

Climate Revolution Initiative

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Did Jairam Ramesh Mislead Nation on Emission Intensity Cuts?

Climate group claims Minister hoodwinked parliament by claiming new policy measures will reduce emission intensity. Ministry report shows reduction does not require any new policy.

Gurgaon, June 22, 2010 -- In the run up to Copenhagen climate conference last year, government had announced that it will reduce its emission intensity by 20-25% by the year 2020 from 2005 levels. Environment minister Jairam Ramesh told the parliament that the government plans to introduce a number of emission reduction measures to achieve this.

Now an advocacy group claims that the so called "cuts" do not require any new action or policy change at all. As Indian industry moves to more efficient manufacturing processes and technologies the country would achieve these reductions under business as usual itself. Implying that through serious policy measures to reduce emissions India could achieve much higher reduction in emission intensity than promised by the government.

The group claims data made public by Ministry of Environment itself two months prior to the announcement of these cuts establishes this beyond any doubt.

Manu Sharma, founder of Climate Revolution Initiative, an advocacy group working in the area of climate change, alleged in a statement released today that Jairam Ramesh misrepresented the reduction in emission intensity, which Indian industry is likely to achieve on their own, to make it seem like India has made a new commitment.

Emission intensity is the measure of emissions caused relative to economic output produced. A cut in emission intensity does not mean India's emissions will reduce in absolute terms. It signifies that emissions caused per dollar of GDP will reduce while the country's total emissions will still continue to multiply over the next few decades.

India's emission intensity fell by 30% between the years 1994 to 2007, according to data recently released by the government for the year 2007. This is despite the fact that we did not have any emission reduction policy in place during this period. So how did we achieve this? Turns out, it did not require much effort after all.

Over the thirteen year period, India's emission intensity declined with little help from the government as our cement industry, steel plants, automotive industry, consumer appliances and thermal power plants moved to advanced processes, technologies and products that consumed less and less energy and

therefore caused fewer emissions.

The same trend is expected to continue over the next decade. This was highlighted in a report released by Ministry of Environment and Forests in September last year, two months before the country boldly announced to the world that it would take on emission intensity cuts.

In a press conference on 2nd September last year, the union Minister of State for Environment and Forests, Jairam Ramesh released the report that compiled results of five studies that projected India's future greenhouse gas emissions under no-mitigation scenario. In other words, the report showed how much would India's emissions increase if it didn't take any action to curb its emissions or continued on business as usual pathway.

One of the key results reflected in all modelling studies, the report states on page 7, is "evidence of a substantial and continuous decline in India's energy intensity of GDP and CO₂ intensity of GDP."

Table 1 on page 9 of the report quantifies the fall in CO₂ emission intensity under different models. The decline given in absolute terms (kg CO₂e per \$ GDP), approximately ranges from 50% to 60% over a 27 to 30 year period (2003-2030). This translates to an annual rate of decline of around 2%.

Going by this, over the 15 year commitment period (2005-2020), our emission intensity would fall on its own by around 30% even if the government continued with the same policies it had in 2005.

Clearly, India's so called commitment to reduce its emission intensity 20-25% by 2020 through new policy measures is nothing but an exercise in cleverly labelling reductions the country is already set to achieve without any new policy from the government.

Yet, on 3rd December 2009, Jairam Ramesh told the parliament that India will reduce emission intensity through multiple new policy initiatives his government plans to introduce. "So, we have an action plan in transportation, industry, buildings, forestry and in various sectors of our economy which will ensure 20 to 25 per cent cut in emissions intensity between 2005 and 2020", to told parliamentarians.

"This is clearly a sham," charged Manu Sharma. Hiding behind numbers that most people cannot interpret, Jairam Ramesh is packaging business as usual (BAU) scenario as a commitment to reduce emissions, he said. This is intended to deliberately hoodwink Indian citizens, the parliament and world into believing that India has taken serious cuts and made a new commitment to significantly reduce its emissions, said Sharma.

Sharma said India could do much more than this if it gets serious about tackling this issue. He argues the minister's primary motivation behind the announcement was to take pressure off India in Copenhagen climate negotiations as China and Brazil had just announced reduction in emission intensity and absolute emission reductions respectively.

In its statement released today, Climate Revolution Initiative challenges the government to prove that the emission intensity "cuts" it announced in December last year are *additional* to reductions Indian industry will achieve on its own over the next decade.

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About Climate Revolution

Climate Revolution Initiative is a series of ambitious proposals and initiatives that can potentially transform the social and political climate on climate change in India and be replicated in any part of the world. The ambitious initiative aims to educate and mobilise the public to force the governments to change. Climate Revolution Initiative is led by Manu Sharma, an activist and renewable energy expert. Full details about its RTI Initiative, including scanned replies from various govt. authorities, are available on www.climaterevolution.net/rti

Additional information

- MoEF report: India's GHG Emissions Profile modelling results of five studies.
<http://moef.nic.in/downloads/home/GHG-report.pdf>

See Table 1 (Page 9) for CO2 emission intensity reductions and Table 2 (Page 10) for the assumption that projections do not consider any new GHG mitigation policy.

Alternate link: <http://climaterevolution.net/trunk/GHG-report.pdf>

- Transcript of statement made by Jairam Ramesh in Lok Sabha on 3rd December 2009.
http://moef.nic.in/downloads/public-information/LokSabha_trnscript.pdf

See page 18 for Minister's quote.

Alternate link: http://climaterevolution.net/trunk/LokSabha_trnscript.pdf

- MoEF officials involved in writing its report on India's GHG Emissions Profile modelling results of five studies:

Vijai Sharma, Secretary (E&F)
J.M. Mauskar, Addl. Secretary
R.R. Rashmi, Joint Secretary
R.K. Sethi, Director
Dr. S. Satapathy, Addl. Director
Ashok Bhardwaj, Section Officer

Source: RTI application filed by Climate Revolution Initiative with MoEF.

- Press statement available online here: <http://climaterevolution.net/trunk/Press-Statement-22-Jun-2010.pdf>