

INTERNATIONAL CRYOSPHERE CLIMATE INITIATIVE

Full Statement to The Climate and Clean Air Coalition High Level Assembly Warsaw, Poland, November 21, 2013

Honorable Ministers and Heads of Delegation-

Four days ago, the International Cryosphere Climate Initiative organized the first-ever Day of the Cryosphere to highlight the ***On Thin Ice*** report released by ICCI and the World Bank two weeks ago. Some called that day the other side of the tragedy in the Phillipines: cause and effect within our climate system. Others simply joked that cryosphere –which means regions of ice and snow – does not appear in spellcheck any more than it figures in these negotiations.

It should. The clear message from the IPCC scientists participating in Cryosphere Day is that the cryosphere is changing fast, it is changing today, it may already have passed some points of no return, and the global impacts may be severe and extremely long-term – essentially irreversible.

There is a reason why the CCAC symbol behind you is of cryosphere: SLCP mitigation is key to its survival. That is why ICCI is working so hard on black carbon sources close to cryosphere regions, like open burning and wood stoves, with the welcome support of many of the governments around this table but also many we hope soon will join us.

It is why we are so eager to see the launch of a financing facility that will support methane projects, especially those that also decrease black carbon, like biogas cookstoves. ICCI has worked hard on this effort for over three years now, and we are ready to keep working until the first projects finally receive support, we trust by early next year.

One final point: we in the CCAC should never talk about “buying time,” because that implies actions on SLCPs means we can wait to act on CO₂, as pointed out by the ***Nature*** article published just today.

But the cryosphere tells us there is no time to buy, or to waste – because for the cryosphere, we are quite definitely out of time.

We need urgent action on CO₂ AND on SLCPs by 2020, and hope ***On Thin Ice*** is a good start on showing us how this might be done. We hope it gives some hope not just to countries in polar and alpine regions, but those suffering already from impacts like sea level rise that come from the cryosphere -- the Maldives, Bangladesh, and so tragically the Phillipines. Thank you.