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India promises to slow carbon emissions rise

India has pledged to cut its "carbon emissions intensity" in the next decade by between 20% and 25%.



India's targeted reductions would not be legally binding

The announcement was made by Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh ahead of the Copenhagen climate summit.

The statement in the Indian parliament marks a major shift for India, which had previously refused to put a figure on its planned emissions.

But analysts say the actual level of carbon dioxide will still rise - but at a slower pace.

The minister said the targets would only be a domestic commitment and would not be legally binding.

He said they would be achieved through measures such as "clean coal" technology in power stations, improved vehicle emissions targets, and better building standards.

"India... owes a responsibility not to the world, but to itself to take climate change seriously," Mr Ramesh said.

"Climate change is of great significance to our country

“ The most vulnerable country in the world to climate change is India... we are prepared to do even more

Jairam Ramesh

Indian Environment Minister

and... the most vulnerable country in the world to climate change is India."

And regarding the level of the targets, the minister said: "At Copenhagen, if we have a successful agreement... we are prepared to do even more."

The announcement follows China's undertaking last week to cut its "carbon intensity" by up to 45% by 2020 compared with 2005 levels. But like India, this will still mean an increase in emissions, but at a slower rate.