

Arctic Council Task Force for Action on Black Carbon and Methane

2nd Meeting, Stockholm

December 11-13, 2013

Report

Introduction

The second meeting of the Task Force for Action on Black Carbon and Methane (TFBCM) was co-chaired by France Jacovella, Director General of Climate Change International, Environment Canada and Annika Markovic, Swedish Ambassador for Environment. The key items discussed at the meeting were: 1) presentations by the Arctic States' and Permanent Participants on intersessional work, actions their governments are taking domestically regarding black carbon (BC) and methane emissions reductions, and their views on key issues for the Task Force's work (e.g., targets, indicators, and inventories for black carbon); 2) presentations by other organizations and Arctic Council working groups on their work related to black carbon and methane; 3) discussion of the Co-chairs Draft Framework Document. The Task Force had a constructive and productive discussion on each of these agenda items.

All Arctic States with the exception of the Kingdom of Denmark, who submitted their comments to the meeting in writing, were present. Five out of six Permanent Participants (except for RAIPON) were also present. Two AC Working groups – AMAP and ACAP – attended the meeting. Arctic Council (AC) Observers were also present, including representatives from China, Germany, India, Japan, Nordic Council of Ministers, NEFCO, UNEP/CCAC Secretariat and European Union.

Presentation of intersessional work and opening remarks

Due to the ambitious timeline set out by the co-chairs and as agreed at the first meeting of the TFBCM in Whitehorse, September 2013, many of the delegations provided submissions during the intersessional period. Some of the submissions provided initial views on key issues being addressed by the TFBCM, such as targets/indicators, while others provided information on activities ongoing internationally and domestically related to SLCPs. All the submissions are available on the TFBCM section of the Arctic Council website (password protected-for TF member only).

In opening remarks, many summarized what they had included in their submissions, highlighted what they felt should be the focus of the TFBCM or provided information on their domestic activities. Many of the PPs highlighted community level examples of the impacts of SLCPs and climate change. Many noted that the Task Force's focus should be political not technical and that there was adequate existing science for action to be taken.

Presentations by Other Organizations and Arctic Council Working Groups

There were presentations by other organizations and Arctic Council Working Groups involved in SLCP activities.

A. Presentations by Other Organizations:

Karin Kindbom, Swedish Environmental Research Institute and project leader for a Nordic Council of Ministers project on BC inventories, presented on the Gothenburg Protocol (1999), which was amended in 2012 to include PM2.5 (includes black carbon), and noted the guidelines for reporting emissions inventories and projections were in the process of being adopted by the Executive Body of LRTAP at its meeting on December 9-13, 2013. In the interventions that followed the presentation, some participants highlighted the need to deliver complete inventories before the next Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in May 2015, specifically by February 2015 – the date agreed to by Arctic Environment Ministers at their meeting in February 2013. However, others noted that they would not have a formal and complete “inventory” by February 2015. As a result of this discussion, all states agreed to explore what they could deliver by February 2015 and report back at the next TF meeting. In addition to the discussion on the timing for the completion of black carbon inventories, some delegates also raised the opportunity for Arctic states to show leadership by being early in submitting Black Carbon inventories to LRTAP, which could serve as an example to other countries.

Helena Molin Valdes, representing both the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) secretariat presented on the work of the CCAC. Of note, several of the CCAC initiatives align well with work of the TFBCM, including those on household cooking and heating, oil and gas, and regional assessments. The CCAC will also be considering aspirational goals and targets for each of its initiatives, but admitted that this is a challenge. Some PPs intervened following the presentation seeking information on how organizations can become non-state members to the CCAC as well as seeking clarity on whether they would be able to secure funding from the CCAC. It was noted that the CCAC would welcome all Arctic States in the coalition; that most of the funding to the CCAC comes from development budgets, therefore actions are focused mainly in developing countries; and that for some initiatives, there could be some openness to Arctic-specific work streams.

A presentation was also made by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Edmond Hughes, on some of the relevant work related to shipping emissions. Key activities for the IMO work include: 1) a definition of black carbon for shipping; 2) work on measurement; and 3) possible control measures. The correspondence group tasked with this work is scheduled to report on its progress in 2014.

Over lunch, Dr. Svante Bodin presented the key findings of a new International Cryosphere Climate Initiative and World Bank report on the impact of Short-Lived Climate Pollutants

entitled, "On Thin Ice". The report looks at 14 measures that could reduce black carbon and methane emissions and in turn slow warming in important snow and ice-covered regions where climate change is having a disproportionate impact.

