

Green energy meeting riles activists

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A controversial group that promises economic growth while cleaning the environment will emasculate the so-called Kyoto Protocol, environmental groups claim.

The Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate alliance was to have its first meeting Wednesday involving some 400 government and business officials from Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and the United States.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, citing Mideast concerns given Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's illness, canceled her participation in the Sydney meeting.

Even before the green growth gathering began, environmental activists including Climate Action Network Australia said voluntary agreements have been tried before and did not result in positive changes for the environment, the BBC reported.

Environmental groups said the mandatory 1997 Kyoto Protocol should be followed.

Australia and the United States have withdrawn from 8-year-old accord signed in Japan, saying it would damage their economies.

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