

ICCI Annual Report 2013

Background and Summary:

The “Cryosphere Action Plan,” co-published with the World Bank as the “*On Thin Ice*” report, comprised the greatest ICCI focus throughout 2013, involving over 100 scientists, policy makers and reviewers working in all major cryosphere regions. This work culminated at the annual climate negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Warsaw, COP-19, with a “Cryosphere Day” on November 17. The Day brought together a cross-section of cryosphere scientists and policy makers, all live-streamed for a global audience on the ICCI website.

At the same time, 2013 saw the greatest expansion to date of ICCI engagement in regions additional to the Arctic: the Himalayas, Andes and Antarctica. ICCI participated in the Antarctic Treaty Consultative meetings, has formally joined the NGO group there and successfully led an effort to engage Antarctic Treaty governments in the first-ever work on short-lived climate forcers on that continent. It co-organized the first-ever meeting on black carbon in the Andes, resulting in a new organization, PISAC (Pollution In the South American Cryosphere) that engages scientists from all the Andean nations, as well as Brazil. In the Himalayas, ICCI has deepened its engagement with China, India and Nepal through both the Cryosphere Action Plan, and other efforts. It joined a pan-Himalayan initiative to form a “Himalayan Council” and has been asked by the office of the Icelandic President (leading the initiative) to provide continued policy support in 2014.

ICCI also expanded its grass roots engagement with on-the-ground pilot projects, working with farmers in three oblasts in Russia to decrease black carbon from open burning, and gaining Climate and Clean Air Coalition support for a new project to do the same in the Himalayas and Andes. ICCI worked with governments, producers and consumers under the Nordic Council to decrease emissions from woodstoves, in work that ultimately could impact standards throughout Europe. Finally, ICCI’s careful multi-year effort to create a methane financing facility culminated in its adoption by the G-8, World Bank and Climate and Clean Air Coalition, with plans for a USD 100 million fund to begin supporting new methane projects in 2014; and the creation by Norway late in 2013 of its own \$100 million fund to support existing Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects, including methane abatement.

The intensive work with cryosphere scientists, especially around Cryosphere Day and *On Thin Ice*, resulted in these scientists throwing a new challenge to ICCI for the next two years: no less than influencing the climate negotiations leading to the intended 2015 agreement, to fully incorporate this “cryosphere imperative.” The scientists, many of them IPCC authors, have offered their time and professional reputations if ICCI will lead this new strategic effort, and we are in the midst of designing an effective strategy to answer this call for action.

Specific Flora Grant Achievements in 2013

Action Plan for the Cryosphere (“On Thin Ice” Report with the World Bank): The bulk of Flora funding (\$53,000) went to this global effort aimed at defining the challenge presented by cryosphere climate change, and how actions on short-lived pollutants (black carbon and methane) can help. The World Bank began to provide additional support to Flora’s in early 2013, and then (once they saw the first results) in July requested to actually co-release it with ICCI, as an official Bank report. This effort was spearheaded by Flora funding already in 2012, and we cannot emphasize enough the importance of Flora’s support in first allowing us to begin the modeling, and then providing ICCI with the ability to maintain policy independence and integrity in the face of the huge, helpful but sometimes biased (and occasionally it must be said, overbearing) Bank bureaucracy. Flora funding leveraged \$99,000 of direct support, plus in-kind costs for printing and public relations surrounding the release that were covered by the Bank.

The Report gained extensive media attention (attached) and is now considered the “gold standard” for both short-lived pollutant impacts, and the “State of the Cryosphere” in 2013, with multiple purposes:

- In its first section, the Report details the impacts of climate change in the major cryosphere regions since the 2007-09 International Polar Year: changes that have been growing, along with scientists’ understanding of their global implications and risks. It included specific chapters on sea level rise, loss of permafrost and loss of the “albedo” (cooling) effect that occurs when snow and ice disappear.
- The Report then summarizes the new Cryosphere Action Plan modeling: outlining how short-lived climate pollutant reductions could slow rapid warming, decreasing the risks. It pointed towards the most effective actions that could be taken to benefit each region in terms of climate, health and crop impacts; for example, Arctic countries should focus on decreasing wood burning and open agricultural burning; while around the Himalayas, cookstoves and diesel transport are of greater importance. The modeling even demonstrated how much Arctic sea ice and snow cover might be preserved. The World Bank has stated that this modeling will influence its future lending patterns in developing countries in these sectors.
- The Report process brought together a number of scientists and policy makers, many of whom had not worked together before, including at the culminating Day of the Cryosphere, a full-day seminar on the margins of COP-19 in Warsaw. Cryosphere Day featured the release of the printed Report, together with presentations by some of the leading cryosphere scientists of the world, all live-streamed (and currently archived on the ICCI website, www.iccinet.org, along with copies of the full Report and its Executive Summary). These new connections led to calls for ICCI to bring the risks, posed by rapid

cryosphere climate change to the human community and global environment; more to the fore of the climate negotiations. ICCI is working to answer this call.

