

# The Telegraph

## Cancun climate summit: UN calls for worldwide phase out of incandescent bulbs

Traditional light bulbs should be banned across the world as part of plans to help tackle climate change, according to a new United Nations report.



At the moment at least half of total lighting market sales are still of inefficient incandescent lamps Photo: GETTY



By [Louise Gray \(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/louise-gray/\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/louise-gray/), Environment Correspondent in Cancun

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Britain is already phasing out traditional bulbs as part of European regulations to save energy, with high wattage bulbs no longer on the shelves.

The scheme has been unpopular with many because compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) take longer to warm up and can give some people headaches.

However they last ten times longer and require far less electricity to produce the same amount of light.

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A UN study found that if every nation switched from incandescent lamps to energy-efficient alternatives, it would cut the world's electricity demand for lighting by over 2 per cent. This is equivalent to saving around 800 million tonnes of emissions.

The study was launched at UN talks in Cancun to prove how easy it would be to cut emissions if the world works together to tackle climate change.

Indonesia alone could save \$1 billion a year and cut its greenhouse gas emissions by eight million tonnes of CO2 annually, the equivalent of taking two million cars off the road a year.

Small nations like Cambodia could save over 30 per cent of its electricity consumption while reducing CO2 emissions by more than 13 per cent.

At the moment at least half of total lighting market sales are still of inefficient incandescent lamps, which are still a quarter of the price of energy-saving bulbs.

However CFLs are becoming much cheaper and could fall further in price if there is mass demand across the world. New Light emitting diodes (LEDs), that are due to come in soon, will be even cheaper and more efficient.

Already lighting companies like Osram and Phillips have begun to roll out the new models in developing countries. They have addressed concerns about the mercury in CFLs by arguing that they are less polluting than a ball point pen or coal-fired power stations.

The UN said it is up to different countries to decide the best way to encourage a switch to energy efficient models, but many may choose a ban on incandescent bulbs.

Other ways to encourage the switch include taxing incandescent bulbs and subsidising the alternative or public awareness campaigns.

As well as Europe, the US, Australia, Cuba, Canada and the Philippines are all banning incandescent bulbs.

The UN is working with the lighting industry to try and phase out incandescent bulbs in countries including China, Russia, Vietnam and Morocco.

Achim Steiner, the head of the UN's Environment Programme, said it would not only be good for climate change but the economy, as businesses save money on lighting and less power stations are needed.

Also more poor people will be able to afford lighting as prices come down, meaning they are able to switch from dangerous, polluting kerosene.

"Among the low hanging fruit in the climate change challenge, a switch to far more efficient lighting must rank as among the lowest," he said.

"Efficient lighting systems is one path that is literally available at the flip of a policy switch".

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