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## **Reducing Black Carbon, HFCs, Methane Key to Protecting Arctic in Near-Term, Say Arctic Ministers**

*Sea ice loss and permafrost melt are self-amplifying feedbacks causing further warming*

*Arctic Ministers urge “urgent action” to avoid irreversible global impacts*

Washington, DC. 6 February 2013 – Arctic Environment Ministers are calling for “urgent action” to reduce black carbon, methane, and HFCs in order to help protect the Arctic and reduce the risk of setting off self-amplifying feedback mechanisms that accelerate warming and lead to irreversible impacts. The Ministers’ call to action is presented in the [Chair’s conclusions](#) released today at the end of the two-day meeting in Jukkasjärvi, Sweden.

The Arctic Ministers acknowledged “the worrying scientific findings identifying large-scale tipping points in the Arctic, such as collapse of the Arctic summer sea-ice, accelerating melting of the Greenland ice sheet, releases of methane from melting permafrost, all of which, if crossed, may have substantial global effects.” If the Greenland ice sheet were to disintegrate, it could lead to up to seven meters (23 feet) of sea level rise.

Ministers concluded that “decisive action” on black carbon, methane, and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) is needed, and “encouraged coordination and support for international and global efforts to address emissions.” The Ministers also encouraged the Arctic Council to consider a new “instrument or other arrangements to enhance efforts to reduce emissions of black carbon from the Arctic States” for decision at the 2015 Arctic Ministerial meeting.

“Reducing black carbon and the other short-lived climate pollutants can cut the rate of Arctic warming by two-thirds. We need a crash course that starts today with black carbon, which is responsible for half of the Arctic warming,” added Zaelke. “We need to reduce HFCs under the Montreal Protocol, as this is the single biggest, fastest, and cheapest climate mitigation available to the world today, avoiding the equivalent of 100 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide.”

International efforts to limit global climate increase to 2°C above pre-Industrial level would still have “major and irreversible impacts on the environment and on the livelihood in the Arctic”, according to Arctic Environmental Ministers. The Ministers also “emphasized that substantial cuts in global emissions of carbon dioxide and other long-lived greenhouse gases are the backbone of any meaningful global climate change mitigation efforts.”

The “Discussion note” for the Arctic Environment Ministers Meeting is [here](#).