

NACAA Report #5 from COP-17  
December 9, 2011

Today is the fourth and final day of COP-17 for the NACAA Delegation (Larry Greene, Co-Chair Global Warming Committee, and Misti Duvall, Staff Associate). We've now gotten used to the time change, just in time to head home. We can't believe the week has gone by so quickly! We enjoyed the opportunity to share information about state and local climate change programs, meet so many interesting people and learn so many new things about climate change related activities around the world, and provide information and contacts on all we've learned.

Ministers and delegation leaders Thursday continued plenary addresses as part of the high level segment. While negotiations regarding technical aspects of operationalizing the Cancun Agreements appeared to make some progress, parties continue to be at odds over the development of a legally-binding agreement – either a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol or a new protocol – that would guide countries after the first commitment period under Kyoto expires next year. Reports indicate that, while the EU has expressed some flexibility regarding the deadline for negotiating a legally-binding agreement in exchange for signing up to a second Kyoto commitment period, Japan, Canada and Russia continue their opposition to extending Kyoto. Meanwhile large developing countries, including China, India and Brazil, continue to push for a second Kyoto commitment period. Legal options moving forward have reportedly been moved to high-level *Indaba* process hosted by the COP President. *Indaba* is a Zulu word referring to gathering together in discussions for a common purpose and has been used throughout the negotiations.

Progress was reported on negotiations over a draft text that includes a number of technical provisions for operationalizing the Cancun Agreements, including REDD+, setting up the Green Climate Fund and technology transfer. Parties are reportedly close to an agreement on the shape of the Green Climate Fund, though questions of funding are still being discussed, and the framework for the REDD+ mechanism. Negotiations are again expected to go into the night.

Thursday morning we attended an event hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) entitled “Protecting Climate and Improving Air Quality: Options for Reducing Short-lived Climate Forcers.” During the event UNEP reviewed its recent report on short-lived climate forcers, “Near Term Climate Protection and Clean Air Benefits: Actions for Controlling Short-lived Climate Forcers.” Following the presentation, remarks were made by Ministers from Sweden, Mexico, Canada and Ghana.

Dr. Joseph Alcamo, UNEP Chief Scientist, presented findings from the UNEP study. UNEP believes that air pollution in the world today is a “major overlooked problem hindering sustainable development.” According to the World Health Organization, approximately 2 million people worldwide die prematurely each year because of exposure to indoor air pollution. Another 1.2 million annually die prematurely due to outside air pollution. Reducing short-lived climate forcers (such as black carbon, methane, tropospheric ozone and some hydrofluorocarbons) would both reduce health risk and slow global warming in the near term. Other benefits include reducing regional impacts of climate change and local air pollution.

UNEP estimates that, by following the recommendations set forth in the report, countries could, by 2030, reduce global black carbon emissions by 70% and global methane emissions by 40%. These reductions in black carbon would save an estimated 2.5 million lives worldwide. Examples of black carbon reduction measures include removing higher emitting vehicles from the road, upgrading brick kilns and stopping open burning of agricultural waste. Measures for reducing methane include methods for methane recovery. Fifty percent of the recommended emission reduction measures for black carbon and methane could be implemented at little or no cost.

Undertaking the measures recommended in the report would reduce global warming by an estimated 0.4°C in the near term. Reductions in short-lived climate forcers are not a substitute for reducing CO<sub>2</sub>, but should be implemented in concert with long term CO<sub>2</sub> reduction measures. There are opportunities for action at the national, regional and global levels.

The UNEP report is available at <http://www.unep.org/publications/ebooks/SLCF/>.

Early Thursday afternoon we attended an event at the US Center, entitled “Taking a Sensible Approach to Addressing Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the United States.” The panel included presentations from Nat Keohane, National Economic Council; Robyn Camp, The Climate Registry (TCR); Mary Nichols, Chairman, California Air Resources Board; and Derik Broekhoff, Climate Action Reserve. Nat Keohane began by reviewing recent US federal actions on climate change, including the Light-Duty Vehicle GHG Rule, Medium and Heavy Duty Vehicle GHG Rule, GHG Mandatory Reporting Rule, GHG permitting actions, GHG NSPS for power plants and refineries and the Renewable Fuel Standard. He also reviewed the Sustainable Federal Fleets initiative, which requires that, by 2015, all vehicles purchased by the federal government must use renewable fuels.

