

High Level Sub-regional Consultation on Advancing Action on Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (SLCPs) in Southeast and Northeast Asia

Northeast and Southeast Asian Countries have most to gain from Action on Short-Lived Climate Pollutants, to address air pollution and near-term climate change, improve public health and food security and capitalize on clean energy opportunities.

Bangkok, 19 August 2014 – Government officials from North East and South East Asia, CCAC country partners from across Asia and international experts came together to discuss the challenge of short-lived climate pollutants for the region.

The High-Level Consultation sends a strong message that countries in the region have most to gain from decisive action on short-lived climate pollutants. Death tolls related to indoor and outdoor air pollution are highest in this region. The meeting examined measures in key sectors, including transport, agriculture, waste and residential cooking, heating and lighting, to achieve multiple benefits for health, climate, food security and energy access and efficiency, and agreed on the need to integrate short-lived climate pollutants action into sectoral policies and inter-ministerial processes, and work with and through regional frameworks and processes.

Short-lived climate pollutants, or SLCPs, such as black carbon or soot, methane and tropospheric ozone, can be dangerous air pollutants that harm human health, agricultural yields and ecosystems while also warming the climate in the near-term. Air pollution is a major challenge in the region, especially in urban areas, and its effect on climate change and consequent sea-level rise and rainfall patterns, make the challenge especially difficult. Another set of SLCPs—many types of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)—are used in air conditioning and refrigeration, and their use is increasing rapidly in the region. Replacing these harmful HFCs with safe alternatives could also bring significant near-term climate benefits. Overall, no region could save more lives and money from mitigating SLCPs than Asia.

A key next step for countries in the region to make rapid progress on SLCPs action is to better integrate climate change, air quality and other key sectoral policies and engage the private sector, notably through:

Conducting research on public health benefits from SLCP emissions mitigation in the transport sector to make the case for scaled up measures

Adopting air quality standards for cookstoves, heatstoves and lighting in the residential sector, taking into account local contexts.

Integrating waste management into climate change action on national and local levels.

Focusing attention on measures to tackle SLCP emissions from residue burning and slash and burn practices, and methane emissions from irrigated rice paddies, livestock manure management and enteric fermentation in the agriculture sector.

Implementing black carbon measures addressing the transport, residential and agricultural sectors could prevent about 1.9 million premature deaths from outdoor air pollution each year by 2030 in Asia, and avoid significant indoor air pollution as well. Reducing black carbon emissions could also slow the melting of glaciers in the Himalayas and support the South Asian monsoon to return to a less disturbed state. On methane, reducing emissions from coal mines could also bring significant crop benefits.

The meeting also agreed that another important element going forward is for countries to work with regional frameworks and processes to incorporate SLCP actions, especially:

the Regional Forum on Environment and Health in Southeast and East Asian Countries

the relevant ASEAN processes

the development and investment programs of the Asian Development Bank

the implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific

and other key regional initiatives

The SLCP consultation was hosted by the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UNEP ROAP) under the auspices of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (CCAC). It built on the outcomes of the 2013 Regional Intergovernmental Consultation on Near-Term Climate Protection and Clean Air Benefits in Asia.

Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, UNEP Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific remarked, “Air pollution is the single largest environment related health risk, especially in Asia. The social, environmental and economic costs are undermining progress towards sustainable development goals. The action areas of the Coalition - on waste management, on brick kilns and cook stoves, on HFCs and refrigeration technologies – are more relevant for this region than any other. We have the most to gain in terms of health, food security, and avoided local climate disruption as well as in terms of our region's contribution to achieving the global two degree goal.”

The Regional Forum on Environment and Health in Southeast and Northeast Asian Countries met on the next day. During the meeting, the Forum incorporated SLCPs within the forum's Work Plan for 2014–2016 and welcomed collaboration of their member countries in with the Climate and Clean Air Coalition.

Countries were invited to join the Climate and Air Coalition as partners as a means to get support for scaling up SLCP mitigation. The Coalition partners work together in more than ten

action oriented initiatives, which includes reducing SLCP emissions and cater for health and other benefits in sectors such as brick production, heavy duty diesel vehicles, domestic cooking and heating, agriculture (manure management, open burning and paddy rice) or municipal solid waste.

The meeting called upon the CCAC to strengthen support in Asia, including help develop an integrated and action-oriented regional assessment of SLCPs and other atmospheric pollutants beginning in 2015. UNEP ROAP will monitor overall progress and support coordination of the efforts across the region.

Japan, one of the ten key donors and an active partner in the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, announced plans to pledge 1.7 million US dollars to the Coalition's Trust Fund in support to sustainable waste management activities and other SLCP reduction activities in Asia. Japan is a lead partner in the CCAC municipal solid waste initiative, which works with cities and countries in Asia and globally on city waste management assessments, plans and sharing of experience.

The CCAC is a voluntary multi-stakeholder initiative of over 90 Partners launched in 2012 to bring together countries and organizations committed to accelerated and widespread actions on SLCPs. The CCAC is a “coalition of the working” that helps stakeholders implement proven measures resulting in benefits ranging from clean diesel engines to sustainable cropping. By introducing these measures, countries can reduce the risks of passing climate tipping points, complement the urgent efforts needed to mitigate longer lived greenhouse gases (GHGs), especially carbon dioxide, and improve the health and well-being of millions of people.

Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam attended the meeting and were joined by leading institutions of the region including Asia Center for Air Pollution Research (ACAP).

Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Clean Air Asia, GIZ, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT), Kanazawa University, Regional Resource Center for Asia and the Pacific (RRC.AP), Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), international organizations including UNEP, UNESCAP, the World Bank, WHO and other experts, practitioners and stakeholders from across Northeast and Southeast Asia and abroad.

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