B. Presentations by Arctic Council Working Groups:

The Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP), represented by Ann-Sofi Israelson, presented on the working group's projects related to SLCPs. Several key projects were summarized in the presentation, such as work on diesel reduction in Russia, residential woodstoves, a black carbon case studies platform, and work on emission sources/ inventories in Russia. Interventions included references to a potential role for the Indigenous People's Contaminants Action Plan to transfer knowledge to indigenous communities; the role of the project support instrument in eventually funding SLCP projects in the Arctic; and ACAP's work on best practices.

The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) presentation, delivered by Lars-Otto Reiersen, focused mainly on the work of its two expert groups that are preparing scientific assessments on black carbon/ozone and methane by 2015, with a draft to be available in April 2014. It also highlighted the role of AMAP's previous work in leveraging the profile of SLCPs. Interventions were focused on issues related to whether coal was considered black carbon; the role of Task Force messages influencing AMAP's work (e.g. improving monitoring); and the need to integrate the scientific work with socio-economic work on SLCPs.

There was also agreement on the need for the TFBCM to continue to engage and coordinate with the Arctic Council working groups. Specifically, many noted the need to ensure that linkages are made between the Task Force's outcome and the relevant work taking place in AMAP and ACAP.

Discussion of the Co-Chairs' framework document

The co-chairs' Framework Document was prepared based on discussions at the first TFBCM meeting, submissions by Arctic states/ PPs and the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Task Force. The co-chairs' objective was to better understand areas of convergence and divergence in order to prepare a revised draft for the next meeting.

General:

Participants were mainly satisfied with the structure and format of the document. Some felt the breakdown between national and joint sections had overlaps. It was suggested that it may be more useful to structure the document according to the tasks in the ToR to avoid repetition. Other interventions focused on: the importance of focusing actions both domestically as well as on a more global scale; the links between black carbon and other contaminants; the need for an aspirational objective as well as guidance for reporting; and some discussion of potential indicators to assess progress.

Common Vision/ Objective:

Participants were comfortable with the general ideas included in the common vision and objective, but acknowledged that further work on language would be required. Some delegates suggested the need to consider more active common goals or targets. Others indicated that the common vision should be political and provide leadership and direction for the future. There was also discussion about the validity of including a preamble to better frame the purpose of the arrangement.

Discussion of the Co-Chairs' framework document

On actions there was support for using those highlighted by the previous Task Force for Short-Lived Climate Forcers. There was a further discussion on targets, with some supporting quantitative and aspirational targets and others having a greater comfort with the terms "objectives" or "indicators" instead of "targets". Many also noted that clarification would be useful on what was meant by benchmarks, targets and indicators.

On national actions and national action plans, many used the discussion to highlight their recent domestic activities, such as Norway's completion of a national action plan on SLCPs. Some countries indicated that national action plans should be a goal of all countries. Others indicated that not all countries have action plans so it would be appropriate to use "national actions" to also capture the relevant actions taking place domestically.

On collective progress reports, the discussion focused on issues such as who the reports would go to, and whether peer review would be required. Many agreed that the reports should demonstrate how Arctic states are collectively making progress towards the objectives or targets and most were supportive of discussing further a peer review process. There was also some discussion of the Arctic Council Secretariat role in the reporting process and whether other groups would be better placed to undertake this work, including a working group of the Arctic Council, an expert group reporting to the SAOs, or possibly the Chairmanship itself. Others indicated that the reports would need to be presented in a form that is easy to synthesize and that there would need to be a mechanism beyond 2015 to monitor progress. Others reiterated the idea of having indicators that could be used to assess joint progress and highlighted that reporting on progress was not purely an administrative task as there would be an assessment component.

There was broad support on the idea of progress reports, however, many indicated the need for a common understanding of what would be included in these reports and how they would be reviewed, synthesized, and used. It was also felt that comparisons among countries would be difficult given that we have different systems and sources of emissions, so it was felt that it would be better for the report to highlight the "Arctic story", including the circumpolar emissions of black carbon/methane and actions taken to reduce these emissions. There was also discussion on the fact that reporting also has an outreach and communications component

that should be considered. Some also felt that reporting should not just be for Arctic states, but that non-Arctic states could also be engaged in the process.

In the context of reporting there was a more detailed discussion on the concept of peer reviews. Although many were interested in this concept, there were several questions that needed clarification: 1) what is being reviewed? 2) who is doing the review? 3) what is the function of the review? 4) who is the audience? 5) is it formal or informal? and 6) how often are these reviews undertaken? Other review processes, including that of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and UNFCCC as well as peer reviews as a tool within development cooperation were highlighted as examples that could be useful for the Task Force.

