Paris, November 12, 2015: A new report by the University of California (UC) outlines 10 scalable solutions for slowing climate change. Delivered as part of the UC summit on Carbon and Climate Neutrality, the Bending the Curve report aims to flatten the trajectory of human-caused warming by reducing CO2 by 80 percent by 2050 and moving to carbon neutrality post-2050.

The report is one of the first to treat mitigation of air pollution and climate disruption under one framework. The solutions proposed in the report recognize the fact that burning fossil fuels – which produces greenhouse gases – also produces particles and gases like ozone and black carbon that contribute to global warming, and that by immediately and simultaneously reducing these pollutants “we can accelerate solutions and gain some time for long-term change to a carbon neutral world”.

It was spearheaded by UNEP Champion of the Earth and Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) Scientific Advisory Panel member, Veerabhadran Ramanathan, of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego. 50 academics and researchers from across the University of California’s 10 campuses representing a broad spectrum of fields ranging from climate science to ethics, economics, ecology, energy, environmental justice, political science and religion worked on the report with the aim of finding the most efficient and practicable ways to minimize the earth’s temperature increase due to emissions of greenhouse agents.

The multi-disciplinary approach groups the 10 solutions into five clusters: Science Solutions, Social Transformation Solutions, Governance Solutions, Market- and Regulations- Based Solutions, and Technology Based Solutions. Reducing short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs) falls into the Science Solution cluster and are specifically dealt with in solutions #1, #7, and #9.

Solution #9, for example, calls for the immediate and “maximum use of available technologies combined with regulations to reduce methane emissions by 50% and black carbon emissions by 90%... [and] phase out hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) by 2030 by amending the Montreal Protocol.” Reducing these SLCPs and tropospheric ozone “could reduce projected warming by 0.6°C within twenty to forty years, keeping mid-century warming below the 2°C global target”.

Helena Molin Valdes, Head of the UNEP hosted CCAC, commended the University for providing pragmatic solutions saying there was a need for more research on mitigation potential across sectors and that organizations like the CCAC can work with academia to reach policy makers and scale up actions to reduce harmful short-lived climate pollutants.
“What makes the proposals in the report extra exciting is that the authors are walking the walk, their proposals builds on both research and practice. The ambitious Carbon Neutrality Initiative, across all the University of California Campuses, aims at achieving net-zero emissions by 2025, a huge task, Ms Molin Valdes said. “This is an open laboratory– with clean transport, experimental anaerobic digesters, and converting methane emissions from waste and waste water into electricity. And most importantly, working towards a very engaged and more committed community to implement this change.”

California Governor Edmund G. Brown described the Bending the Curve report as “a call to activism, a call to action.”

“If we put all our best minds together, with the research integrity and capacity of the University of California, that is a formidable force and nothing less than that is required,” Governor Brown said.

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RESOURCES:
Watch Professor Veerabhadran Ramanathan explain Bending the Curve in this video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqlfReFU8Kk
Governor Brown’s speech can be seen here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6x0PHCAk