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“Health, Agricultural and Climate Benefits of Reducing Short-lived Climate Pollutants” SB38 Side Event report

Overseas Environmental Cooperation Center, Japan (OECC)
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This is a report of a side event held at the 38th Session of the Subsidiary Bodies of the UNFCCC from June 3rd to 14th 2013, in Bonn, Germany.

- Title : “Health, Agricultural and Climate Benefits of Reducing Short-lived Climate Pollutants”
- Date : 18:30 - 20:00, Wednesday, 12 June 2013
- Organizer(s) : United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- Venue : Room Rail at the Ministry of Transport of Germany
- Presenter(s) : Dan McDougall (Environment Canada), Kaveh Zahedi (CCAC Secretariat), Markus Amann (CCAC Scientific Advisory Panel), Marina Maiero (World Health Organisation), Felicity Creighton Spors (World Bank), Mark Radka (UN Environment Programme), Terri Willis (C40-CCI Cities), and Nurul Quadir (Bangladesh)
- Abstract: The Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants (CCAC) is catalyzing rapid reductions from harmful pollutants to protect human health and the environment now and slow the rate of climate change within the first half of this century.

■ Summary

1. Dan McDougall: Opening statement

- In his opening statement, Mr McDougall laid out the reasons Canada joined the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC). He touched upon strong scientific basis, demonstrated need to act, the public health and environmental aspects of short-lived climate pollutants (SLCP), the CCAC’s domestic and international commitments, the CCAC’s principle of mobilizing political will, and a wide variety of stakeholders involved in the CCAC.
- He also noted that Canada has made substantial financial commitments for the work of the CCAC.

2. Kaveh Zahedi: “Reducing SLCPs for large-scale benefits in agriculture, health and climate”

- Mr. Zahedi explained some of the rationales for reducing SLCPs emissions: 1) SLCPs are responsible for a substantial fraction of near-term climate change; 2) SLCPs have detrimental effects on public health; and 3) they also have negative impacts on agricultural outputs.
- The main SLCPs include methane, black carbon and hydrofluorocarbons. And there are various measures that can be taken now to reduce emissions of these substances. But such efforts have to be complemented by long-term efforts to cut CO₂ emissions.
- The CCAC is originally a voluntary initiative launched by few countries, including Canada, Bangladesh and Ghana. Its membership has expanded to include 64 countries.

3. Markus Amann: Comments from the scientific point of view

- Mr. Amann made comments on the CCAC from the scientific viewpoint.
- The coalition focuses its efforts on concrete measures to reduce SLCPs emissions. But from the scientific point of view, there are considerable uncertainties about to what extent these measures contribute to mitigating climate change.
- He also touched upon the economic dimension of efforts to reduce SLCPs emissions. He stated that initial investment in half of the measures that are now promoted could have both immediate and long-lasting positive financial impacts. In contrast, the environmental and health benefits will not manifest themselves right away.
- Scientific evidence suggests that the impacts of reducing black carbon emissions are much greater than previously expected. Concrete mitigation measures include reducing the use of kerosene lamps in developing countries.

4. Marina Maiero: "Health benefits of reducing SLCPs"

- Ms. Maiero discussed various health benefits of reducing SLCPs.
- She remarked that incomplete combustion is one of the major culprits of releasing different kinds of SLCPs. Both indoor and outdoor air pollution kills several million people each year and also causes other health hazards (e.g. heart diseases, pneumonia, and cancer). She also noted that smaller pollutants tend to cause more detrimental health impacts than larger ones.
- There are multiple co-benefits of SLCP reductions that extend far beyond cleaner air.
- Economic efficiency can be improved by combining climate change responses with health objectives according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
- The WHO has taken several initiatives to reduce SLCPs emissions, including gathering data and conducting awareness-raising campaigns. The WHO is currently not a member

of the CCAC, but it plans to join it shortly.

5. Felicity Creighton Spors: “Methane finance study group”

- Ms. Spors introduced the work of the methane finance study group established in late 2012 in response to a request by G8 to design a result-based finance scheme for methane emissions reductions.
- Main findings of the study group so far demonstrate that immediate, middle- and long-term actions are all important and expected to deliver tangible results.

6. Mark Radka: On the UNEP’s initiatives

- Mr. Radka presented on the UNEP’S views on SLCPs.
- According to him, one of the biggest sources of black carbon emissions is the transport sector, and it is possible to tackle this by adopting certain environmental standards for fuels and engines (e.g. regulations on the amount of sulfur in diesel).
- He stated that SLCPs reduction measures in the short run should be complemented by long-term CO2 emissions reduction efforts.

7. Terri Wills: “Municipal solid waste initiative Canada, US, Mexico, World Bank”

- Ms. Wills made a presentation on the municipal solid waste initiative targeted at mega cities, which was launched at Rio+C40.
- The overall objective of the initiative is to work with cities around the world to implement measures to reduce SLCPs (mainly methane and black carbon) emissions from the waste sector. The initiative specifically focuses on cities because they have the powers to act (e.g. cities are the operating entities of waste collection and disposal systems)
- They have completed assessments of the waste disposal systems of eight cities located in different parts of the world, developed action plans, convened workshops, and built a knowledge platform. Concrete actions that they promote include optimizing garbage truck routes and introducing organic treatment in landfills.
- The initiative plans to take the following further steps: direct assistance, training and capacity building, mentoring and city-to-city exchanges, and developing transformative strategies.

8. Nurul Quadir: “CCAC Action on the National Level: Bangladesh National Action Plan (NAP) for Reducing Short Lived Climate Pollutants (SLCPs)”

- Mr. Quadir made a presentation on the Bangladesh National Action Plan for Reducing SLCPs.

- In Bangladesh, especially in rural parts of the country, black carbon has direct health impacts on the population, particularly women.
- Mr. Quadir stated that rapid implementation of measures to reduce SLCPs offer real opportunities for the country to 1) Improve public health; 2) reduce crop yield loss; 3) slow down near-term climate change; and 4) help prevent changes in regional rainfall patterns.
- Bangladesh has identified a number of SLCPs abatement measures for key economic sectors and selected nine high priority measures from them.
- Mr. Quadir concluded his presentation by affirming that Bangladesh is one of the pioneer countries that commenced preparing a comprehensive national action plan to reduce SLCPs.

■ Q&A

Q. (Unidentified): Canada should be doing more to reduce SLCPs emissions for the sake of human rights protection.

A. (Mr. McDougall): Many of the actions taken in Canada focus on the co-benefits side, rather than SLCP emissions reductions. In this sense, the human rights issue is taken very seriously as well.

Q. (Bangladesh): In Bangladesh, measures that exclusively focus on fuels would not be very effective, because the engines of most of the vehicles are technologically outdated.

A. (Mr. Radka): it is certainly necessary to address engines and fuels at the same time.

Q. (Mexico): Mexico is preparing an action plan to address SLCPs, but having difficulties in estimating SLCPs' impacts on climate change. Would it be possible to count the effects of SLCP emissions reductions as part of Mexico's long-term mitigation measures?

A. (Mr. Amann): Short-term SLCP reduction efforts should not be equated with long-term mitigation measures.

A. (Mr. McDougall): Measurement is certainly a critical issue.

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