Arctic: Flora funding supported continued ICCI work on a possible Arctic Council agreement to reduce black carbon. This resulted in the May 2013 adoption by Arctic foreign ministers (including John Kerry from the U.S.), meeting in Kiruna, Sweden, of a new negotiating mandate to conclude such an agreement; if possible, by the following Ministerial in 2015 in Canada. ICCI has provided background materials to the negotiating Task Force, and was invited (as the sole external organization) to present its recommendations at the latest Task Force meeting in Stockholm in December. We hope to continue working to advocate for the strongest possible Arctic agreement, which could serve as a model for other regions.

Andes-Patagonia: ICCI joined together with the University of Chile and Molina Center to convene Andean cryosphere scientists, air pollution experts and policymakers for the first time ever in this region, in October 2013 in Santiago. The group decided to form a new umbrella organization, PISAC (Pollution in the South American Cryosphere). Its first action is the drafting of a non-paper identifying gaps and potential early policy actions for decision makers in the region, planned for release in mid-2014. Members will then present these issues to their respective governments in the region.

Himalayas: India and China have long been sensitive to discussions on climate change in the Himalayan cryosphere originating from elsewhere, especially from the standpoint of short-lived pollutants such as black carbon. Although changes in the Himalayas threaten the water and other resources of up to 3 billion people, these countries in the past have termed such efforts an unwarranted incursion in domestic affairs. ICCI therefore worked carefully to engage these and other Himalayan governments in the *On Thin Ice* results. ICCI actively consulted leading policy makers in the region early in the Report process, with multiple visits to China, India and Nepal. We took every opportunity to meet with national representatives at other Himalaya-focused meetings, and brought the designated black carbon coordinator of the BASIC nations (China, India, South Africa and Brazil) to the Bonn climate meetings to speak at ICCI's side event there and more importantly, discuss our work.

This active consultation process bore fruit: for the first time, an international report on short-lived forcers was met by acceptance rather than opposition from these key nations. ICCI is continuing this dialogue in 2014. China has agreed to a Swedish-sponsored meeting in January; and the BASIC expert from India is himself now organizing an all-India conference on short-lived pollutants in early February, with ICCI participating in both events.

ICCI also joined efforts spearheaded by the President of Iceland to create a "Himalayan Council" modeled on the Arctic Council, meeting with two dozen representatives from the Himalayas hosted by the President in Reykjavik in October. ICCI has been asked

especially to bring its Central Asian contacts into this work, and to participate as an advisor in the ongoing process, with a next meeting in Bhutan in April 2014.

Antarctica: ICCI presented the initial results of the On Thin Ice/Cryosphere Action Plan modeling to governments and scientists at a lunchtime presentation to all delegates at the meeting of the Antarctic Treaty in May 2013 in Brussels, Belgium. This was the first time short-lived climate pollutants have been raised in any Antarctic forum, a timely effort given renewed concern over the instability of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet (WAIS) in a changing climate, and its potential (almost unstoppable, once begun) contribution of 6 meters to global sea level rise. ICCI gained the outspoken support of the Norwegian, Dutch and Swedish delegations, successfully advocating for inclusion of short-lived pollutants in the Treaty's next two-year workplan. The Antarctic NGO umbrella group ASOC has asked ICCI to again lead the NGO side event at the next ATCM meetings in Brazil in 2014.

Looking Ahead: the "Cryosphere Imperative"

In Warsaw, the scientists and policy makers participating in the *On Thin Ice* Report and Cryosphere Day called on ICCI to bring these issues – the combination of the risk posed by rapid changes in the cryosphere, and what can be done about it by reducing both traditional greenhouse gases and short-lived pollutants – into sharper focus for the negotiations meant to lead to a new climate agreement in 2015. Their goal is to raise the ambition of the 2015 agreement to the level of action needed given the clear physical and global risks posed by climate change in the cryosphere: risks the scientists believe negotiators and their governments still do not adequately comprehend.

The scientists involved – most of them IPCC authors, including the Lead Author for Cryosphere Impacts – have pledged to volunteer their time to such an ICCI effort, and put their professional reputations on the line to clearly outline the consequences of inaction. ICCI is working on a strategy to answer this call, including engaging the support of at least one major government in each cryosphere region, with a series of events leading to the next COP in the Andean nation of Peru late this year; and the final push for an agreement in Paris in December 2015.