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Increasing Integration in Global Climate Governance – The Climate and Clean Air Coalition

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Abstract

This Working Paper attempts to show that the establishment of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (the CCAC or Coalition) constitutes a promising development in efforts not only to respond to the challenges of improving air quality and stabilizing the climate, but also to increase integration in the global climate governance architecture. After a brief general introduction in part 1, part 2 describes the formation of the CCAC, its membership, actions, governance structure, and future perspective. This part stresses that the CCAC's mandate to maximize the climate, health, and agricultural benefits of swift action on reducing emissions from Short-Lived Climate-Forcing Pollutants (SLCPs) is entirely complementary to the efforts of Coalition Partners to reduce emissions of CO₂ and other long-lived greenhouse gases, in particular, State Partners' actions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Part 3 of the Working Paper explores some implications of the establishment of the CCAC for the global climate governance regime, analysing, for example, the Coalition's impact on the complexity and effectiveness of the institutional architecture and on the interaction of state and non-state actors on the international plane. The brief conclusion in the part 4 of the Working Paper suggests that the launch of the CCAC may indeed be considered an important step towards overcoming institutional complexity and increasing integration in the global climate governance regime. It claims that the Coalition is likely to assume a key role in supplementing the centre of the regime – the UNFCCC process – in the near future.

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1. Introduction

The “warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observation of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice and rising global average sea level” concludes the fourth report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).¹ And the so-called Outcome Document of the 2012 United Nations (UN) Conference on Sustainable Development adds, “climate change is a cross-cutting and persistent crisis and (...) the scale and gravity of the negative impacts of climate change affect all countries.” It underlines “that combating climate change requires urgent and ambitious action, in accordance with the principles and provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change” (UNFCCC).² Moreover, as Sands and Millar rightly point out, “climate change is a global problem that necessarily requires a global response.”³ Classified as a “super wicked”⁴ problem, which defies resolution because of the enormous interdependencies, uncertainties, circularities, and conflicting stakeholders implicated in any effort to develop a solution,⁵ climate change presents both opportunities and challenges.

Amongst others, climate change poses some very specific and particularly demanding governance and policy challenges.

Because of its ‘wickedness’, however, it is almost impossible to reconcile all the relevant aspects at stake under one single umbrella.⁶ Thus, any realistic approach to climate governance needs to begin with the phenomenon of fragmentation, including links to the broader school of legal pluralism and to another phenomenon, globalization.⁷ In line with and based upon van Asselt and Zelli’s assumption that the global climate governance architecture is already fragmented,⁸ this working paper draws on the example of the emerging regime under the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (CCAC or Coalition). It points out that the establishment of a new regime or issue area within the fragmented global climate governance architecture does not necessarily lead to even greater fragmentation. Instead, it actually furthers the integration of what seems like a myriad of different efforts to address perhaps the most pressing global challenge of our times.

¹ IPCC, *Climate Change 2007: Synthesis report*, last accessed on 24 April 2014, <http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/publications_ipcc_fourth_assessment_report_synthesis_report.htm>, 30.

² Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, *Outcome of the conference, The future we want*, UN Doc. A/CONF.216/L.1 of 19 June 2012, para. 25.

³ Sands, P.J. & Millar I 2011, ‘Climate, International Protection’, in *The Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law* (edited by Wolfrum, R.), last accessed on 24 April 2014, <http://www.mpepil.com>.

⁴ First used by Levin, K. et al. (2009), ‘Playing it Forward: Path Dependency, Progressive Incrementalism, and the ‘Super Wicked’ Problem of Global Climate Change’, in: IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science, vol. 6, last accessed on 24 April 2014, <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1088/1755-1307/6/50/502002>>.

⁵ Lazarus, R. (2009), ‘Super Wicked Problems and Climate Change: Restraining the Present to Liberate the Future’, in: *Cornell Law Review*, vol. 94, 1153–1234.

⁶ Cf. van Asselt, H, Gupta, J & Biermann, F 2005, ‘Advancing the Climate Agenda: Exploiting Material and Institutional Linkages to Develop a Menu of Policy Options’, *Review of European Community & International Environmental Law*, vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 25–264.

