

APEC leaders agree to 25 per cent by 2030

Leaders of the 21-nation Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation have agreed to work towards achieving an APEC-wide regional aspirational goal of a reduction in energy intensity of a least 25 per cent by 2030 with 2005 as the base year.

Prime Minister John Howard says APEC leaders moved substantially to reach a new regional consensus represented by the Sydney Declaration on Climate Change, Energy Security and Clean Development.

“We are committed, through wide-ranging and ambitious actions, to ensuring the energy needs of the economies of the region while addressing the issue of environmental quality and contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions,” the declaration says.

The declaration reaffirms APEC leaders’ commitment to work with all members of the international community for an enduring global solution to climate change.

The Sydney Declaration does not include mandatory or aspirational targets for greenhouse gas emissions in APEC countries, but Federal Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull says its importance should not be underestimated.

“There is no level of emission cuts in developed countries alone that is capable of delivering an environmentally effective global reduction in emissions,” says Turnbull.

“A 50 per cent cut in emissions in the developed world coupled with business as usual in the developing world would see global emissions twice 2001 levels, whereas Japan’s ‘50 by 2050’ proposal would demand a cut, by 2050, to a level equal to one half of 1990 levels.”

“That is why this agreement is so significant – once a global goal is agreed it will follow inevitably that all countries will have to reduce emissions if that goal is to be achievable,” he says.

The underlining aim of the Sydney Declaration is to improve energy efficiency in a cost-effective way to enhance energy security and address greenhouse gas emissions while promoting economic growth and development.

APEC leaders agree that all economies should contribute to achieving the goal, taking into account national circumstances and allowing for a range of marketbased policy measures.

Regional goals to reduce energy intensity and increase forest cover by at least 20 million hectares by 2020 will also be adopted.

Recognising that enhanced uptake of low carbon energy uses requires coherent policy and regulatory settings, the leaders agree to promote policies that advance the deployment of low and zero emission energy uses.

Collaborative research into low and zero emission technologies will be boosted by the Asia-Pacific Network for Energy Technology.

Howard says the outcomes of the APEC meeting will add to the momentum that will be continued at the meeting convened by US President George W Bush at the end of September.

It will also feed into the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali in December 2007.

“It’s an important milestone in the march towards a sensible international agreement on climate change, which recognises the need to make progress, but also recognises that different economies bring different perspectives to addressing the challenge of climate change,” says Howard.

[Source essa news]