

INTERNATIONAL CRYOSPHERE CLIMATE INITIATIVE

ICCI 2012 ANNUAL REPORT

SUMMARY:

2012 was a terrible year for the cryosphere, with continued melting and temperature rises at some of their highest levels ever. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Arctic. With the truly terrible Arctic sea ice and Greenland melt loss of this past summer, it simply felt like one of those times to “just do it” and assume things will fall into place.

ICCI in 2012 continued to focus on those issues with greatest import for the preservation of the cryosphere, and especially where no other organizations are working. The latter includes work on agricultural burning, especially in Russia; and on woodstoves close to the Arctic as well as cookstoves in the Himalayas and Andes. We have continued our work to expand the Arctic efforts into these two regions as well as Antarctica, especially in concert with UNEP and the new Climate and Clean Air Coalition. ICCI also has continued quietly working to ensure the founding of a prototype methane financing facility, which is now likely to have its administrative seat in the Nordic countries.

Most exciting, ICCI has initiated work on a “Cryosphere Action Plan” aimed at outlining concrete steps that can be taken on CO₂ in concert with the short-lived forcers such as black carbon. This report would be released late in 2013. The work will be led by ICCI with participation by all the cryosphere regions as well as the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

2012 ACHIEVEMENTS:

- **Effective expansion of UNEP’s near-term climate work to the regional level, with an ICCI focus on cryosphere regions.**

ICCI has worked closely with UNEP on this work, which is aimed at guiding policy makers as to the most effective measures (such as addressing cookstoves or diesel engine emissions), throughout the year. We held a side event at the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development meetings on June 18, 2012. (This was the anniversary conference of the groundbreaking environmental conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, that also saw the adoption of the Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992.) The side event was moderated by Swedish Environment Minister Lena Ek, and included the Nepalese Deputy Minister of Environment, a representative of the Canadian Inuit

peoples, and our Himalayan partner, ICIMOD. ICCI was also quite active at the Stockholm+40 meetings in April (to commemorate the first global environmental conference held in Stockholm in 1972, and which established UNEP).

More recently and excitingly, ICCI has taken the lead on cryosphere-oriented work by establishing a new project aiming to build on the UNEP report from 2011, with the goal of a “Cryosphere Action Plan” (CAP) aimed at saving as much of the cryosphere as possible in the face of rapid climate change. The Plan will lay out this groundbreaking work by combining measures aimed at CO₂ with those on short-lived pollutants such as black carbon and methane. We will do this by reprising the 2010 UNEP/WMO Black Carbon and Ozone Assessment in an independent effort to focus on cryosphere regions, with some of the better data and modeling now available.

The “Action Plan” will involve modelers from both the U.S. and Europe (the same groups from NASA-GISS and JRC who did the UNEP work), and policy makers from all the major cryosphere regions. UNEP, the Arctic Council, ICIMOD, the World Bank and several governments are some of the groups who have already agreed to participate in the drafting the Plan, led by ICCI. ICCI began supporting the first modeling runs by NASA in October, and towards the end of the year obtained some end-of-year World Bank funding to support the modelers in Europe and an initial evaluation and drafting meeting in late spring 2013. The final report is aimed for release at the next major round of climate negotiations in Warsaw in December 2013 (COP-19). Funding permitting, we hope to sponsor an entire “Day of the Cryosphere” seminar in Warsaw on Sunday, December 8, the traditional “rest day” in negotiations that often see such day-long events. This would be the first cryosphere-focused day ever held.

ICCI has high hopes that the Cryosphere Action Plan can move the whole cryosphere agenda forward on many levels, showing that it is possible, feasible and above all vitally necessary to slow temperature rise not just in the Arctic, but the Andes, Himalayas, Antarctica and even the East African Highlands.

- **Effective follow-up to the SLCF Initiative launch in February, in particular to keep the focus on SLCFs as complementary to action in the UNFCCC forum on CO₂, including ICCI’s becoming one of the initiative’s first NGO partners.**



The Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) to reduce short-lived climate pollutants, founded in Washington, DC in February by six governments, has taken off in 2012, and now includes over 20 governments and 18 non-governmental partners, including the World Bank, UNDP and many NGOs. Hosted by the UNEP offices in Paris, the CCAC now has several initiatives focused on

sources such as diesel, oil and gas, and brick kilns. ICCI is considered one of the key founding organizations, and we are deeply involved in several new CCAC efforts, especially those focused on emissions from cookstoves and woodstoves, and on financing. As well as being invited to the inaugural meeting in DC, ICCI participated actively in all the organizational meetings that took place during the year (April, July, October and December, in Doha). ICCI has focused on ensuring meaningful participation in the CCAC by civil society, which was at times in question as the organization took shape and some governments preferred not to include NGOs. We have actively reached out to the NGO community to engage other organizations, and several have also joined the CCAC.

