

**The Veolia Institute Foresight Committee calls upon public and private bodies to curb Global warming by greater emphasis on cutting methane emissions along with continued steps to reduce CO2 emissions.**

The Veolia Institute's Foresight Committee held a half-yearly meeting in Paris during the COP21.

Prior to COP21, on November 9<sup>th</sup> 2015, the Institute joined with l'Agence Française de Développement and the Prince Albert II de Monaco Foundation to co-sponsor a full day International Conference "*Mitigating methane emissions: from science to innovative solutions*". This conference paved the way to 2 side-events on Tuesday December 8<sup>th</sup> during COP21 around the same theme.

At the November conference, world renowned experts stressed the importance and relevance of diminishing methane emissions in order to combat Climate Change. Over a 20 year period, methane gas produces more than 80 times the atmospheric warming of an equivalent weight of CO<sub>2</sub>, and methane emissions account for more than one third of the warming effect of all greenhouse gases. Because the atmospheric half-life of methane is less than one tenth that of CO<sub>2</sub>, reducing methane emissions can make a substantial near-term contribution to retarding the increase in average Earth temperature in the coming decades.

The Foresight Committee commends the side-events' contribution to identifying solutions to the huge challenge of stabilizing the Earth's average temperature and hopes that stakeholders, including corporations and policy makers across the world will take prompt and effective steps to reduce methane emissions. It joins in supporting the initiative of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition that held an event centered on the subject of Short lived Climate Pollutants, prominently including methane.

Methane emissions are generated approximately one third from agricultural practices (mostly rice cultivation and ruminants belching), one third from oil and gas exploration and extraction, and one third from landfill sites.

A number of solutions to reduce methane emissions are readily available and efficient. In the agricultural sector, diminishing methane emissions from rice culture activity can be achieved by modifying irrigation practices: these should be extended wherever possible. In landfills, methane capture to make electricity is cost effective and should be intensified. As to various leakages of methane in oil and gas operations and distribution, the main actors in this sector have the resources, the technologies and the means to reduce drastically methane emissions.

Even with the commitments made by countries in the COP21 process (INDCs) to reduce CO2 emissions, these will still have increased by 20% from their 2010 level by 2030. A specific focused effort on short lived pollutants and in particular methane could therefore allow a considerable reduction in GHG related global warming.

Private sector stakeholders have a major role to play in implementing these solutions, and appropriate regulation at the national and sub-national levels can hasten their achievement.

**Harvey Fineberg**

President of the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation  
Former President of the United-States Institute of Medicine  
Former Dean of the Harvard School of Public Health

**Pierre Marc Johnson**

Lawyer and Physician,  
Former Prime Minister of Quebec  
Chief Negotiator of the government of Quebec in the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement talks between Canada and European Union

**Yuriko Koike**

Member of Japan's House of Representatives  
Former Defense Minister of Japan  
Former Environment Minister of Japan

**Philippe Kourilsky**

Biologist  
Emeritus Professor at the Collège de France  
Honorary Director-General of the Institut Pasteur  
Member of the French Academy of Sciences

**Amartya Sen**

Economist, Nobel Laureate 1998  
Thomas W. Lamont University Professor  
Professor of Economics and Philosophy at Harvard University  
Former Master of Trinity College, Cambridge

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**About the Veolia Institute**

A nonprofit association, the Veolia Institute's main focus is to contribute to a better understanding of the changes occurring at the interface between society and the environment. It places forward-thinking about the environment at the heart of its approach in order to encourage exchange and dialogue between all stakeholders engaged in addressing environmental management and sustainable development issues. The Institute works closely with a multidisciplinary network of academic experts, institutions, field practitioners and centers of excellence worldwide to address global and local environmental problems in all their complexity. It provides a forum for exchange and discussion and acts as an active link between the international scientific community, civil society and the economic sector. Through its actions, conferences and publications, the Veolia Institute aims to contribute to predicting future developments and their impact on public policies, private initiatives and society overall. *For more about the Veolia Institute:* <http://www.institut.veolia.org>.

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