**Background**

In warm countries, where microbial growth is faster as a result of high temperatures, the use of refrigeration must be regarded as essential. Around 81% of the world’s population lives in developing countries (the majority of these countries have a warm climate: equatorial, tropical or Mediterranean) and it is estimated that 35% of the population of these countries live in towns with increasingly severe food supply problems as they are still without refrigeration. However, in warm/developing countries, the emphasis is put on an increase in agricultural production and they are very little inclined to refrigerate agricultural products. It is the reason why post-production losses are considerable, whether in the field, during transportation, in storage or during distribution. These losses can be defined as "a decrease in food quantity or quality".

The recently adopted, by World Leaders at the UN Sustainable Development Summit -Sept 2015-, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) stipulate "Zero Hunger" as the second important global goal that international community needs to achieve by 2030 which means ensuring "Food Security". According to the International Institute of Refrigeration (IIR), establishing cold chains for perishable foodstuffs in developing countries that are on the same level as cold chains in industrialized countries would enable these countries to have at least 15% more food availability which in many cases means closing the gap between food needs and demand.

At the same time, the global environmental challenges are posing dramatic changes to the refrigeration industry leading to new era of technologies and applications. Access to new technologies, specially related to cold chain sector, in most of developing countries is another challenge which could hinder the sustainability of any local food security strategy if it doesn’t consider the environmental and technology dimensions in such plan.

IIR reinstated, recently, an International Working Group on “The Cold Chain in Hot Climate Countries” with the objective to address comprehensively the challenges of the Cold Chain Network and ensure introduction and deployment of sustainable and environmental technologies.

UNEP, within its mandate to support developing countries to comply with Multilateral Environmental Agreements, is actively working in almost all developing countries in building and implementing strategies to reduce emissions from the refrigeration sectors and to secure adoption of low-GWP alternatives and technologies.

IIR and UNEP, accordingly, agreed to join hands and efforts in addressing this vital sector by ensuring providing state-of-art technical support to the developing countries in soundly mange the Cold Chain Sector. The first joint action, of both organizations, will be organizing the first international Experts’ Roundtable Meeting on "Cold Chain Management in Hot Climates" during the period of 26-27 Sept in Dubai, UAE in cooperation with ASHRAE Falcon Chapter in UAE.
Technical Focus and Program

The Experts’ Roundtable Meeting will address different aspects related to the Cold Chain Network. Three key dimensions i.e. Technology, Operation and Policies. The main topics of the event’s sessions will include, but not limited to, the following topics:

- Food Security in hot climates
- Challenges to Cold Chain systems and networks in hot climates
- Availability of technologies
- Energy efficiency considerations
- Low GWP technologies
- Technologies Vs. Applications
- New Cold Chain Concepts e.g. Logistic platform storage
- Issues related to the Transportation sector
- Considerations of the special sectors i.e. Fishery, Marine, etc.

Participation

The Roundtable meeting is organized at experts level only and participation will be coordinated through specific invitations addressed by IIR and UNEP to the concerned developing countries for nominating local experienced experts from the field. Participation of the international and regional organizations and associations as well as key speakers will include, tentatively, ASHRAE, AREA, CIHEAM, CRAA, EPEE, FAO, IIAR, JRAIA, UNIDO, RTOC/TEAP in addition to participation of selected governmental environmental representation from different continents to build bridges between industry, environment and governments. Some industry representatives might be invited as where new technological development need to be presented with non-commercial aspects.

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