

Air Pollution and Climate Change

Where to address particles in international environmental regimes?

*Presentation by
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Starting point

- The scientific evidence showing co-benefits is overwhelming : *Stringent global climate policy will lead to considerable improvements in local air quality and reduced effects of air pollution.* [Or, the other way around, if local air pollution strategies are developed with climate change in mind, this will reduce climate change mitigation costs.]

Air pollution in UNFCCC

- In the UNFCCC process, air pollution aspects play a minor role. It is sometimes mentioned as an element that reduces costs for reducing GHG emissions, but hardly ever in quantitative terms.
- One example that might change that: In the ongoing negotiations on a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) there is a proposal to give preferential treatment (reduced costs, expedited process, ..) to CDM-projects with demonstrated co-benefits.

Proposed (not agreed) CDM changes

- Project activities that demonstrate one or more specified co-benefits shall be promoted through:
 - Exemption from payment of registration fee
 - Exemption from the share of proceeds to cover the administrative expenses of CDM and/or assist with costs of adaptation
 - Expedited timelines for the registration of project activities
 - Exemption from additionality criteria
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Co-benefits (proposed, not agreed)

- Energy efficiency
- Technology transfer
- Environmental services such as ***air pollution reductions***, improvement in water quality, proper treatment and reduction of waste, conservation of biodiversity and management of hydrological resources (emphasis added)
- Poverty alleviation
- Social benefits
- Economic growth
- Strengthening human and institutional capacity

Possible reasons for the “absence” of air pollution issues in UNFCCC

- So far it has not been possible to fully take science as basis for climate change negotiations in the same way as for instance in LRTAP (critical loads/levels approach). May be that is to some extent an effect of the clear divide between science (IPCC) and policy (UNFCCC)? Another reason may be the division of the world’s countries in two distinct groups: Annex I (developed countries) and non-Annex I (developing countries)
- Climate change negotiations are strongly politicized with many “old” North – South issues on the table, including “historical responsibility”.
- Policies and strategies to reduce emissions are developed at the national level – no globally binding policies and measures

Possible reasons for the “absence” of air pollution issues in UNFCCC (2)

- The “basket approach” is an important basis in climate change. So far the scientific basis for including air pollutants like particles/black carbon in the basket is not well developed. Clear guidance/recommendation from IPCC would probably have to come first.
- Efforts to include “new gases” based on IPCC AR4 (e.g. NF₃) has not been successful so far in the negotiations for the second commitment period. Reluctance among some major players to take focus away from CO₂.
- Will increased focus on the linkages between indoor pollution – local air pollution – regional air pollution – climate change widen the gap between developed and developing countries?

Particles in original AWGLCA negotiating text (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.1)

- 144. [[A four-year programme of work on] [Parties should take advantage of] opportunities for rapid, near-term climate mitigation [shall be established as a precautionary measure] to complement ongoing measures to mitigate climate change over the medium and long-term, with the goal of achieving significant near-term results through, for example, reducing emissions of substances that are short-lived in the atmosphere such as black carbon (soot), promoting the phase-down of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and biosequestration.]
- *(Presently in paragraph 60 of non-paper no. 30 without any changes.)*

Arctic Council and short-lived forcers

- Arctic Council's decision on short lived forcers (or pollutants) at the Sixth Ministerial meeting in Tromsø 29th April 2009:
 - **Note** the role that shorter-lived climate forcers such as black carbon, methane and tropospheric ozone precursors may play in Arctic climate change, and **recognize** that reductions of emissions have the potential to slow the rate of Arctic snow, sea ice and sheet ice melting in the near-term,
 - **Urge** implementation of early actions where possible on methane and other short-lived climate forcers,
 - **Decide** to establish a task force on short-lived climate forcers to identify existing and new measures to reduce emissions of these forcers and recommend further immediate actions that can be taken and to report on progress at the next Ministerial meeting.

Possible ways forward

- Continue and strengthen international cooperative research and monitoring (TFHP, Arctic Council Task Force, ...) Could WMO and/or UNEP play a role in strengthening international cooperation and raise awareness?
- Strengthen IPCC's focus on the issue? Requires publications!
- International instrument addressing climate change and air pollution control:
 - Include particles in the revised Gothenburg Protocol
 - A new protocol under CLRTAP open to everyone
 - Separate protocol under UNFCCC
 - New instrument under UNEP
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Ways forward – with priorities

1. Strengthened research and monitoring, and information activities
2. Use the revision of the Gothenburg Protocol – this provides a “fast track” and will cover a significant part of the northern hemisphere
3. Use the experience from a revised Gothenburg Protocol to decide on further steps, taking into account developments under the UNFCCC