

China will struggle to hit energy-saving goal: official

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Vehicles drive on the road through the central business district in Beijing. China will exhaust all means to hit an energy efficiency target it set for the end of the year, but fulfilling the goal will prove difficult, a top official said Tuesday.

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China pledged to cut [energy](#) consumption per unit of [gross domestic product](#) by 20 percent from 2006 to 2010, but such a task was proving arduous, Zhang Xiaoqiang told the "Summer Davos" meeting of the World Economic Forum.

"In order to fulfil this goal we will exhaust all effective means, especially those aimed at shutting down small electric plants, small steel makers,

small cement plants and other high energy consuming enterprises," the state-run Xinhua news agency quoted him as saying.

"This is no easy task," said Zhang, a vice minister at the National Development and Reform Commission, China's economic planning ministry.

The pledge essentially amounts to a vow of more energy-efficient economic growth, but overall Chinese [carbon emissions](#) would still increase.

As the world's biggest [greenhouse gas](#) emitter, China has insisted that the cuts are necessary to reduce pollution and clean up its environment.

Missing the goal could result in red faces for top leaders who have trumpeted efforts to curb emissions growth and develop renewable energy.

China will next month host the final United Nations [climate change](#) meeting before full global UN talks on the issue in December in Mexico.

At global climate talks in Copenhagen last year, China pledged that it would reduce energy consumption per unit of GDP, also known as carbon intensity, by 40-45 percent by 2020 based on 2005 levels.

Zhang said that [energy efficiency](#) would remain Chinese policy, whether the 2006-2009 goals are met or not.

China reduced its carbon intensity by 15.6 percent from 2006 to 2009 based on 2005 levels, he added.

Zhang's commission had previously said the 2006-2009 reduction was about 14 percent. He did not explain the discrepancy.

Carbon intensity rose 0.09 percent in the first six months of the year, the first year-on-year increase since 2006, the government said last month, signalling the difficulties in meeting the 2010 target.

In recent months, the government ordered thousands of companies to close high-polluting plants by September in a last-ditch effort to hit the five-year goal.

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