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Key Points:

- OMI and adjoint modeling can constrain monthly anthropogenic SO₂ emissions
- Twenty percent emission reduction during the Beijing Olympic Games are made evident
- Posterior emissions improve monthly forecasts of surface and column SO₂

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A new approach for monthly updates of anthropogenic sulfur dioxide emissions from space: Application to China and implications for air quality forecasts

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Abstract SO₂ emissions, the largest source of anthropogenic aerosols, can respond rapidly to economic and policy driven changes. However, bottom-up SO₂ inventories have inherent limitations owing to 24–48 months latency and lack of month-to-month variation in emissions (especially in developing countries). This study develops a new approach that integrates Ozone Monitoring Instrument (OMI) SO₂ satellite measurements and GEOS-Chem adjoint model simulations to constrain monthly anthropogenic SO₂ emissions. The approach's effectiveness is demonstrated for 14 months in East Asia; resultant posterior emissions not only capture a 20% SO₂ emission reduction in Beijing during the 2008 Olympic Games but also improve agreement between modeled and in situ surface measurements. Further analysis reveals that posterior emissions estimates, compared to the prior, lead to significant improvements in forecasting monthly surface and columnar SO₂. With the pending availability of geostationary measurements of tropospheric composition, we show that it may soon be possible to rapidly constrain SO₂ emissions and associated air quality predictions at fine spatiotemporal scales.

1. Introduction

Atmospheric sulfur dioxide (SO₂) is a pollutant emitted from anthropogenic activities (coal power plants, industry, and residential combustion) and natural sources (volcanoes and phytoplankton). Its reaction with H_2O and oxidants (H_2O_2 and O_3) in liquid phase leads to the formation of sulfuric acid (H_2SO_4) that can be dissolved into cloud water to form acid rain or be neutralized by NH₃ to form sulfate particles [Wang et al., 2008a, 2008b]. Sulfate particles can further affect air quality and Earth's radiative energy budget through scattering of radiation and aerosol-cloud interactions [Haywood and Boucher, 2000]. In addition, higher-SO₂ conditions may enhance the formation of isoprene-derived secondary organic aerosol that also has significant influences on regional air quality and climate change [Lin et al., 2013]. While the importance of SO₂ on air quality and climate change is recognized [Myhre et al., 2013], a large range in estimates of anthropogenic SO₂ emissions exists. For example, the average, minimum, and maximum estimates of anthropogenic SO₂ emissions for year 2000 are, respectively, 55.2, 43.3, and 77.9 Tg S yr⁻¹ globally and 11.7, 9.6, and 17.0 Tg S yr⁻¹ over China [*Boucher*] et al., 2013]. Furthermore, those estimates are a result of the bottom-up approach that analyzes and integrates SO₂-related activity rates (of coal power plants, industry, and residential combustion) with SO₂ emission factors from various agencies and sources. Consequently, they have limitations in that they usually have a temporal lag of 2 to 3 years and can guickly become outdated [Zhang et al., 2009b]. These limitations are further amplified at regional scales, such as in China which has experienced rapid economic development at the last two decades and is subject to implementation of emission control policy in various times [Li et al., 2010].

Satellite observations that provide near-real-time information about atmospheric composition are useful constraints for detections and updates of emissions [*Streets et al.*, 2013]. *Xu et al.* [2013] used Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) Aerosol Optical Depth (AOD) as constraints to estimate aerosol emissions (including SO₂) over China through an adjoint inverse modeling method. However, since SO₂ and aerosol particles co-exist in the atmosphere and sulfate is only one component of aerosol composition, the atmospheric SO₂ can be at least equally important as AOD in constraining SO₂ emissions. Indeed, the

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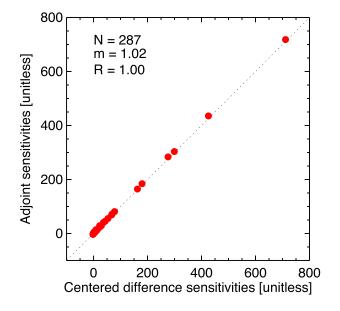


Figure 1. Validation of adjoint model sensitivities through comparison to centered finite difference results for a 3 day simulation. Shown here are the sensitivities of column cost function (penalty term is not included, and horizontal transport is turned off) with respect to anthropogenic SO₂ emission scale factors: the 1:1 line (dotted), the number of grid columns (*N*), the slope of linear regression (*m*), and correlation coefficient (*R*).

reduction of SO₂ emissions after implementing emission control policies since 2006 in China can be detected by Ozone Monitoring Instrument (OMI) [Li et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2009a]. McLinden et al. [2016] used OMI SO₂ observations to detect SO₂ sources that are not captured in conventional inventories. Lee et al. [2011] inferred a top-down SO₂ emission through inventory multiplying satellite-based SO₂ column amounts by the ratio between bottom-up SO₂ emissions and simulated SO₂ column amounts. Fioletov et al. [2013, 2015, 2016] approximately assumed linear relationship between reported emissions and total SO_2 molecules and used it to estimate large SO₂ point source, although the relationship should be nonlinear.

