

Conference on Mitigation of Emissions from Open Agricultural Burning in the Wider Himalayan Region

Date: 20—21 February 2015

Venue: Godavari Village Resort, Kathmandu, Nepal



Jointly organized by International Cryosphere Climate Initiative (ICCI) and ICIMOD, the conference is part of the project sponsored by the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) that aims to reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs). The project seeks to develop concrete options for reducing emissions from open burning near regions of snow and ice (cryosphere), thus improving crop yields and human health, and potentially making positive impact on the region's climate and nearby glaciers. The project will identify the sources of open burning in two regions (the Andes and the Himalayas), where and when burning takes place as well as what is burnt, and use this information to design at least two on-the-ground pilot projects in each region, where alternatives to burning will be demonstrated.

See the background for more information on the project.

This conference aims to

- Characterize agricultural burning using completed mapping combined with regional expert input: who burns what, where and why
- Identify potential mitigation options and barriers
- Identify key actors and stakeholders as well as establish partnerships
- Help in raising regional awareness of the impacts and importance of open burning and the general work of the CCAC in the region

Target participants

Representatives of the scientific community, government officials, international organizations, farmers and farmer organizations and other relevant experts interested in agriculture, air quality and health issues, adaptation and climate change will participate in the conference.



Background

Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) Agricultural Initiative: Mitigation Options to Reduce Open Agricultural Burning

Certain air quality measures, primarily involving reductions in black carbon and methane, hold special promise to slow climate change in cryosphere (snow, ice and glacier) regions in ways that can also support local development and adaptation. Open field and forest burning contributes to regional and global climate change by emitting CO₂, methane, and – of special interest near cryosphere – black carbon (BC), which deposits on nearby snow and ice, speeding melting.

In addition to depositing on nearby ice and snow, causing greater and earlier melting, set agricultural fires often burn out of control, spreading and causing forest and field wild fires that release additional BC as well as greenhouse gases including methane, CO, and CO₂; damage nearby sensitive ecosystems; and cause loss of human life and infrastructure. Smoke from open burning also negatively impacts human health, sometimes quite significantly, as evidenced during the Russian fires of summer 2010.

At the same time, agricultural burning negatively impacts soil quality by compacting and destroying the humus and organic matter that make agricultural lands productive. This decreases yields, at a time when agriculture is already under stress from climate change. Nevertheless, good alternatives to burning exist, especially those that integrate low-till or no-till methods.





This project, part of the Agriculture Initiative of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), aims to explore these alternatives in a manner consistent with local needs and rural development.

The overall CCAC Agriculture Initiative aims at maximizing best practices to minimize emissions of short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs) from agriculture. This CCAC Open Burning project will map fires and develop concrete options for emissions reductions from open burning by promoting alternatives to burning, targeting at least two staple crops/ technologies in each of two cryosphere regions, the Andes and Himalayas. The overall

project is managed by the International Cryosphere Climate Initiative (ICCI), with partners including the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Kathmandu, Nepal; the Molina Center for Energy and Environment in La Jolla, California; and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Michigan Technological University has carried out related satellite fires mapping.

Registration Information

Registration can be done at the conference website, www.openburningcryosphere.org, where further information on the arrangements will soon be made available. A block of rooms have been reserved at Godavari Village Resort for a reduced price, but travel and hotel arrangements should be made directly by the participants.

Space is limited so please register as soon as possible.

Please also indicate if you would like to give a presentation on topics such as national or regional assessments, data on open burning, or alternatives to open burning.

Note: A limited amount of travel support is available for some participants, particularly agricultural experts, including farmers. Please indicate while registering if you need financial support. There is no conference fee.

For further information contact

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