

# China backs hundreds of global coal power projects: report

BEIJING - Chinese companies are planning or constructing hundreds of coal-fired power projects around the world, data show, even as Beijing talks up its commitment to fighting climate change.



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The report by German environmental lobby group Urgewald comes as China seeks to fill a vacuum left by the United States following President Donald Trump's decision to exit the Paris climate agreement.

Urgewald estimates about 250 Chinese companies are involved in nearly half of the 1,600 new coal power projects planned or being built worldwide.

They include state-owned energy giants China Datang Corporation, China Huaneng Group, and SPIC.

Urgewald bases its figures on publicly available company information and the Global Coal Plant Tracker published by San Francisco-based research platform CoalSwarm.

It estimates more than 840,000 megawatts will be added to the world's coal-fired power capacity if the 1,600 projects are completed.

Just 120 major coal plant developers -- including 26 Chinese companies -- are responsible for about two-thirds of the planned expansion.

The projects are in 62 countries, including 14 which have no existing coal-fired power capacity.

China-backed projects are planned or under way in several nations including China, Pakistan, Malawi, Egypt and Jamaica, Urgewald said in the report published on June 29.

"If the Chinese government truly wants to position itself as a global climate leader, it needs to rein in its state-owned companies that are flooding the world with new coal power plants," Trusha Reddy, coordinator of the International Coal Network at Earthlife Africa, was quoted by Urgewald as saying.

China's National Energy Administration did not respond to a request for comment.

Urgewald said the top 120 companies were "paving the road towards climate chaos".

"The companies pushing forward this glut of new coal infrastructure pose a threat to us all, as their projects would bury our chances of keeping global warming well below two degrees Celsius," Urgewald director Heffa Schuecking said.

China, the world's biggest polluter but also its biggest investor in renewable energy, has repeatedly vowed to stay the course on reducing its greenhouse gas emissions.

Earlier this year it reportedly cancelled more than 100 carbon-belching coal power projects.

But although China's own coal consumption has fallen for the past three years, reducing the fossil fuel's share of its energy use to 62 percent, it has also been investing heavily in coal projects abroad as part of its Belt and Road infrastructure initiative.

**Source:** *AFP*

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