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SYNDEY

ASIA-PACIFIC NATIONS TO ESTABLISH TASK FORCES TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

Asia-Pacific nations attending a meeting on climate change here have decided to form eight working groups tackling issues related to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Officials from Australia, China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United States on Thursday issued a joint communique at their inaugural meeting of Asia Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate here.

The eight task forces will focus on different issues including renewable energy, power generation, cleaner fossil fuels, and coal mining.

"We have directed the task forces to drive improvements with regard to best practices and ensure that a range of technologies is developed and repeatedly demonstrated so that scale is increased and costs are reduced," the communique released by the six nations said.

The six partners represent almost half of world GDP, energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions and population.

The partnership was put together by Australia and the United States, the only developed countries to refuse to join 35 others and sign the Kyoto Protocol, which would commit signers to legally binding targets for reducing emissions.

The partners have said the partnership rests on the notion of a non-binding compact that would complement, but not replace, the Kyoto Protocol.

The partners will also consider establishing an Asia Pacific energy technology cooperation center with the focus on developing an energy audit program and associated projects.

High officials from the six partners met big businesses chiefs Wednesday, urging them to use clean technologies to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The communique said it was critical for governments and big businesses to work together to develop cleaner and lower emissions technologies to tackle global climate change triggered by increasing greenhouse gases emissions.