Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development

Contact: Ella Haines: +1.202.338.1300, ehaines@igsd.org

Key Allies Join Second Front in Climate War:

Five initiatives launched targeting short-lived climate pollutants black carbon, methane, and HFCs

Stockholm, 24 April 2012. The second front in the war against climate change just got major reinforcements in the effort to reduce black carbon (soot), methane, and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), collectively known as short-lived climate pollutants because they remain in the air to warm the Earth for only a few days to a decade and a half. Reducing them can cut the rate of global warming by half or more for the next 30 to 40 years, providing critical protection for the Arctic, Himalayas, and other vulnerable regions, while saving millions of lives a year and reducing crop damage, providing a substantial boost for development.

The European Union, Norway, Japan, Nigeria, Colombia, and the World Bank announced today that they have joined the Coalition for Climate and Clean Air to Reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants, launched in February by three developing (Mexico, Ghana, and Bangladesh) and three developed countries (Sweden, US, and Canada), along with the United Nations Environment Programme. The Coalition concluded its inaugural Ministerial meeting today in Stockholm. Many other countries are poised to join shortly.

Initial funding for the Coalition has been provided by the US and Canada. Sweden and Norway announced today that they would contribute as well. The World Bank announced they have $12 billion in their portfolio that can contribute to the Coalition goals, and noted the need for urgent action to reduce the short-lived climate pollutants.

Five initiatives aimed at accelerating and scaling-up action against the short-lived pollutants were approved by the Ministers meeting in Stockholm yesterday and today. (They are listed in the appendix.)

Durwood Zaelke, President of the Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development, who attended the inaugural meeting in Stockholm, stated, "The Coalition may be the single most important development for climate protection in the past ten years. It focuses on fast-action climate mitigation that can be done today with existing technologies by willing partners. It has the potential not only to reduce a major part of climate pollution, but to build the momentum and confidence we need to successfully manage carbon dioxide from energy production, which is essential for keeping the Planet's long term temperature increase to an acceptable level."

Many scientists calculate that global temperature cannot increase more than 2°C above pre-Industrial levels without risking major and perhaps catastrophic climate impacts, including devastating sea-level rise and punishing storm surges, as well as droughts, floods, and other extreme weather events. Major cuts in carbon dioxide are essential to stay below 2°C in the longer term, along with cuts to the short-lived climate pollutants.

Zaelke said, "To win the climate war, we need to cut both the short-lived climate pollutants and long-lived carbon dioxide, the most damaging gas. Fortunately, we're gaining allies quickly in the second front of the fight against black carbon, methane, and HFCs. A victory on this front will build the confidence we need to win the war." The short-lived climate pollutants are responsible for 40 to 45% of all warming, with carbon dioxide, a substantial portion of which remains in the air for millennia, responsible for the other 55-60%.

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Appendix

[This is excerpted from UNEP's press release today on the Coalition meeting]

Assessment and Go-Ahead for Scaled-up Initiatives

The meeting assessed around a dozen initiatives proposed by developed and developing countries for fast and federated action on short lived climate pollutants including many happening already at the national level.

Delegates took forward five to be approved for rapid implementation by ministers on the final day. Those given the green light include:

- Fast action on diesel emissions including from heavy duty vehicles and engines

Studies show that reductions are possible by addressing emissions from the freight transportation supply chain, through city action plans, and adoption of a range of measures for reducing sulphur in fuels and vehicle emissions

- Upgrading old inefficient brick kilns which are a significant source of black carbon emissions

Mexico has for example [20,000] small and medium-sized brick kilns and the design of many of the [6,000] in Bangladesh hark back to the 1900s.

- Accelerating the reduction of methane emissions from landfills

World-wide the waste management sector contributes about 11% of global methane emissions, and the coalition will work with cities to reduce methane emissions from landfills by improving strategic municipal solid waste planning and providing technical assistance.

- Speeding up cuts in methane and other emissions from the oil and gas industry

Natural gas venting and leakage from the oil and gas industry accounts for over one fifth of global man-made emissions of methane: Flaring at oil installations generate both methane and black carbon emissions. An estimated one third of leaks and venting can be cut using existing technologies at low cost.

- Accelerating alternatives to HFCs

HFCs are being rapidly introduced as replacements to chemicals that can damage the ozone layer—the Earth's protective shield that filters out hazardous ultra violet light.

The Coalition aims to fast track more environmentally-friendly and cost effective alternatives and

technologies to avoid HFC growth.

- Additional initiatives – including a proposal by Ghana on agricultural/forest open burning and a proposal by Bangladesh on cookstoves – would be further developed over the coming weeks.

Trust Fund Established

To support the Coalition's efforts, a new Trust Fund managed by a UNEP-hosted secretariat was agreed today.