⁷ See Boyd, W. (2010), ‘Climate Change, Fragmentation, and the Challenges of Global Environmental Law: Elements of a Post-Copenhagen Assemblage’, in: *University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Law*, vol. 32, no. 2, 457–550.

⁸ Zelli, F. & van Asselt, H. (2013), ‘The Institutional Fragmentation of Global Environmental Governance: Causes, Consequences, and Responses’, in: *Global Environmental Politics*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1–13.

The working paper is structured as follows: first, it briefly reviews the formation of the CCAC, addressing its functioning and work to date. This section includes some background information on Short-Lived Climate-forcing Pollutants (SLCPs) and stresses that the CCAC's mission is entirely complementary to efforts to reduce CO₂, thereby not contesting the prevalence of the global climate regime. The paper goes on to describe the Coalition's structure as a voluntary, multi-stakeholder forum within the United Nations (UN). Given that the CCAC's Secretariat is hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), this section assesses both the initiative's relationship to the UN system and its role and position within the global climate regime. Moreover, it consid-

ers the Coalition's specific advantages and shortcomings as a multi-stakeholder forum in the framework of the UN with a clear focus on catalysing concrete action but not developing norms. Finally, the working paper assesses the implications of the launch of the Coalition with respect to fragmentation and integration in global climate governance. This last section examines consequences of the institutional complexity and effectiveness of the global climate governance architecture. Moreover, corollaries for different types of actors are assessed, as well as potential causes of integration and ways in which the Coalition contributes to achieving more integration in global climate governance.

2. The Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC)

2.1 Overview

At the beginning of 2012 the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (CCAC or Coalition) was established as an international effort to maximize the climate, health and agricultural benefits of swift action on Short-Lived Climate-forcing Pollutants (SLCPs). SLCPs are atmospheric substances that have relatively short lifetimes in the atmosphere. They include tropospheric ozone (O₃) and particulate matter (PM), especially black carbon, as well as methane (CH₄) and some hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). Scientific studies show that air pollution and climate conditions are closely interlinked and pose a serious threat to human health as well as natural resource and climate stability. The

mitigation of SLCPs thus has the potential to quickly improve air quality and at the same time slow down the rate of near-term climate change.⁹

2.2 Establishment

On 16 February 2012, then U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton formally announced the formation of the CCAC in Washington, D.C. Apart from the United States, the founding Coalition Partners included Bangladesh, Canada, Ghana, Mexico, Sweden and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In April 2012 the Coalition held its first ministerial meeting in Stockholm on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the UN Conference on the Human Environment. At that meeting, Colombia, Japan, Ni-

⁹ See, for example, *UNEP and WMO 2011, Integrated Assessment of Black Carbon and Tropospheric Ozone (2011): UNEP, Near-term Climate Protection and Clean Air Benefits (2011)*.

geria, Norway, the European Commission and the World Bank joined. In addition to five other countries, delegates from the private sector attended the meeting as observers.¹⁰ Non-state entities that qualify for CCAC membership include intergovernmental organizations or initiatives, international organizations and their subsidiaries, as well as private sector entities and civil society organizations.¹¹ CCAC membership has grown to 40 State and 53 Non-State Partners,¹² with further countries, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations expressing an interest in joining.

2.3 Membership

To join the Coalition, a prospective partner sends a letter to the Executive Director of UNEP. A state applicant identifies its particular areas of interest with regard to SLCPs and any specific actions it has taken or plans to address near-term climate change. Non-state entities are also encouraged to include a statement of their willingness and capacity to contribute to the work of the Coalition and support its objectives and initiatives. If in a position to do so, the potential State or Non-State Partner is asked to indicate that it intends to make contributions of financial or other resources to support the Coalition's activities. All Coalition Partners have promised "to control and to reduce SLCPs, including in their own countries", while still "recognizing the central importance of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, including through national action and multilateral cooperation under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change."¹³

2.4 Actions

The Coalition is pursuing quick-start actions as part of an initial tranche of ten initiatives. Most of these focal areas are intended to reduce emissions in specific sectors (e.g. transport, brick production, municipal solid waste disposal, and oil and gas production). In addition, there are three cross-cutting initiatives encompassing all substances and sectors: Financing SLCP Mitigation; Promoting SLCP National Action Plans; and Regional Assessments for SLCPs.¹⁴

