30 January 2010

Atmospheric Brown Clouds (ABC): Regional Assessment Report with Focus on Asia

Corrective Statement

On 20 January 2010, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued a statement on the melting of Himalayan glaciers. According to the statement estimates relating to the rate of recession of the Himalayan glaciers and date for the disappearance of Himalayan glaciers in its Fourth Assessment report were "poorly substantiated" adding that "well established standards of evidence were not applied".

This statement by IPCC necessitates modifications to a report published in 2008 by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) entitled" Atmospheric Brown Clouds: Regional Assessment Report with Focus on Asia". The publication included the full report and a summary.

In the main report on page 101, the following reference is made to the melting of the glaciers in the Himalayas in the coming decades based on the conclusions of IPCC-WG II report:

"IPCC (2007) and WWF (2005) suggested that the Himalayan glaciers' total area could shrink from 500 000 km2 at present to 100 000 km2 by 2035."

In page 6 of the Summary references are made to the glaciers and snow packs based on the conclusions of the IPCC WGII report.

"If the current rate of retreat continues unabated, these glaciers and snow packs are expected to shrink by as much as 75 per cent before the year 2050, posing grave danger to the region's water security".

These statements and references to the IPCC and WWF reports are now withdrawn, since they are based on inadmissible data. We regret and apologize for misunderstanding that may have arisen from this error. All other statements in the report and summary, including the regional description of the brown clouds, and the potentially large role of black carbon and brown clouds on the observed glacier retreat remain the same. The report is available at http://www.rrcap.unep.org/abc/impact/index.cfm.

V Ramanathan

Chair of ABC International Science Team and Lead Author of the UNEP ABC 2008 Report