Robyn Camp provided an overview of state actions on climate change. Currently, 43 states have GHG inventories, 36 states have Climate Action Plans and 20 states have established GHG targets. Regional collaboration is occurring through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), Western Climate Initiative (WCI) and Midwest Governors GHG Reduction Accord. TCR works with states, provinces and tribes to standardize measuring, reporting and verification of GHG emissions.

Mary Nichols then reviewed California’s efforts to address climate change. California is now in the process of implementing AB 32 – California’s comprehensive climate change law – which was passed in 2006 and requires California to reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. California’s efforts include specific regulations on auto emissions, including a low carbon fuel standard; mandatory audits for large industrial facilities; and the creation of a cap and trade program. Finally, Derik Broekhoff discussed offset provisions in active and pending cap and trade programs in the US and Canada. All programs either incorporate or plan to incorporate carbon offsets based on standardized approaches, including baselines and additionality. He reviewed RGGI, which allows offsets of up to 3.3% of compliance obligation; California, which allows offsets of up to 8% of compliance obligation; and WCI, which allows offsets of up to 49% of total reductions. Climate Action Reserve has developed a number of protocols, available at <http://www.climateactionreserve.org/how/protocols/>.

Later Thursday afternoon we participated in a panel discussion, co-hosted by NACAA and TCR, entitled “Understanding the Real Impact of GHG Mitigation Activities. Misti co-moderated the panel with David Rosenheim of TCR. Larry presented examples of state and local policies and programs to address climate change mitigation and adaptation, noting that 36 states have developed Climate Change Action Plans, designed to provide strategies for reducing GHG emissions, while 15 states have developed – or are in the process of developing – Climate Change Adaptation Plans. Larry then briefly discussed examples such as the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative; Boulder, Colorado’s EnergySmart Program; PlaNYC; and a tool developed for local air districts in California through the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association to assist localities in addressing climate change. Further examples and links to information were included in a handout distributed to participants [Note: this handout will be posted on Air Web next week].

The panel also included presentations from Mary Nichols, Chairman, California Air Resources Board, and Hon. Terry Lake, Minister of Environment, British Columbia. Chairman Nichols discussed how regulating carbon has changed aspects of work in California, as integrating carbon regulation necessitates thinking about things like lifecycle accounting and efficiency. An example is California’s low carbon fuel standard, a regulation reducing total carbon content of fuel sold in California by 10% by 2020.

Minister Lake then reviewed efforts in British Columbia to address climate change. Information on British Columbia’s efforts is contained in our reports from earlier this week, but we’ll include a brief refresher. British Columbia launched its Climate Action Plan in 2008; 178 of the 189 local governments in the province have also signed up to the plan, which sets provincial emission reduction targets of 33% below 2007 levels by 2020 and 80% below 2007 levels by 2050. Pillars of the plan include establishing a carbon neutral government, instituting a tax on carbon, and preparing long term adaptation strategies. The Province is also working closely with the Western Climate Initiative, in partnership with California and Quebec, on instituting a cap and trade program. The reporting period for cap and trade is slated to begin in 2012, with full implementation in 2013. British Columbia has also adopted vehicle GHG emissions standards, modeled on those established by California.

Next, Linda Adams, President, Regions20, discussed their work with subnational governments around the world, including from both developed and developing countries. R20 has 27 member subnational governments, as well as 36 partners including academics, businesses, NGOs and UN organizations. Projects in development include a cool roofs toolkit, which will soon be posted on their website, and a green finance network to facilitate investments, which will launch in March.

Finally Glenn Schmidt, with BMW, provided an industry perspective, including examples from BMW. The company is working primarily in three areas to reduce GHG emissions: 1) improving conventional technology; 2) electromobility; and 3) evaluating emissions along the value chain – for example, ensuring that renewable energy is used in production. BMW also recently started a car sharing program in Munich and Berlin.

At the end of the day we attended the US Delegation briefing for environmental NGOs, where we were briefed on the status of the negotiations by Jonathan Pershing, Deputy Special Envoy for Climate Change. Key issues are still in the midst of negotiations, which are occurring in three or four different settings. This includes debating questions around what happens next with regard to a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol and related legal issues, including whether or not there will be a legally-binding agreement. Another question is what will happen with measuring, reporting and verification, as well as transparency, which the US sees as key issues. Other discussions are focused on issues such as technology, adaptation and finance. It is likely that there will be decisions on a number of these issues, but the form of those decisions is unclear at this point.

That's all from us. Tomorrow we head back to the US, but stay tuned for NACAA reports on the conclusion of the COP-17 negotiations. See you stateside!