The Coalition is already engaged in efforts to reduce methane from landfills and black carbon from burning waste with an initial group of ten major cities, including Rio de Janeiro, Lagos, Stockholm, Accra and New York. Furthermore, work to develop national SLCP action plans has started in Ghana, Mexico, Colombia and Bangladesh.¹⁵

The CCAC Partners' commitment to the fast reduction of SLCPs is meant to be complementary to their efforts to reduce CO₂ and other long-lived greenhouse gas emissions – in particular, State Partners' actions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Thus, the still evolving regime under the CCAC does not contest the prevalence of the global climate regime centred on the UNFCCC. The Coalition attempts to work in tandem with immediate CO₂ reduction, as long-term climate protection will only be possible if severe and lasting cuts in carbon dioxide emissions are also made rapidly.

¹⁰ See UNEP, *New Climate and Clean Air Coalition Expands to 13 Members (24 April 2012)*, last accessed on 24 April 2014, <<http://www.unep.org/ccac/News/tabid/101655/Default.aspx>>.

¹¹ *Non-State Partners must provide a demonstration of their international character and a statement of their accreditation status to UN organizations or bodies, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, or their participation in the UN Global Compact. See CCAC, How to join*, last accessed on 24 April 2014, <<http://www.unep.org/ccac/Howtojoin/tabid/101656/Default.aspx>>.

¹² As of July 2014, see CCAC, *Executive Summary, Doc. WG/JUL2014/2*.

¹³ See generally CCAC, *Coalition Framework*, viewed 14 March 2014, last accessed on 24 April 2014, <<http://www.unep.org/ccac/About/tabid/101649/Default.aspx>> (detailing the structure and objectives of the Coalition).

¹⁴ See CCAC, *Initiatives*, last accessed on 16 April 2014, <<http://www.unep.org/ccac/Initiatives/tabid/130287/Default.aspx>> (detailing initiatives to promote near-term SLCP reduction and cross-cutting efforts to accelerate emissions reductions across all Short-Lived Climate-Forcing); see also CCAC, *Country Partners*, last accessed on 16 April 2014, <<http://www.unep.org/ccac/Partners/CountryPartners/tabid/130289/Default.aspx>> and CCAC, *Non-State Partners*, last accessed on 16 April 2014, <<http://www.unep.org/ccac/Partners/Non-StatePartners/tabid/130290/Default.aspx>>, (detailing types of Coalition Partners).

¹⁵ See CCAC, *Ministers from 25 Nations Commit to Scaling Up Voluntary Action to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants*, last accessed on 14 March 2014, <<http://www.unep.org/ccac/News/Ministersfrom25NationsCommittoScalingAction/tabid/105775/Default.aspx>>.

2.5 Governance structure

The CCAC is a “voluntary international framework” where “each Partner individually determines the nature of its participation”, and its constitutive document, the Coalition Framework, “does not create any legally binding obligations between or among its Partners.”¹⁶

The CCAC Assembly takes stock of progress and plans future efforts. It is a high-level meeting of the Coalition Partners including ministers of State Partners and heads of Non-State Partners. Assembly meetings are held at least once a year and are open to Partners and any other stakeholders approved by the Coalition. Stakeholders approved by consensus of the State Partners and regional economic integration organization (REIO) Partners of the Coalition may attend the meeting as observers. For instance, at the meeting of the Assembly in September 2013 in Oslo, Norway, two regional organizations that were not yet Coalition Partners were able to observe the meeting.¹⁷

The CCAC Working Group, which comprises representatives of all Partners, is in charge of overseeing cooperative actions. Its Co-Chairs, currently Sweden and Nigeria,¹⁸ must be states or REIOs. It is expected to meet at least twice a year.

A smaller Steering Committee provides oversight, support and recommendations to the Assembly and the CCAC Working Group. Only states and REIOs have voting privileges. Up until now, it comprises eight elected CCAC Partners: the two Co-Chairs of the Coalition Working Group, four other State or REIO Partners, and two non-voting representatives, one from an international organization and one from a non-governmental organization.

