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Chairs' summary report from second Black Carbon and
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Summary meeting report



Chair's Summary: Meeting of the Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane Helsinki, Finland | June 8-9, 2016

Introduction

The Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane (EGBCM) held its second meeting in Helsinki, Finland on June 8-9, 2016. Karen Florini (United States) chaired the meeting. Participants included seven Arctic States (Canada, Finland, Iceland, Kingdom of Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the United States); one Permanent Participant organization (the Arctic Athabaskan Council); four Observer States (Germany, Italy, Japan, and Poland); the European Union; and two Arctic Council working groups (AMAP and ACAP).

The Chair opened the meeting by highlighting relevant provisions of the Arctic Council's Framework for Enhanced Action on Black Carbon and Methane and the Group's Terms of Reference, including the need for ambitious action that can slow the pace of warming in the Arctic. She also put these provisions into the context of the Paris Agreement and its goal of keeping warming well below 2 degrees and pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5 degrees. Several delegations stressed that many are looking to the EGBCM to serve as a model for action by the Arctic Council.

Development of Sector-specific Recommendations

The intersessional work delivered a series of recommendations for action for each priority sector - mobile sources, heating stoves, solid waste, oil and gas methane leakage and flaring – and provided an overview of key policies/practices and lessons learned from implementation. Experts convened to further refine and prioritize the recommendations, aiming to develop recommendations that are ambitious, specific, and actionable.

The inter-sessional work will focus on developing a detailed set of recommendations for these sectors by early fall; these will be included in the draft Summary of Progress and Recommendations that the Expert Group is tasked to prepare under the Framework.

The Expert Group previously decided to prioritize its detailed recommendations to the above-listed sectors as major emissions sources that appear to be feasible to tackle in the near-term. However, the Group had also noted that several additional sectors will likely warrant attention by future Expert Groups, namely open burning and forest fires, enteric fermentation, and shipping because of their current and/or potential significance as emission sources, and it had been proposed to briefly highlight these sources in "sidebar" boxes in its Report. Upon further discussion during the June meeting, the Group concluded that shipping warrants inclusion in the Report in light of significant increases in Arctic black carbon emissions from shipping projected for the near to medium term. The Expert Group similarly concluded that enteric fermentation warrants inclusion in its Report by calling for additional research on solutions, given that enteric fermentation is the largest anthropogenic source of methane emissions world wide, and that methane is a well-mixed gas that affects the Arctic regardless of where it is emitted. While the Group acknowledged the significance of open burning, it concluded that it was not likely to be able to develop actionable recommendations during the current cycle of Expert Group work, and thus confirmed that this topic will be the subject of a sidebar box.

Emissions inventories and projections, and formulation of a black carbon goal

The first meeting of the Experts (January 2016) had revealed inconsistencies and data gaps in black carbon inventories and projections, hampering efforts to understand the emission profile of the region.

Over the inter-sessional period, the United States and Finland sought to harmonize the different emission-source categories used in various countries' national black carbon inventories, in order to create a pan-Arctic inventory. Additionally, with the agreement of relevant Arctic States, IIASA-GAINS modeling was used to fill in data gaps for those countries that currently do not have *projections* for their black carbon emissions. The exercise highlighted important data gaps in both inventories and projections, leading at least one country to announce their intention to develop their own projections by the end of 2016.

There was general agreement that national inventories and projections should be the basis of pan-Arctic inventories and emissions projections, whenever available, relying on IIASA modeling to fill in data gaps until inventories and projections can be improved.

The inventories and projections will be used to help identify options for an ambitious collective, aspirational, quantitative black carbon goal, which the Framework provides that Ministers will adopt in 2017. The Expert Group tentatively agreed, subject to consultations with their governments, on an approach under which each country would come forward with additional tons of black carbon reductions it can achieve beyond its existing 2025 projection; these reductions would then be aggregated into a regional goal. The Group stressed the importance of transparency in target-setting to drive ambition and the need to go beyond business as usual. Inspired by the provisions of the Paris Agreement, the Expert Group also agreed to recommend to Ministers a process for periodically revisiting the goal to ratchet up ambition.

Role of Observer States

The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) has estimated that thirty percent of black carbon's warming impact in the Arctic results from black carbon emitted by Arctic States. Though significant, that also means that seventy percent results from emissions by the rest of the world. Moreover, as noted above, methane is well-mixed in the atmosphere so methane releases anywhere contribute to the Arctic's warming. With this in mind, the Expert Group emphasized the important role Observer States can play not only in supporting action by the Arctic States, but by informing the recommendations for action, sharing lessons learned, cooperating to enable other countries to reduce emissions, and importantly, taking domestic action to reduce emissions.

Proposed work plan through 2017 ministerial

The Chair presented a detailed work plan for delivering (through the Senior Arctic Officials) the *Summary of Progress and Recommendations* to ministers at the 2017 Arctic Council ministerial, and for developing and reaching consensus on options for a black carbon goal. Intersessional work will focus on further development of the recommendations, refining inventories and projections, and moving closer towards development of a black carbon goal. A preliminary draft report is envisaged at the end of September 2016 with a view to providing a brief update report at the October Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) meeting. The aim is to have a final report for submission to SAOs in January 2017.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the EGBCM is planned to take place late October 2016 in Washington D.C.