

Introductory Meeting and Scoping Session. September 17 – 19, 2013. Whitehorse, Yukon. Summary Report.

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Arctic Council Task Force for Action of Black Carbon and Methane
(TFBCM)

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Summary Report

Introduction

The task force co-chairs France Jacovella, Director General of Climate Change International, Environment Canada and Annika Markovic, Swedish Ambassador for Environment chaired the first meeting of the Task Force for Action on Black Carbon and Methane. This meeting was a broad scoping discussion that focused on sharing views on the various tasks identified in the Task Force's Terms of Reference, included in the 2013 Senior Arctic Officials report to Ministers. All Arctic States with the exception of Russia and Iceland were present. Two of the six Permanent Participants, Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC) and Aleut International Association (AIA), were also present. The Task Force had a constructive and productive discussion on each of the tasks.

Both co-chairs underlined the high importance of the work of the Task Force for their governments, and stated that the Task Force has the potential to contribute to real reduction of emissions through concrete measures that will have positive health and climate benefits in the North.

In discussing their expectations for the task force, delegates pointed to the importance of this work for Arctic communities and beyond given the potential for "on the ground results". They also highlighted the need for an ambitious outcome. Many underlined that the Arctic Council is the right venue for this work, and that the task force should strive to work fast given the urgency of its mandate. There was broad agreement that duplication of work should be avoided and that the work of the previous task force on Short Lived Climate Forcers (SLCFs) provided a solid technical and scientific foundation for further deliberations regarding an arrangement/ agreement or other deliverable under this Task Force. The initial discussion also highlighted the importance of engaging Arctic Council observers and other stakeholders (international bodies, civil society, and private sector). Many pointed to the important fact that the work on reducing black carbon and methane emissions for climate purposes is complementary to the international work to reduce CO2 emissions.

Co-chairs' discussion document

The co-chairs presented a discussion document describing the various parts of the mandate and invited delegates to an interactive discussion on each part. There was a general view that all are striving for a political agreement/ arrangement as the end product of the task

force, which will have considered all the elements of the mandate. The outcome will need to deliver concrete actions for communication by Ministers to the public and the Arctic inhabitants. Although all elements of the mandate were deliberated, the discussions on the development of improved emission inventories, development of mitigation strategies/national action plans/best practices and the consideration of various objectives/benchmarks/targets for the Arctic, nations or sectors were the key areas of discussion with a wide ranging of views expressed by delegates.

Engaging observers and external stakeholders

All delegates agreed to the importance of broad engagement, transparency and openness in the work of the Task Force. There was general agreement that experts from relevant Arctic Council working groups, and other international organizations and fora (i.e., Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP), International Maritime Organization (IMO), and Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC)) could be engaged as they could provide expertise to the Task Force. It was also agreed that Arctic Council Observers (both states and organizations) as well as other stakeholders should have the opportunity to be engaged as the Task Force moves forward. The issue of observer engagement will be raised with Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) at their meeting in October. Delegates will continue the discussion on engagement both intersessionally and at the next meeting. For the next meeting, relevant Arctic Council working groups, such as ACAP, AMAP, and PAME will be invited to provide their expertise.

Next Steps

The next meeting of the Task Force is tentatively scheduled for December 12-13, 2013 in Sweden. A number of issues were also identified for separate discussion/ consideration at a later meeting, including: Assessment/peer review of submissions by Arctic States to the Council; Targets and benchmarks for emissions reductions; further information on LRTAP (work on guidelines for the development of black carbon inventories), IMO (the shipping sector); and the relationship between the Arctic Council and the CCAC.

At the conclusion of the meeting, delegates supported the Swedish and Canadian co-chairs' offer to undertake intersessional work, including the preparation of a draft framework arrangement for the next meeting, preparation of a report to the upcoming SAOs meeting, and outreach to a number of Arctic Council Working Groups. Co-chairs will also follow-up with the Permanent Participants and States that were not present at the meeting to offer them an opportunity for input.

Additionally, delegates were invited to make submissions on the elements of the draft framework arrangement, examples of best practices and work in international fora, benchmarks/targets and engagement of stakeholders in the Task Force process, for consideration by the co-chairs as they prepare draft documents for the subsequent meeting.