The Scientific Advisory Panel of the Coalition is responsible for providing advice on scientific matters related to SLCPs and near-term climate change as requested by the Coalition. The Panel currently consists of nine scientists who are selected on the basis of suggestions by CCAC Partners and subsequently nominated and approved by the CCAC Working Group.¹⁹

At present, the CCAC Secretariat comprises four full-time staff members for day-to-day functions. Their tasks include facilitating communication between Coalition Partners, preparing the meetings of CCAC bodies, and managing the Coalition Trust Fund.

This multi-stakeholder “partnership of governments, intergovernmental organizations, representatives of the private sector, the environmental community, and other members of civil society”²⁰ has significant direct ties to the UN inherent in its governance structure. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) hosts the CCAC Secretariat at its Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) in Paris, and UNEP, in accordance with UN rules and regulations, manages the CCAC Trust Fund. UNEP is a Non-State Partner and a non-voting representative of the Steering Committee, and UNEP’s Chief Scientist is an ex officio member of the Scientific Advisory Panel.

As regards the Coalition’s role and position within the global climate governance architecture, the CCAC is directly linked to UNEP and, at this point, plays a rather marginal role, at least with respect to other actors in this regime. However, it is noteworthy that the Coalition, with respect to SLCPs, has been recognized as a cooperative initiative under the UNFCCC regime²¹ – a fact that clearly underpins one of the ben-

¹⁶ See CCAC, *Coalition Framework*, *supra note 13*.

¹⁷ See, CCAC, HLA, *Chair Summary, Doc. HLA/SEPT2013/8 (3 September 2013)*.

¹⁸ See, for example, CCAC, *Steering Committee meeting, Paris, High Level Assembly (HLA) preparatory session of the Working Group, Oslo, Co-Chairs’ Summary, Doc. SC/FEB2014/4 (12 February 2014)*.

¹⁹ See, CCAC, *Teleconference, Report (30 May 2012)*; CCAC, *Working Group Meeting, Paris, Chair’s Summary, (23–24 July 2012)*; CCAC, *CCAC Marks One Year Anniversary, last accessed on 14 March 2014*, <<http://www.unep.org/ccac/News/CCACMarksOneYearAnniversary/tabid/105917/Default.aspx>>.

²⁰ CCAC, *Coalition Framework*, *supra note 13*.

efits deriving from the CCAC's direct affiliation to the UN system. Yet its dependency on the UN system as a whole and on UNEP in particular may impede the Coalition's development – assuming this is indeed the objective – towards a key player within the global climate regime. In this respect, the CCAC's clear focus on catalysing concrete action to reduce SLCPs as well as its lack of participation in the regime's central decision-making procedures under the UNFCCC constitute other disincentives.

2.6 Future perspective

Given that the Coalition is due to remain in existence until at least the beginning of 2017,²² if tackled properly, the CCAC's complementary approach to addressing climate change could fill the regulatory gap until 2020, when a new agreed outcome with legal force under the UNFCCC and applicable to all Parties may come into effect and start to be implemented. Until then, the Coalition's fast actions to mitigate SLCP emissions could help to slow down the rate of climate change and improve the chances of staying below the 2°C target in the near term.

3. Effects on the global climate governance architecture

“Transnational climate governance has blossomed in the last two decades”,²³ and with the launch of the CCAC yet another actor has appeared on the scene. However, even though the global climate governance architecture is already fragmented, the establishment of this new initiative for fast action to reduce SLCP emissions actually furthers greater integration in the global climate governance architecture.

According to the International Law Commission (ILC), the fragmentation phenomenon may most broadly be described as the emergence of specialized

and relatively autonomous spheres of social action and structure.²⁴ While the danger of conflicting and incompatible rules, principles, rule-systems, regimes, and institutional practices seems to be inherent in this phenomenon, on the positive side, it reflects the rapid expansion of international law and policy activities into various new fields as well as the diversification of their respective objects and techniques.²⁵

“Integration is used in many different ways in various contexts.”²⁶ Possibly the most well known use of this concept in the field of the environment is that con-

²¹ UNFCCC, *Compilation of information on mitigation benefits of actions, initiatives and options to enhance mitigation action: list of selected cooperative initiatives*, last accessed on 14 March 2014, <http://unfccc.int/meetings/bonn_jun_2013/items/7655.php>.

²² CCAC, *Coalition Framework*, supra note 13.

²³ Abbott, K.W. (2013), ‘Strengthening the Transnational Regime Complex for Climate Change’, *Transnational Environmental Law*, vol. 3, no. 1, 57–88.

