



## Press Release

---

### **Integrated Assessment of Short-Lived Climate Pollutants in Latin America and the Caribbean released**

*Cutting air pollution in Latin American and the Caribbean can limit global warming, prevent thousands of premature deaths, and benefit agriculture.*

**Toronto, April 18, 2018:** Efforts to reduce dangerous air and climate pollutants by Latin American and Caribbean countries could reap immediate and long-term benefits for health, food security and the climate according to the first ever [Integrated Assessment of Short-lived Climate Pollutants \(SLCPs\)](#) for the region.

Short-lived climate pollutants – which include black carbon (or soot), methane, ground level (tropospheric) ozone, and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) – all have a global warming potential hundreds to thousands times that of carbon dioxide. Black carbon and ozone also seriously impact human and plant health.

The assessment, developed by 90 authors and led by experts from the region was released today by the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC). It found poor air quality and climate change is already affecting vulnerable populations and environment in the region resulting in premature deaths, crop yield losses, and ecosystem damage.

In 2010 an estimated 64,000 people died prematurely in the region from exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and ground level (tropospheric) ozone. Ozone was also responsible for an estimated 7.4 million tonnes in yield losses of soybean, maize, wheat, and rice. If no action is taken to improve air quality, by 2050 annual premature mortality from PM2.5 and ozone exposure is expected to almost double while annual crop losses could rise to about 9 million tonnes.

“This report recommends concrete measures aimed to reduce short-lived climate pollutants. If countries in the region put in place those measures, they will contribute to maintain the planet’s temperature below the 2°C threshold set out in the Paris climate agreement,” said Leo Heileman, UN Environment Director for Latin America and the Caribbean.

“Countries in the region are working together to scale up effort on mitigation and adaptation plans. These actions support the 2030 Agenda by reducing vulnerability and driving economic growth and innovation in areas like clean energy and energy efficiency,” Mr. Heileman said.

Implementing emission reduction measures, by 2050, can reduce warming in the region by up to 0.9 degrees Celsius, reduce premature deaths from fine particulate matter pollution by at least 26%, and ozone by 40%, annually, and avoid the loss of 3–4 million tonnes of four staple crops – soybeans, maize, wheat, and rice – each year.

Agriculture, transport, domestic and commercial refrigeration are the sectors that product the largest emissions of methane, black carbon, particulate matter, and hydrofluorocarbons.

Over 45% of methane emissions could be reduced by 2050 through six actions in four sectors: oil and gas production and distribution, waste management, coal mining, and agriculture. These include activities like: the recovery and use of vented gas in oil and gas production, separation and treatment of biodegradable municipal solid waste, and recovering biogas from livestock manure using anaerobic digestion.

Black carbon emissions can be reduced by over 80% by 2050 in most countries by focusing on initiatives that modernize cooking and heating stoves, improve diesel vehicle standards to Euro VI equivalent, put diesel particulate filters on vehicles, eliminate high emitting vehicles, and enforce bans on open field agricultural burning.

Using climate friendly alternatives to hydrofluorocarbons in refrigeration and cooling can almost completely eliminate these potent greenhouse gases and achieve further benefits through improvements in appliance energy efficiency.

Helena Molin Valdés, Head of the UN Environment hosted Climate and Clean Air Coalition Secretariat, said the report represents an opportunity and an invitation for countries to strengthen national action and regional cooperation to reduce these pollutants.

“The report outlines areas where countries can and should be more ambitious in their actions to reduce global warming and improve air quality in the near-term,” Ms Molin Valdés said. “Many countries in the region are putting measures in place to clean up transport and energy sources already, but it is uneven. Stronger public policies and pollution control can increase the economic incentives and will maximize the number of benefits for climate action, health, agriculture and sustainable development. Fast action is of essence.”

Examples of initiatives and measures that have successfully reduced short-lived climate pollutant emissions in the Latin American and the Caribbean region can be found in a companion Technical Report to this Assessment: Progress and Opportunities for Reducing SLCPs in the LAC Region. The examples include technical and non-technical measures covering a range of key sectors, including transport; coal mining and oil and gas production; municipal solid waste and wastewater treatment; livestock rearing and open burning; residential heating and cooking; and small industrial sources.

**You can download the report [here](#).**

**You can download the Spanish press release [here](#).**

**Contact:**

Tiy Chung, CCAC Communications Officer, [tiy.chung@unep.org](mailto:tiy.chung@unep.org), +33 6 26 71 79 81