

Arctic Council Task Force for Action on Black Carbon and Methane

6th Meeting, Tromsø, November 17-18, 2014

Summary report-FINAL

Introduction

The Task Force for Action on Black Carbon and Methane (TFBCM) held its 6th and last meeting in Tromsø (Norway) on November 17-18, 2014. The meeting was chaired by France Jacovella (Canada) and Jon Kahn (Sweden). Representatives from all Arctic States attended the meeting. Three Permanent Participant (PPs) organizations (the Saami Council, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, and the Inuit Circumpolar Council) and two working groups (ACAP and AMAP) were present. Four observers were also in attendance: Japan, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom and the European Union.

The meeting was focused on the Framework Document and continued discussions of the remaining issues that had been identified at the last meeting in Iqaluit. The co-chairs opened negotiation of the Framework Document inviting delegations to express their views on its legal status. It was agreed that the Framework represents a political commitment and not a document that would have binding obligations under international law. All sections of the document were thoroughly reviewed and negotiated. At the end of the meeting all brackets were removed and an agreement on all parts of the document was reached by Task Force delegates. The final draft of the Framework Document is attached to this report.

The discussions focused on the common vision section and the annexes to the Framework Document, which include description of the two-year iterative implementation process, guidance for national submissions, and Terms of Reference for an Expert Group to support implementation of the Framework. The following presents a summary of these discussion items:

Common vision:

After the previous TFBCM meetings, two alternative options for the common vision – qualitative and quantitative – had been developed. At this meeting, it was agreed that setting of quantitative targets has to wait due to the absence of robust baseline information for black carbon and methane emissions (some of the states will be able to present their first black carbon inventories only in 2015). However, all delegations were unanimous in underlining that the Arctic Council should send a strong political signal in the form of an ambitious, politically aspirational collective vision, especially in the light of the efforts being undertaken under the UNFCCC to conclude a new climate change agreement by December 2015. An aspirational, qualitative version of the common vision was agreed upon for black carbon and methane, which included a reference of the need to adopt an ambitious, aspirational and quantitative collective goal on black carbon, and to consider additional goals, by the next Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in 2017.

Annex A - Two-Year Iterative Process to Enhance Implementation

To implement the arrangements following a Ministerial decision, the Framework proposes a 2-year iterative process, elaborated in Annex A to the Framework. The process includes a series of steps, which will involve national reporting, information exchange and the development of a synthesis report with policy recommendations for the Arctic Council Ministers. There were discussions about how to manage the first two-year cycle, during which the procedure will be tested. The Task Force has had extensive discussions about the necessity of creating a new mechanism within the Arctic Council, leading to a Task Force consensus decision to recommend establishing an Expert Group which will assess the collective progress towards the common vision and prepare a report containing a synthesis and policy recommendations to Arctic Council

Ministers. The Expert Group will be supported by the Arctic Council Secretariat and other relevant Arctic Council bodies as appropriate.

The Task Force reached consensus on all the steps, including the possibility of arranging a high level policy-makers forum which would promote an open dialogue among the Arctic Council members, Observers, and other stakeholders etc. Delegates agreed to make the language concerning this step flexible to leave it to the discretion of the Arctic Council Chair to decide when and how to convene this forum.

Annex B – Guidance for National Submissions and Guidance for Synthesis

A new version of Annex B, which contains guidelines for national reporting from the Arctic States on their black carbon and methane emissions, was presented. As tasked at the previous meeting, the intersessional working group had simplified the templates and integrated them into one document. Everyone agreed that the new template was clearer, gave the process more flexibility to evolve over time and was built on the understanding that the starting point for the whole process is the states' reporting to UNFCCC and the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP). To allow for some flexibility to those not party to the Gothenburg Protocol under CLRTAP, language adjustments were made to ensure that information can be received from as many participants as possible.

Observers' contribution:

Observers also had an opportunity to provide their views on the discussions and many commented on the common vision and the portion of the Framework related to observer actions. All observers were generally supportive of the Framework and the ambition of the Task Force. Observers in attendance indicated an interest in cooperation and contributing to the process, however, some also expressed a desire for more flexible language in the Framework when describing the expectations by Arctic States on the actions of observer states, such as “urging” versus “expecting”.

Next Steps:

A clean version of the Framework document, copy attached, was provided to Task Force members on November 21st. As there were no brackets in the document, Task Force members are asked to advise the co-chairs and Secretariat whether they have any comments that need to be addressed before they can seek the required approval from their organization. Task Force members should provide confirmation of agreement with the Framework document or any needed changes by November 28th. As a function of the feedback received, the Co-chairs will provide the draft final version that should form the basis for seeking approval.

Co-chairs will circulate for review the first draft of the Task Force input to the SAO report to Ministers by December 8th. Any comments on this input will be due by December 15th.

As each organization seeks approval for the draft final Framework document, Task Force members are asked to inform the co-chairs should any concern be raised.

By the end of January, the co-chairs will provide a status of any feedback received, as well as any further information that may be received regarding consideration of the Framework Document by Ministers.

List of Participants

Campbell	Michelle	CANADA
Cerqueira	Julie	UNITED STATES
Cerutti	Rita	CANADA
Davey	Marie	UNITED KINGDOM
DeAngelo	Benjamin	UNITED STATES
Egede	Parnuna	ICC
Forsgren	Anna	SWEDEN
Hamalainen	Johanna	ACS
Hannerz	Fredrik	SWEDEN
Hiroyuki	Inui	JAPAN
Iartceva	Kseniia	ACS
Inamov	Nuritdin	RUSSIA
Israelson	Ann-Sofi	ACAP
Jacovella	France	CANADA
Kahn	John	SWEDEN
Kattsov	Vladimir	RUSSIA
Kupiainen	Kaarle	FINLAND
Larsen	Carsten Moberg	KINGDOM OF DENMARK
Larsen	Jan Rene	AMAP
LeFranc	Maurice	UNITED STATES
Muehling	Brian	UNITED STATES

Olsen	Morten Skovgård	AMAP
Plumadore	Rebecca	CANADA
Ragnarsson	Tomas Orri	ICELAND
Rosenthal	Erika	AAC
Staffansson	Jannie	SC
Torensen	Havard	NORWAY
Turk	David	USA
Vaaja	Nina	ARTIC COUNCIL SECRETARIAT
Vestreng	Vigdis	NORWAY
Vignati	Elisabetta	EU
Yoon	Ho-Sung	SOUTH KOREA