



## **Citizens March, Obama and Other Leaders Listen, Pledge Action**

23 September 2014 - Two days after the historic People's Climate March, more than 100 heads of State met the challenge from the Secretary General to step up their climate mitigation actions. A key outcome of the UN Climate Summit was the prominence of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-lived Climate pollutants, and their bold ambition to cut the rate of climate change in half through the end of the century by cutting black carbon, methane, and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). This also will save more than two and a half million lives a year, and improve crop yields significantly.

The CCAC announced a series of initiatives ranging from a partnership with oil and gas companies to reduce methane emissions, to a pledge to support an amendment to the Montreal Protocol to phase down HFCs. In his address to the Summit today, President Obama described the US efforts including an HFC amendment, and noted that, “Already more than 100 nations have agreed to launch talks to phase down HFCs under the Montreal Protocol. The same agreement the world used successfully to phase out ozone depleting chemicals. This is something that President Xi and I have worked on together. Just a few minutes ago I met with Chinese Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli and reiterated my belief that as the two largest economies and emitters in the world we have a special responsibility to lead. That is what big nations have to do.”

In a study published in [\*The Economist\*](#) this week the Montreal Protocol was ranked the most effective of all past climate mitigation strategies, having done more to curb warming than almost all other strategies ranked in the top 20 combined, including China's one child policy and the fall of the USSR. [\*The Economist\*](#) also concluded that phasing down HFCs under the Montreal Protocol is the quickest way to cut climate emissions.

“Phasing down HFCs under the Montreal Protocol is the single biggest, fastest, and most effective near-term climate strategy, capable of doing 10 to 20% of all the mitigation needed to stay below the 2°C guardrail for disastrous climate impacts,” said Durwood Zaelke, President of the Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development, and a speaker at the Summit today. “Phasing down HFCs also is critical for building momentum for a strong UN climate treaty in Paris in 2015,” Zaelke added. “The road to Paris goes through Montreal.”

The CCAC also announced a complementary private sector effort by the Global Cold Food Chain Council to promote climate-friendly alternatives and enhance energy efficiency, with a goal of reducing global emissions by up 30-50% within 10 years. New and tangible efforts to reduce these pollutants in oil and gas production, freight transportation and municipal solid waste were also announced by the CCAC and will be implemented in collaboration with governments, civil society, and intergovernmental partners.

Additionally, UNEP announced a new initiative to accelerate the transition of energy-efficient appliance and equipment, including lighting, air conditioners, refrigerators, electric motors, ceiling fans and distributions transformers in an effort to reduce global electricity consumption by more than 10%, saving \$350 billion USD annually and reducing global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 1.25 billion tons per year.

“The citizens’ march and the mitigation initiatives announced today will be remembered as a historic turning point in the effort to slow climate change—provided the world follows through with a strong treaty in Paris in 2015, said Zaelke.

IGSD’s *Primer on Short-Lived Climate Pollutants* is [here](#); its *Primer on Hydrofluorocarbons* is [here](#).