

# South Africa adopts more ambitious emissions target before climate summit

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South Africa's cabinet has adopted a more ambitious emissions reduction target ahead of a United Nations climate conference in November, the country's environment department said last week.



Flames are seen close to the city fanned by strong winds after a bushfire broke out on the slopes of Table Mountain in Cape Town, South Africa, 19 April 2021. | Source: Reuters/Mike Hutchings/File Photo

Africa's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases now aims to keep emissions to a range of 350 - 420 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e) by 2030.

That compares with an earlier draft target of 398 - 440 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e announced by the environment department in March, which a climate commission established by president Cyril Ramaphosa recommended should be improved upon.

The Global Carbon Atlas estimates South Africa emitted around 480 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2019. The updated target forms part of a so-called Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) which will be submitted in the buildup to the UN's COP26 conference in Glasgow.

"The NDC represents South Africa's contribution to global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate change," the environment department said in a statement.



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### Plans to move towards renewable energy in the pipeline

Major South African polluters include state-owned power utility Eskom, which generates the vast majority of the country's power by burning coal and fuel, and chemical producer Sasol.

Under Ramaphosa, who became head of state in February 2018, the government has promised to take swifter action to combat climate change and unveiled reforms aimed at embracing power generation from renewable sources.

Eskom is pitching for billions of dollars of funding to help finance its plans to shift away from coal and towards renewable energy. It hopes to announce a financing deal at COP26 and is talking to the US, British, French and German governments as well as the World Bank about funding.

On Wednesday, 22 September, Sasol said it had improved on its emissions reduction target for 2030 after it came under pressure from investors and environmental groups.

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