India 'associates' with Copenhagen Accord :Jairam Ramesh

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India has agreed to formally associate itself with the climate accord struck in Copenhagen last year, one of the last major emitters to do so, the environment minister said in a statement on Tuesday.

NEW DELHI, Mar 9 (bdnews24.com/Reuters) - India has agreed to formally associate itself with the climate accord struck in Copenhagen last year, one of the last major emitters to do so, the environment minister said in a statement on Tuesday.

"After careful consideration, India has agreed to such a listing," Jairam Ramesh told parliament, referring to India's decision to formally join the more than 100 countries that have choosen to associate themselves with the non-binding Accord.

"We believe that our decision to be listed reflects the role India played in giving shape to the Copenhagen Accord. This will strengthen our negotiating position on climate change."

India's decision leaves China, the world's top greenhouse gas emitter, as the only nation among the "BASIC" group of big developing countries to hold off from associating with the political agreement.

The step is likely to be a small boost for the troubled Accord, which many greens say was a bare-minimum outcome from a summit originally intended to agree on the shape of a broader, tougher legally binding pact to fight climate change.

The BASIC group of nations -- China, India, South Africa and Brazil -- joined the United States, EU and

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a small number of other countries at the end of the Copenhagen summit to agree on the Accord.

It was meant to be formally adopted by all nations at the conference but last-minute objections by a small number of countries meant the agreement was merely noted. In a compromise, it was decided nations wishing to associate themselves with it would be added to a list later on.

But BASIC nations, and particularly China, India and Brazil, feared a ringing endorsement of the Accord could detract from the 1992 UN Climate Convention, which says rich nations must lead action to slow global warming.

CONDITIONAL ENDORSEMENT

They have also made clear their view that the Accord should not become the basis of a new legally binding climate treaty and that the existing UN talks looking to agree on a successor to the Kyoto Protocol was the main way forward.

But progress has been slow on negotiations to extend the Kyoto Protocol, which binds about 40 rich nations to cut emissions by an average of 5.2 percent below 1990 levels by 2008-12.

Poorer nations want negotiations to continue on two tracks -- one working on a successor to Kyoto from 2013 and the other looking at longer term actions to fight climate change by all nations, including the United States which never ratified Kyoto.

The United States, in a submission to the United Nations late last month, backed the Accord but said negotiating texts created in the UN's long-term action track were not the basis of any future agreements, a view at odds with developing nations.

Washington also wanted "further formalisation of the Accord" at a major UN climate meeting at the end of the year in Mexico.

Ramesh said Indian support for the Accord was conditional.

" ... the Accord is a political document. It is not a template for outcomes," he said, adding that the Accord could not be a separate, third track of negotiations supplanting existing UN-led talks that have already yielding complex negotiating texts that represent years of work.

"The Accord could have value if the areas of convergence reflected in the Accord are used to help the Parties reach agreed outcomes under the UN multilateral negotiations," he said.

The Copenhagen Accord sets a non-binding goal of limiting global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial times and a goal of $100 billion in aid from 2020.

It also lists steps by dozens of nations, including all the top greenhouse gas emitters, to either cut or curb the growth of their emissions by 2020.

India and China have publicly said they "supported" the deal and Indian officials have said previously there was a distinction between expressing support and explicitly becoming "associated".

Some countries have charged that China's and India's reluctance to associate with the Accord was merely a negotiating tactic to try to win more concessions from the United States.

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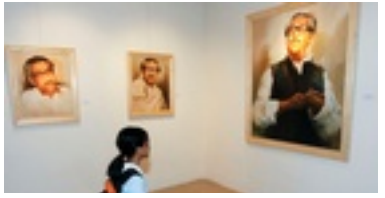

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