Initial financing pledges for the Coalition now amount to some $16.7 million with significantly more funds expected over the coming 12 months.

Science Advisory Panel

Sound science has underpinned the formation of the Coalition and will guide its work into the future. Ministers today asked three luminaries involved in short lived climate pollutant work to advise them on the formation of a dedicated world-class Science Advisory Panel to provide scientific advice to the Coalition.

The advice will be provided by Drew Shindell of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, Mario Molina, the distinguished Mexican chemist and 1995 Nobel Prize co-winner and Veerabhadran Ramanathan, chair of the UNEP Atmospheric Brown Cloud project based at the University of California San Diego,

Coalition Web Site Goes Live

The Coalition today also unveiled a dedicated web site to support dissemination of information about the initiative's role and partners http://www.unep.org/ccac/

Notes to Editors

Quotes from Other Newly Joining Partners

Colombia

Frank Pearl, the Colombian Minister of the Environment and Sustainable Development, said:" "Colombia has recognized for some time the urgency of acting on these short lived climate pollutants including the impacts of black carbon on public health and the accelerated melting of glaciers the high mountain areas of Latin America".

"Colombia is among several countries in our region to act on soot particles from *vehicles and other contaminating sources as well as emissions that are triggering tropospheric or ground level ozone—another short lived climate pollutants," he said.*

"In joining the Coalition we see not only potential national and global benefits but Colombia plans to act as a regional hub, reaching out to other countries in Latin America in order to generate regional opportunities for sustainable development," said Mr Pearl.

Nigeria

Mrs Hadiza Ibrahim Mailafia , Nigerian Minister of the Environment said: "Nigeria is delighted to be a new member of the Coalition. It is estimated that 95,000 women in my country die each year prematurely because of black carbon emissions from source such as inefficient cook stoves--

this is a conservative estimate. Meanwhile there are enormous opportunities for reducing methane emissions from sources such as the oil and gas industry and landfills that can benefit Nigeria and its people and the wider regional and global ambitions to combat climate change in a cost effective and economic way".

"We look to encourage more countries within Africa and beyond to join this inspiring initiative so that fast action can be federated everywhere in order to save lives, improve food security and tackle climate change which challenges the future of the poor and the vulnerable exponentially," she added.

Norway

Bård Vegar Solhjell, the Norwegian Minister of the Environment, said: "Norway is delighted to join the Coalition. It unites our country's interest in achieving national sustainability with international responsibilities in the areas of health, food security, climate and development".

"There are many international initiatives addressing these short term pollutants, and Norway is participating in several of them. In this Coalition the United Nations Environment Program participates, both as partner and as Secretariat for the Coalition. This is a very wise decision, which provides credibility and leverage and increases the value of the Coalition´s work", he added.

"Finally it echoes to Norway's interest in the Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication—a key issue for the upcoming Rio+20 Summit in June—in which well-targeted policy and financial interventions can catalyze benefits across multiple fronts," said Mr Solhjell.

World Bank

"From multi-billion dollar investments in clean energy each year to climate smart solutions for agriculture and cities, the Bank already targets short-term environmental pollutants in developing countries through our lending, data and evidence based knowledge sharing and technical assistance. But, we can achieve even more by working as a coalition," said Rachel Kyte, World Bank Vice President for Sustainable Development.

"This is the most important decade for action on climate change", Kyte said. "But with a global treaty that will speed the curbing of carbon dioxide many years off, the climate and clean air coalition puts a practical new deal on the table - one that helps slow global warming while reducing the soot and smog that is damaging food crops and health worldwide, undermining growth and development."

Aims of the Coalition

- To catalyze the speed and the scale of action on short lived climate pollutants
- Enhance existing and develop new national actions to address mitigation gaps
- Encourage existing and new regional actions
- Reinforce and track existing efforts to reduce these pollutants, promoting opportunities for greater international coordination and developing and improving inventories
- Identify barriers to action and seeking to surmount them

- Promote best practices or available technologies and showcase successful efforts to address short lived climate forcers
- Improve understanding of and review scientific progress on short lived climate pollutants, their impacts and benefits of mitigation and dissemination of knowledge; and
- Mobilize targeted support for those developing countries that require resources to develop their capacity and to implement actions consistent with national strategies to support sustainable development

The Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Term Climate Pollutants was launched in Washington DC on 17 February 2012.

http://www.unep.org/dewa/Portals/67/pdf/HFC_report.pdf

http://www.unep.org/dewa/Portals/67/pdf/Black_Carbon.pdf

http://www.sciencemag.org/content/335/6065/183

For More Information Please Contact Nick Nuttall, Acting Director UNEP Division of Communications and Public Information/UNEP Spokesperson, on Tel: +254 733 632755, E-mail: nick.nuttall@unep.org