²⁴ UN General Assembly, ILC, *Fragmentation of International Law: Difficulties Arising from the Diversification and Expansion of International Law*, UN Doc. A/CN.4/L.682 of 13 April 2006, paragraph 7.

²⁵ See *ibid.*, paragraph 14.

²⁶ Doelle, M. (2009), ‘Integration among Global Environmental Regimes: Lessons Learned from Climate Change Mitigation’, viewed 16 April 2014, <http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2173244>, pp. 63–85.

tained in the 1992 Rio Declaration, where it is stated: “In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it.”²⁷

Although this working paper does not address the nexus between environment and development, Rio Principle 4 seems appropriate to assess the integrating effects of the establishment of the CCAC. While it is hard to simply dismiss the impression that the presence of yet another actor in the global climate change regime compounds the fragmentation of the said regime, several features point to the integrative nature of the Coalition. Firstly, although the creation of the CCAC introduces a new area to the global climate governance architecture, namely a regime committed to the fast reduction of emissions from SLCPs, it neither claims autonomy from UNEP nor from the UNFCCC or general international law. Secondly, as the Coalition’s focus lies on catalysing concrete action rather than on developing new norms, rules, and regulations, concerns about the emergence of parallel or conflicting norms are without foundation. Finally, the setting up of the emerging regime centred on the CCAC does not involve new or other courts or tribunals interpreting the same body of law differently. Thus, in this respect potentially arising fragmentation may be ruled out, too.

At least from a scientific point of view, the emergence of the CCAC, as well as its role and position in the present global climate governance architecture, may be seen as a positive development leading to the further integration and completion of the global climate governance ‘picture’, as tackling global warming is not confined to long-lived greenhouse gases such as CO₂. In fact, according to a recent study,²⁸ black carbon, a

substance not included in the UNFCCC Kyoto Protocol and one of the Short-Lived Climate-forcing Pollutants covered under the regime of the CCAC, is the second most powerful climate pollutant after carbon dioxide. Hence, in seeking to address the full range of global challenges linked to climate change, those behind the current climate governance architecture might be well advised to ensure the full consideration and enhanced cooperation with this timely approach to mitigate emissions in the near term, thereby complementing current efforts to reduce CO₂.

Furthermore, with respect to the institutional complexity and effectiveness of the global climate governance architecture, it should be recognized that the still evolving regime under the CCAC with its non-treaty based structure cannot be categorized as an international organization with its own legal personality. Rather, it has the status of a new initiative within UNEP, which itself is not an international organization.²⁹ Thus, the launch of the Coalition neither directly increases the complexity of the institutional architecture, nor does it render the regime less effective. Moreover, one corollary with regard to the different types of actors within the global climate governance regime may be drawn from the fact that more than half of the CCAC’s Partners are non-state entities, indicating a shift away from state-centred international cooperation. Another explicit indicator in this respect is the fact that the Coalition refers to both its State and Non-State members as ‘Partners’, while, for example, the UNFCCC uses the term ‘observer organization’ for non-State entities admitted to its sessions. In the long run, developments like the establishment of the CCAC may even spur transformation regarding the requirement of legal capacity for actors on the international plane.³⁰

²⁷ *UN General Assembly, Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro 3–14 June 1992), Annex I, UN Doc. A/CONF.151/26 (Vol. I), Principle 4.*

²⁸ See Bond, T.C. et al. (2013), ‘Bounding the role of black carbon in the climate system: A scientific assessment’, manuscript accepted for publication in *Journal of Geophysical Research-Atmospheres* (15 January 2013), last accessed on 16 April 2014, <<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jgrd.50171/pdf>>.

²⁹ As a programme under the UN General Assembly, UNEP is not an international organization, i.e. an entity established by an instrument governed by international law, which is capable of generating through its organs an autonomous will distinct from the will of its members. See, for example, Schmalenbach, K. (2006), ‘International Organizations or Institutions, General Aspects’, in: Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law (edited by Wolfrum, R.), last accessed on 14 March 2014, <<http://www.mpepil.com>>.

³⁰ See Wagner, M. (2010), ‘Non-State Actors’, Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law (edited by Wolfrum, R.), last accessed on 14 March 2014, <<http://www.mpepil.com>>.

