

**17th World Clean Air Congress, Busan, Korea**  
**“Clean Air for Cities: Perspectives and Solutions”**  
**29 August – 2 September 2016**

1. OVERVIEW OF THE MEETING

With air pollution now a global environmental and health crisis, experts from around the world gathered in Busan South Korea to address the multiple challenges being faced around the globe and ways forward for countries and cities.

Clean Air Asia’s 9th Better Air Quality Conference (BAQ) and the 17th International Union of Air Pollution Prevention and Environmental Protection Associations’ World Clean Air Congress (WCAC) brought together nearly 1000 representatives of governments, environmental ministries, the private sector, NGOs, research institutions, academia and civil society, including many of the world’s most prominent figures in their fields.

Opening the meeting Bjarne Pedersen, CAA Executive Director, and Richard Mills, IUAPPA Director- General said the aim of the conference was to help identify “effective responses to the air pollution challenges that have come starkly into view in the past two years with the emergence of evidence that air pollution exposure is responsible for 7 million premature deaths worldwide and is now the leading environmental health risk. Air pollutants such as ozone and particles are major contributors to climate change; and more than 80 percent of people living in urban areas that monitor air pollution have air quality levels that exceed World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines”.

“Our intention is that this special joint meeting should help chart a pathway to cleaner air in Asia and around the World ”

Keynote sessions were focused on the new science on climate and air pollution, air pollution and health in cities, and finding innovative and effective solutions for clean air.

The “Climate, Air Pollution and Sustainability - New Challenges, New Science, New Opportunities” session examined the linking of the climate and air pollution agendas with sustainability in light of the Paris Agreement and the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and what this means for science, policy and practice. In the “Air Pollution, Health and the Urban Future”, WHO contributors, including Director-General Dr Margaret Chan, expound on how the goal of “clean air for cities” is a way to achieve health goals and a sustainable urban future. The session also featured country and city representatives discussing how governments are tackling air pollution in China, Latin America and Europe. The Health Effects Institute presented the findings of the first comprehensive assessment at national and provincial levels of the burdens of disease attributable to the major sources of particulate-matter air pollution in China.

In a significant session of climate Professor Drew Schindell highlighted recent emission trends that indicated that the targets of the Paris Accord were already at risk, and that an urgent and sustained effort to reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants

was now required, both to bring climate mitigation back on track and to alleviate the global crisis in air pollution.

The final keynote session, “The Global Challenge of Air Pollution - Finding Solutions”, heard from the International Energy Agency on the role of energy in air pollution and ways in which the energy sector can contribute to a solution, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition on why national and urban strategies to reduce short-lived climate pollutants are critical, and the US Environmental Protection Agency on the role of environmental policy, collaboration and public access to information in finding solutions to air pollution and climate change.

Breakout sessions focused on in-depth discussion of scientific findings, and new policies and technologies for cleaner air. These included sessions on air quality management (monitoring and reporting, emission inventories and source apportionment), sustainable transportation (real-world emissions, clean fuels and vehicles, fuel economy, green freight and logistics, and walkability), and managing air quality in cities (megacities, mountainous cities and port cities).

## 2. PRESS RELEASE

### *ASIA'S HEALTH CRISIS FROM AIR POLLUTION SET TO GET WORSE BEFORE IT GETS BETTER*

Under current policies premature deaths forecast to rise to 1.3 million in China alone by 2030.

The World Clean Air Congress and Asian Better Air Quality Conference, jointly meeting this week in Busan, Korea, opened with a stark warning from World Health Organisation Director-General, Dr Margaret Chan, that world-wide there is a long way to go in tackling the health effects of air pollution and the toll of premature mortality.

Her warning will be quickly reinforced by new scientific assessments to be reported to the meeting today (Tuesday) and tomorrow. These conclude that the toll of premature deaths from air pollution (already estimated at 7 million per annum globally) is set to rise through the coming decades before falling.

A report to the meeting by Robert O’Keefe, Vice-President of the Health Effects Institute (HEI), on HEI’s newest study in China, indicates that if no further action is taken, and as the Chinese population continues to grow and age, the health impact of air pollution – in terms of deaths from cardiovascular and lung diseases - will increase, potentially to 1.3 million deaths annually by 2030. However, the study notes, with currently planned and potential additional actions to control air pollution from PM2.5, a key pollutant, levels in China are projected to decline substantially by 2030. O’Keefe noted that, in spite of the adverse trend in premature mortality, “if China continues to build on the positive actions it has already taken, 275,000 premature deaths could be avoided.”

Commenting on these findings on the basis of a separate study, Jos Lelieveld, Director of the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry, emphasised that work by his team

indicated that these conclusions held not just for China but for much of Asia. He continued,

‘Our work suggests that the largest potential for deteriorating air quality is in India, while Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Vietnam are also high on the list of countries where premature mortality attributable to air pollution is growing rapidly’.

The two assessments both suggested that there was major potential from cost-effective measures that could be taken now to improve air quality. However, both also urged that, while a continuing focus on traffic emissions was essential, other pollution sources, notably residential energy use, industrial emissions, and agriculture, should receive more emphasis.

