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## China launches 80 mln energy efficiency program

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BEIJING, June 8 -- China, the world's second-largest energy consumer, has launched an US\$80 million program with the United Nations (UN) to promote efficient use of energy and cut pollution, UN and government officials said Monday.

China, struggling to fuel the world's fastest-growing major economy in the face of rapid demand growth, increasing reliance on oil imports and recurrent power shortages, aims to quadruple gross domestic product (GDP) by 2020 while just doubling its energy consumption.

The program aims to reduce energy consumption by nearly 19 million tons of coal equivalent in the first three-year phase of the program, cutting carbon emissions by 12 million tons.

With relatively dirty coal used to generate over two-thirds of the country's power, air pollution is also moving up the government agenda because of its impact on health and growth.

"It seeks to remove barriers to the widespread application of energy conservation and efficiency in China's major energy end users — industry and buildings," said Khalid Malik, UN Resident Coordinator in China.

With industrial users accounting for around 70 percent of energy consumption, the government planned to invite six firms from energy-intensive sectors — steel, chemicals and cement — to join voluntary pilots over the next three years, said an official from the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC).

The construction sector was another key target, making up some 20 percent of the country's energy demand and energy efficient designs would be a key factor in future power use, NDRC program coordinator Niu Bo added.

Energy efficiency standards and labeling for electrical goods in the residential and service sectors — ranging from refrigerators to air conditioners — would also be phased in over three years.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) would provide US\$17 million for the first three-year phase of the program, the Chinese Government would supply US\$31 million and another US\$32 million would come from the private sector, Malik said.

Premier Wen Jiabao has urged the country to step up power conservation to relieve an energy crunch that is impeding economic growth.

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The government issued China's first medium and long-term plan for energy conservation late last year, under which China would aim to burn 2.25 tons of coal for every 10,000 yuan (US\$1,200) worth of GDP by 2010, down from 2.68 tons per 10,000 yuan in 2002.

(Source: Shenzhen Daily/Agencies)