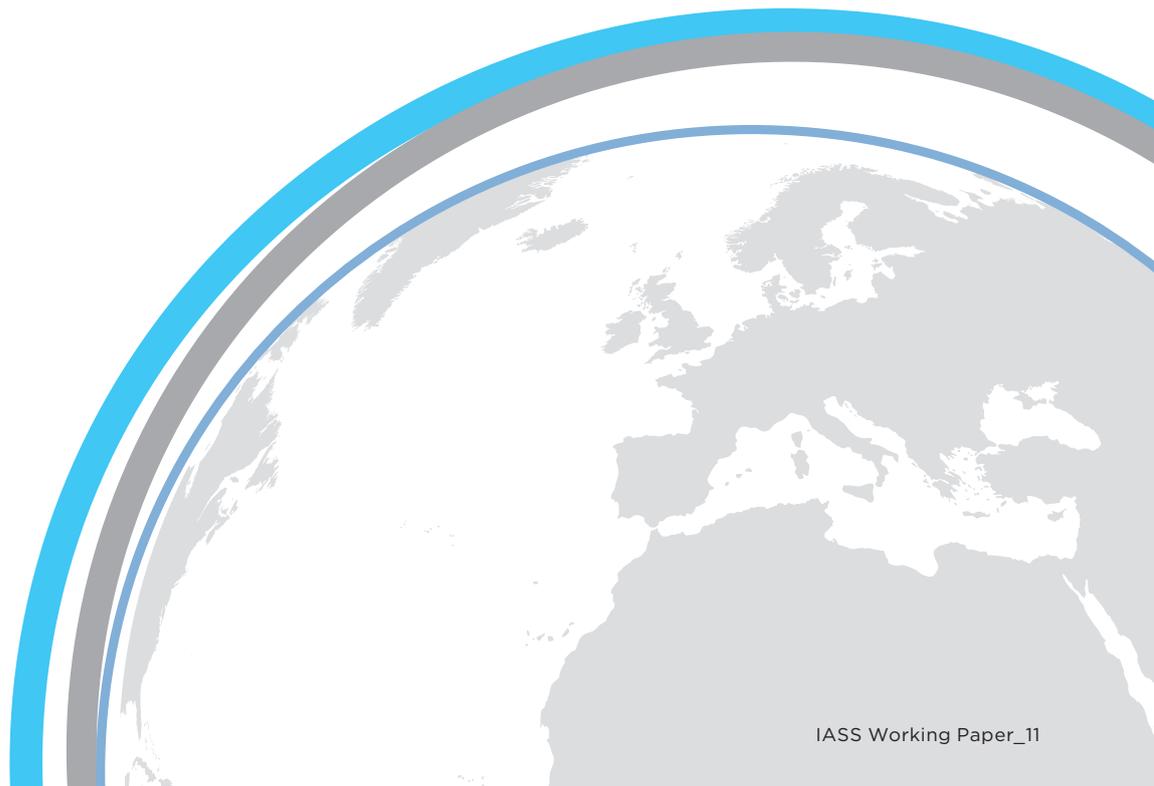


Participants of a joint side event on SLCPs in South Asia on the margins of the 19th Conference of the Parties (COP-19) to the UNFCCC in Warsaw, Poland (from left to right): Ali Shareef (Ministry of Environment and Energy, The Maldives), Prof. Mark Lawrence (Scientific Director, IASS), Dr. Maheswar Rupakheti (IASS), Dr. Birgit Lode (IASS), Marion Wichmann-Fiebig (Federal Environment Agency, Germany), Dr. Arnico Panday (ICIMOD), Sophie Bonnard (CCAC Secretariat).

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4. Conclusion

Given the ever more fragmented global climate governance architecture, the launch of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants is an important step towards overcoming institutional complexity and increasing integration. Due to its status as a voluntary, non-treaty-based initiative under UNEP and its focus on SLCPs and action as opposed to the creation of norms, the Coalition will not lead to even greater fragmentation of the global climate governance regime. Rather, it seems much more plausible that in the near future, the CCAC may assume a key role in supplementing the centre of the regime, namely the UNFCCC process that does not address all causes of climate change and is currently stalled due to political rifts. ■





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