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Germany's Merkel repeats call for climate cut rules

Thu Nov 19, 2009 3:18pm EST

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By John O'Donnell

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - German Chancellor Angela Merkel called once again for binding rules to cut carbon pollution at climate talks in Copenhagen next month, a target endorsed on Thursday by French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

1 of 1 [Full Size](#)

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The heads of more than 200 countries including China, the United States and India are due in Denmark in December to thrash out a deal to address climate change although a legal framework for binding pollution control seems unlikely to emerge.

"We clearly must reach a binding agreement next year and if possible in the first half of the year, one where it will be internationally checked as to whether individual countries stick to their obligations," Merkel said.

"The political commitment to that should and must come in Copenhagen," she said on the sidelines of a European Union summit, flanked by Lars Lokke Rasmussen, Danish prime minister and chair of the Copenhagen conference.

Her remarks, reiterating those made on Wednesday [ID:nLI171250], were echoed by Sarkozy.

"We want success at Copenhagen and we have set a number of red lines. Copenhagen should outline the numbers and the precise objectives."

The talks in Copenhagen aim to hammer out a new deal for battling global warming after the current Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012. Major obstacles to agreement include the United States' own internal debate about how to set goals for emission cuts.

"We have started this year in a difficult financial crisis," said Merkel. "We in the G20 have agreed to cooperate internationally. But that would not count for much if we were to fail at the climate conference."

Countries including China, Japan, Brazil and Russia have all recently made pledges in the fight against climate change.

(Editing by Louise Ireland)

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