

China says willing to work with US on climate change



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BEIJING (AFP) – China said Thursday it was willing to work with the United States on addressing climate change, saying such efforts were vital to fighting global warming.

"Strengthening cooperation on climate change is in the interest of the two countries and conducive to our two nations contributing to international climate change cooperation," foreign ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said.

"We would like to work with the US to make concrete progress on this issue."

Jiang was speaking ahead of a visit to China beginning Friday by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who is on her first overseas trip since taking on the role.

Clinton has said closer ties with China on fighting climate change was one of her priorities on her three-day trip, during which she will meet President Hu Jintao.

Todd Stern, Clinton's special envoy on climate change and a veteran negotiator on global warming, is accompanying her.

China and the United States are the world's two largest emitters of the greenhouse gases that cause global warming, and they have traded accusations in recent years on who should shoulder the responsibility for the problem.

But US President Barack Obama has pledged to shred the climate policies of his predecessor George W. Bush and has vowed to lead an international fight against global warming.

In 2001, Bush rejected the Kyoto Protocol that sought to forge a global deal on fighting climate change, with his administration blaming the pull-out on the fact developing nations such as China did not have to commit to emission cuts.

Cooperation between the two giants is essential for the success of negotiations to be held in Copenhagen in December on a new global pact to replace the Kyoto Protocol when it expires in 2012, Greenpeace China said.

"Strong leadership from the US and China, acting together, is essential to reaching an agreement in Copenhagen," the environmental group said in an open letter released Thursday to Clinton and her Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi.

"We urge China and the US to explore deeper collaboration between their energy efficiency and renewable energy industries, to create a new development model that meets energy demands... and

generates millions of green jobs without sacrificing human health or the environment."

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