

The **Asian Co-benefits Partnership (ACP)** was launched with the support of the Ministry of the Environment, Japan in 2010 to help mainstream climate and environmental co-benefits into decision-making processes in Asia. The ACP serves as an informal and interactive platform to improve information sharing and stakeholder coordination on co-benefits in Asia
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The bi-monthly Co-benefits Corner Newsletter brings you recent news and expert views on co-benefits.
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Updates

Events in Stockholm 23-25 April, 2012



Lars Nordberg

International Advisory Panel of the
Global Atmospheric Pollution Forum

Short-lived Climate Pollutants (SLCPs) have been gaining attention in international policy circles. Lars Nordberg provides an update of activities related to SLCPs at the "Stockholm+40 – Partnership Forum for Sustainable Development" held in Stockholm from 23 to 25 April 2012.

The "Stockholm+40 – Partnership Forum for Sustainable Development" was an international conference attended by high-level political decision-makers and dignitaries from around the world, including Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt of Sweden and Premier Wen Jiabao of China. H.M. the King of Sweden, Carl XVI Gustaf took part in the initial plenary session. The conference addressed three themes: sustainable innovations, sustainable production, and sustainable living, and was held in preparation for Rio +20 scheduled for June of this year.

Several side-events were arranged in connection with the conference, in particular a Seminar on Science and Actions to Control SLCP and a meeting with the recently launched Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC). Both these events confirmed the scientific justification for taking urgent action and the co-benefits of measures to combat climate change and air pollution in an integrated manner. The benefits of implementing measures, as specified in UNEP's reports on SLCPs and HFCs were highlighted, and the urgent need for national, regional and global action was emphasized.

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(↘) CCAC is a voluntary governmental body open for NGOs and other entities. The first meeting of the Working Group as well as the first High-level Ministerial Assembly took place from 23-25 April. The major outcomes are as follows:

1. Five focal areas were identified (reduction of BC from diesel vehicles; measures to reduce emissions from the oil and gas industry; improved brick kilns; action on HFCs; and solid waste management).
2. A science advisory panel was established with a view to synthesizing policy-relevant science.
3. A programme to promote awareness-raising and outreach for the general public and partners of the coalition was agreed upon.
4. UNEP, Paris will house the CCAC secretariat.

The urgency of action on SLCPs and related matters was endorsed by the high-level segment of the conference; it can therefore be concluded that the matter will figure prominently at Rio +20. The six core founders of the initiative (Sweden, USA, Canada, Mexico, Ghana and Bangladesh) were joined by Norway, Colombia, Nigeria, Japan and the European Commission and the World Bank also announced their intention to become partners. The necessary funding for the first year was committed by participating countries and bodies through a voluntary UNEP Trust Fund.

It was concluded by scientists and political leaders that the matter is of high priority, that the local benefits of measures must be stressed, that action should be included in national development plans, and that awareness must be raised without further delay. Complacency is not an option at this stage.

It is my belief that IGES/ACP, being an informal and interactive platform for the facilitation of dialogue in Asia on development, climate change, air quality, cleaner technology and better job opportunities, would be able to contribute significant input to the coalition, not least regarding integrated and coherent multi-level governance structures for the promotion of sustainable development.

Highlights

Climate Mechanisms and Co-benefits: Incentives Needed



Mutsuyoshi Nishimura

Former chief climate negotiator for Japan

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) makes several references to promoting sustainable development. In this interview, Ambassador Mutsuyoshi Nishimura reflects on why a polluter pays system and an increase in ambition are needed to translate those words into action.

Q. What do think are the biggest opportunities and challenges to promoting co-benefits in the UNFCCC?

A. We have debated co-benefits extensively. And we know their merits and difficulties. Yet one must ask how co-benefits are being realized? Up to now, co-benefits have been realized when several factors fortuitously come together. For instance, an alert policymaker, cooperative bureaucracy, and supportive fiscal arrangements can lead to co-benefits. In short, co-benefits are not having institutional traction; they are do-your-best game at best.

This is the biggest challenge for co-benefits. We can praise the concept, recognize best practices, and analyze potential cost-savings all we want. But we do not have the incentive structures needed to make co-benefits a routine consideration in decision-making processes. While I think awareness raising and capacity building activities will be important for co-benefits, I don't think they will be enough to bring about the wholesale changes required to help poorer countries escape poverty and mitigate climate change in tandem.

What is needed is to introduce the most potent institutional traction: letting polluters pay for the externalities of limited carbon space that would achieve climate target like 2°C.

In short, if we move to a world where the polluter pays, there is a solid and credible incentive: pricing of carbon. Providing this incentive is far more reliable than relying on a fortuitous combination of factors in achieving 2°C and realizing co-benefits.

Q. There is discussion in Japan about initiating a bilateral offsetting crediting mechanism (BOCM). In what ways, if any, could such a mechanism be designed to promote co-benefits?

A. If BOCM is recognized as an offset (despite its seemingly arbitrary nature) it will function similar to the current Kyoto-style national emission reduction target system. That is, it will be contingent on governments. The level of co-benefits for a recipient country will be limited because its main purpose is to help donors meet climate mitigation pledges. If your pledges are set low, you have less of an incentive to promote BOCMs and achieve co-benefits. The CDM has the same shortcomings.

Before we talk about designing an offset mechanism, we must recognize their limited potential to promote co-benefits. The degree and extent of co-benefits from an offset mechanism depends on your ambition level (reduction commitment). In short, co-benefits are at the mercy of arbitrary pledges from developed country governments. The question is not so much about designing an offset mechanism as it is about raising ambition. And ambition is currently in short supply. That is why I am not enthusiastic that an offset mechanism can promote co-benefits.



Publications

- **Low Carbon Transport in Asia: Strategies for Optimizing Co-benefits**
Edited by Eric Zusman, Ancha Srinivasan, and Shobhakar Dhakal (www.routledge.com)
- **Integrated Air Quality Management: Asian Case Studies**
Edited by Nguyen Thi Kim Oanh (www.crc.press.com)
- Find out more at [our website](http://www.cobenefit.org/): <http://www.cobenefit.org/>



Activities

- **3rd Asian Co-benefits Partnership Advisory Group Meeting in International Forum for Sustainable Asia and the Pacific (ISAP)**
(July, 2012 at Pacifico Yokohama, Japan)
The ACP Advisory Group members plan to discuss the ACP's second work plan.
- **The Better Air Quality Conference**
(5 -7 December 2012 Hong Kong)
BAQ 2012 is a biennial event that brings leading experts, policy and decision makers together to network, learn and share experiences on air quality management.
(<http://www.baq2012.org/>)

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