At the Doha climate negotiations, ICCI stood for organization of a CCAC exhibit booth. It also hosted a large side event on the final evening with the environment ministers of Bangladesh and Great Britain and climate ambassadors from Nigeria, Sweden, Mexico and the European Commission. The CCAC also held its first full ministerial-level meeting at Doha. ICCI was chosen by our NGO colleagues as one of two organizations to actually sit at the table with the ministers. The meeting was cast as one of the few “positives” of the Doha talks (see for example the below link to a *Guardian* article).¹

Despite our deep engagement in building the CCAC, ICCI remains in some sense a “loyal opposition.” The CCAC has great potential to demonstrate concrete action by like-minded nations on measures that will show their greatest benefit in cryosphere regions like the Arctic. At the same time, the CCAC could, of course, take some of the pressure off the need for deep cuts in CO₂ that are every bit as vital. ICCI hopes therefore to continue its active engagement in the CCAC to ensure it keeps this dual effort in mind: that CO₂ must form the basis on any effort directed at climate change, while at the same time high altitude and polar regions need intensified efforts on the short-lived pollutants to slow the rapid rates of warming there, using no-regrets measures that meet health and sustainable development goals.

- **Ensuring adoption of the current agreed Gothenburg Protocol (GP) text in May.**

ICCI is pleased to report that the Protocol was adopted in May, with its language on black carbon intact. This represents the first and, for the time being, only international agreement that includes black carbon as one of its goals--a major international legal precedent.

ICCI was present at that successful meeting, but a few days later was back in the trenches also at a working group meeting that will begin to implement the new Protocol. As with many such agreements, the devil is in the details, and much of the actual implementation lies in annexes that are now being formulated. Black carbon emissions from agricultural burning in Russia and from North American

¹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/dec/06/doha-conference-black-carbon-methane>

and European woodstoves are especially important, and throughout the year we have participated in discussions and actually drafted a specific annex to address agricultural burning and gained its support from several key governments. To aid in this work, we have engaged a former Executive Secretary of the CLRTAP, who largely volunteers his time and asks only for expenses to be covered. We hope to keep shepherding this work through the process in 2013.

- **Beginning a new negotiation on a black carbon Arctic Council agreement that goes beyond the GP with more stringent requirements, aiming at conclusion of the AC in May 2013 at the Swedish Arctic Council ministerial in Kiruna.**

The work on the black carbon agreement has proved some of the most difficult and time-consuming by ICCI throughout the year. We have worked closely with the government of Sweden (the current Arctic Council chair) by drafting background papers and the basic outlines of an agreement. We also have engaged the active support of the indigenous Arctic Council groups.

This effort has been successful in gaining support for such an agreement from all Council governments-with the exception of Russia, which remains “unconvinced” and thus has blocked the initiation of negotiations. (The Arctic Council operates on a consensus basis.) The current plan is to raise the issue among the Arctic Council environment ministers at their meeting in February to try to gain a mandate for the ministerial meeting in Kiruna in May 2013 to begin negotiations then, aiming at the next ministerial meeting in Canada in 2015.

It is disheartening to see the extensive effort being laid down in the Arctic Council on preparing the way for (albeit sustainable) exploitation of resources as the sea ice and snow cover continue to disappear, without any effort to slow that warming through mitigation of SLCFs. As new observer nations join the Council, especially those directly affected by sea level rise coming in part from Arctic melting such as India and China, we hope a sense of greater urgency will be imparted. The kind of world that allows any real exploitation of Arctic resources would be a world hardly sustainable at the lower latitudes.

- **Effective woodstoves efforts in the Arctic and complementary efforts on cookstoves in the Himalayas, Andes and globally.**



ICCI’s woodstoves and cookstoves efforts have moved substantially through this year, as ICCI formally joined the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves and took on a Nordic Council project aimed at decreasing emissions of black carbon for wood burning stoves and boilers in Nordic countries. As part of this project, we began outreach to the Nordic stove producer community towards the end of the year, as new designs and marketing based

on these Arctic climate benefits also will need to come from the private sector. ICCI will also work with Nordic Swan on voluntary black carbon regulations, and look at new “burn right for the Arctic” consumer campaigns.

- **Initiation of an Antarctic Program.**

Initial contacts with scientists have indicated a fair number sampling for black carbon and other short-lived climate forcers, but working very much in isolation. ICCI will begin this program through contracting a new dedicated staff member to begin liaising with Antarctic researchers and organizations under the Antarctic Treaty system and producing a report on the potential impact of SLCFs and other near-term climate dynamics impacting Antarctica from South America, Australia and southern Africa. We hope to participate also for the first time in the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) in May 2013.

ICCI has contracted for this work with Dr. Harlan Cohen, an Antarctic policy expert who worked for many years with the State Department and who currently also works with IUCN on oceans issues. He is completing a study of black carbon research within the Arctic, and our plan is for him to present this work at the next meeting of the ATCM.