On black carbon inventories, all delegations acknowledged that inventories were a key issue and noted the objective of preparing inventories that were consistent with the CLRTAP guidelines. There was some difference in perspective on the timing for completing inventories, with some Arctic states indicating that they would be ready to deliver inventories by February 2015 and others noting the challenges associated with preparing a robust inventory in these short timelines. Arctic States agreed to come to the third meeting prepared to say what, in their case, would be a feasible inventory for 2015.

On best practices, many noted the challenges with ensuring a common approach or definition of what is encompassed under best practices. There was discussion on the idea of creating a “platform” to bring together existing best practices, the consideration of ACAP’s work related to best practices, using reports to compile best practices, and reference to the work of the Previous Task Force on Short-Lived Climate Forcers. Linkages with the Circumpolar Business Forum were highlighted and there was agreement that there needed to be consideration of industry engagement in the Task Force’s work. On project-based activities and best practices, the work of ACAP was highlighted by several delegates. Some noted that there could be potential for further pilot projects under ACAP, which could focus on specific regions of the Arctic or on certain communities. The Indigenous Peoples Contaminants Action Program under ACAP was also mentioned as a useful example of partnership and community engagement.

On science and research needs, there was general support for the need for this type of work to continue. This could include a reference to improved air quality monitoring and it could look at new areas of emissions such as flaring. Many also noted that we are not starting from a blank slate on science and the point that there is not enough time to dig deep into science was also raised. The risk of policy being based on “old” science was raised and there was some discussion about whether or not there would be value in organizing a science-policy workshop on black carbon and methane, on the margins of a future Task Force meeting. AMAP may organize a work shop when their scientific assessments on black carbon/ozon and methane are finished in 2015.

On increasing awareness domestically, including at sub-national level, many highlighted the need for this to happen not just at a sub-national level, but also at the community level. The idea of preparing a report which could be used/tailored to communities was discussed, as was the possibility of producing a short film, in partnership with AMAP and ACAP.

On awareness raising, there was broad support for ensuring the message of the TFBCM was relayed effectively to communities. There was also some discussion about the idea of producing a video, possibly with the AMAP and ACAP, highlighting the work of the Arctic Council on SLCPs. The co-chairs highlighted that this area would require a more detailed discussion at future meetings.

On engagement in international forums, the table prepared intersessionally was highlighted and delegates were encouraged to provide further revisions/additions. Many noted the need to prioritize what forums would benefit the most from further cooperation with the Arctic Council or Arctic states. The CCAC was one forum highlighted by many delegates. The role of the World Health Organization (WHO) was also raised.

On Arctic Council observers, there was broad support for engaging observer states and organizations in the work of the TF given emissions of SLCPs in certain countries outside the Arctic, and given the expertise of the observer organizations. There was broad support for encouraging observer states to take on similar commitments as the Arctic states.

The co-chairs provided an opportunity for the observers in attendance to outline their interest in the TFBCM. Some noted that non-Arctic states were responsible for many of the emissions impacting the Arctic, and also stressed that addressing SLCPs could be an ideal opportunity for observers to show their “value-added”. Others highlighted their own national efforts/actions related to SLCPs and impact their countries were facing. Many noted their role in research/expertise in SLCPs, and interest in addressing climate change. Generally, all highlighted the value of cooperation and need for information sharing.

Next Steps

The TFBCM will need to deliver an arrangement by the next Arctic Council Ministerial in Canada in spring 2015. In order to make progress in the lead up to the third meeting of the TFBCM, intersessional work will take place in the following areas:

- Co-chairs: will revise the Framework Document.
- Peer review: AAC/Sweden/Canada/US will prepare a paper on existing processes.
- Community level engagement: US/AIA: will brainstorm ideas
- Reporting template: US/Canada /Norway/Sweden/Finland: will explore elements of a template.
- Targets, objectives: US/Sweden/Norway/Canada will explore standard definitions of targets, objectives, etc., including thoughts on indicators/metrics to measure progress.
- Engagement of business and industry AIA: will expand on ideas related to engagement of business and industry in the Task Force.

- Observer engagement US: will expand on ideas related to observer engagement.
- Black carbon inventories: All determine what their respective states will be able to deliver by February 2015 on black carbon inventories.

Options for the location and timing of the next meeting of the TFBCM are being explored, including the possibility of Canada hosting the meeting in late March or another country hosting the meeting in April or May. In order to ensure progress, the co-chairs intend to hold another meeting before Summer 2014.