Commenting on the findings, Dr Carlos Dora from the World Health Organisation added:

‘China and other countries in Asia are now beginning to take vigorous action on air pollution, but these results highlight the scale and urgency of the challenge they face. Recent work by WHO indicates that almost as many people today rely upon polluting wood, biomass and coal fuels for cooking as they did a decade ago.

A global response to the challenge is now being articulated, with the first World Health Assembly resolution on air pollution and health in 2015; a road map for its implementation in 2016; and air pollution featuring in four of the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN last year. This opens important opportunities which now need to be carried through to national and local action.’

### 3. CLOSING DECLARATION FROM THE CONGRESS

#### *THE IMPACT OF AIR POLLUTION ON HEALTH AND CLIMATE: IMMEDIATE ACTION NOW REQUIRED*

#### JOINT STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF AIR POLLUTION PREVENTION ASSOCIATIONS AND CLEAN AIR ASIA

‘Clean Air for Cities’, the International Conference convened by IUAPPA and CAA comes to a close today. Its aim has been to help fashion an effective response to the challenge presented by recent evidence on the impact of air pollution on health and on global warming, dramatically highlighted by the deadly smogs that have repeatedly enveloped major Asian cities in recent years.

1,000 delegates, 500 significant research papers, review reports, and numerous new initiatives at the conference can provide the stimulus for a significant step forward in atmospheric science and policy, and their conclusions and implications will be assessed and followed up in the coming months, for instance at Habitat III in Quito which will adopt the New Urban Agenda and localize the Sustainable Development Goals. Meanwhile, amid the wealth of evidence, the central conclusions on health and climate impacts - summarised here - need to be urgently recognised and acted upon.

## Reducing the toll of premature and unnecessary deaths

The figure of 7 million advanced deaths from air pollution annually reported by the WHO has been further substantiated. Other work, discussed at the Conference, pointed to a broadly similar conclusion. It also emphasised that it is not just China that faces a formidable problem but other Asian countries also. The largest potential for deteriorating air quality is now in India, while Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Vietnam are also high on the list of countries where premature mortality attributable to air pollution is growing rapidly.

Further, for at least another generation, through to 2030, the current level of premature mortality will continue to rise as a result of the age structure of the population. Mitigation policies, such as those now being developed by China and some other countries, can reduce the rising toll but, until 2030, not below current levels.

In the course of the Conference, the World Health Organisation, the International Energy Agency, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition and others joined in urging early and more radical action by countries in Asia and across the world. Evidence from them and others made clear that the large potential social and economic benefits from reduction of emissions of the pollutants that cause health damage, and the variety of sectors in which cost-effective and technically feasible mitigation measures can be found, make arguments against pursuing transformative action unsustainable. However, to be successful, such action must be based on a holistic approach and ensure community engagement.

### Keeping open the possibility of achieving climate mitigation targets

Latest scientific evidence presented at the conference also indicates that without immediate action on short-lived climate pollutants – predominantly the same pollutants that damage human health - it will be impossible to hold global average temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, as proposed in the Paris Accord. In the face of increasing frequency of extreme weather events, including wild fires, floods, heat waves and droughts, and the fact that the first 7 months of 2016 place it on course to be the hottest year on record, we are already getting perilously close to the 1.5 degree aspiration in the Accord.

There is already wide recognition of the potential benefits of reducing emissions of short-lived climate pollutants including methane, black carbon, tropospheric ozone and hydrofluorocarbons, for implementing the Paris Accord and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the 2030 target date ( including the goals on health, agriculture, energy, poverty, gender equality, sustainable cities, clean water and sanitation).

What this meeting has made clear is that urgent action to secure the early benefits of SLCP mitigation is now essential rather than optional for achieving longer-term international climate targets.

Global action on black carbon and methane could help slow expected warming in 2050 by up to 0.5 degree Celsius, while the phasing down of HFCs could avoid a further 0.1 degree Celsius by 2050 and up to 0.5 degree Celsius by 2100. By mitigating the emission of short-lived climate pollutants, about 2.4 million annual premature deaths and 52 million tonnes of annual crop loss can be avoided by 2030.

The International Union and Clean Air Asia now therefore call for the adoption of a two-pronged approach which emphasises reducing the near-term rate of warming as well as keeping the long-term peak below dangerous levels in order to achieve climate targets and the sustainable development goals at the local, regional and global levels. Such an approach would appropriately reflect the multiple benefits associated with quick action to mitigate both short-lived climate pollutants and long-lived greenhouse gases.

It's important that countries now commit to scale-up action urgently. We must not wait until new strategies and formal targets are negotiated before we take action. International negotiations take time. The time to act is now. Countries and cities need to recognise the scale of the contribution required from SLCPs to deliver climate mitigation goals, and how they can most effectively be delivered. This can be secured by active engagement with the initiatives of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition and other cooperative programmes, and the engagement of civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders, which Clean Air Asia and the International Union will continue to assist in any way they can.

Busan, Korea  
2 September 2016