Here we present a new approach for using satellite observations and the

GEOS-Chem adjoint model to constrain anthropogenic SO₂ emissions on a monthly basis, enabling reliable and rapid update of anthropogenic SO₂ emissions for both regional air quality forecast and climate studies. To account for the nonlinear relationship between SO₂ sources and atmospheric SO₂ abundance in the top-down emissions estimates, we develop the OMI SO₂ observation operator in the framework of the GEOS-Chem adjoint model [*Henze et al.*, 2007]. This study is different from the past studies in that (a) we develop a new approach to resolve month-to-month variation of anthropogenic SO₂ emissions and (b) we illustrate this approach with 14 months' regional air quality prediction and validate our method using both in situ SO₂ data and cross validation. We focus on China in this study as it has experienced rapid economic development at the last two decades and SO₂ loadings are high there.

2. GEOS-Chem Model, OMI, and In Situ SO₂ Data

GEOS-Chem is a global 3-D chemistry transport model driven by assimilated meteorological observations from the Goddard Earth Observing System (GEOS-5) at the NASA Goddard Global Modeling Assimilation Office [*Bey et al.*, 2001]. It has 47 vertical levels and a horizontal resolution of 2° latitude by 2.5° longitude in this study. Global anthropogenic emissions are from Emission Database for Global Atmospheric Research (http://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu/), and anthropogenic SO₂ emissions over China are replaced by Intercontinental Chemical Transport Experiment-Phase B (INTEX-B) emissions [*Zhang et al.*, 2009b]. The INTEX-B emission inventory was originally developed to support the INTEX-B field campaign in 2006 by using limited ancillary information for 2006 at that time and activity data extrapolated from available statistics for 2004 and 2005.

The new operational and science-grade total SO₂ slant column density level 3 daily products (http://disc.sci. gsfc.nasa.gov/Aura/data-holdings/OMI/1readme.omso2e.2015-02-12.pdf) from OMI are used to constrain anthropogenic SO₂ emissions over China. Compared with the previous operational OMI SO₂ band residual difference algorithm [*Krotkov et al.*, 2006], this new algorithm applies principal component analysis to the OMI spectra to extract a set of PCs to reduce retrieval interferences and, therefore, decreases the noise in SO₂ retrieval by a factor of 2 [*Li et al.*, 2013]. In situ observations of SO₂ at the Miyun (40°29'N, 116°46'E) site [*Y. Wang et al.*, 2010], which is about 100 km northeast from Beijing's urban center, are used for independent evaluation of the GEOS-Chem simulations.

3. GEOS-Chem Adjoint Model Development

The adjoint of the GEOS-Chem was developed specifically for inverse modeling of aerosol and aerosol precursor emissions [*Henze et al.*, 2007]. It has the advantage of accurately and efficiently calculating sensitivities of a cost function with respect to model parameters such as scale factors for anthropogenic SO₂ emissions at every grid box. The inverse modeling process uses these sensitivities to optimize these emission scale factors. Previous top-down estimates of aerosol (and aerosol precursor) emissions have been conducted with GEOS-Chem [e.g., *Henze et al.*, 2009; *Wang et al.*, 2012; *Xu et al.*, 2013; *Zhang et al.*, 2014; *Zhu et al.*, 2013] and other adjoint models [e.g., *Yumimoto and Takemura*, 2015].

Here we develop the OMI SO₂ observation operator for GEOS-Chem adjoint model, thereby enabling us, for the first time, to conduct top-down estimation of anthropogenic SO₂ emissions using their observations in an inverse modeling framework that accounts for the full sulfur chemistry and lifecycle in the atmosphere. The scaling factors of anthropogenic SO₂ emissions in each GEOS-Chem grid box (σ) are optimized by minimizing the cost function, given by

$$J(\boldsymbol{\sigma}) = \frac{1}{2} \Sigma_{\Omega} [H(\boldsymbol{M}(\boldsymbol{\sigma})) - \mathbf{c}_{obs}]^{T} \mathbf{S}_{obs}^{-1} [H(\boldsymbol{M}(\boldsymbol{\sigma})) - \mathbf{c}_{obs}] + \gamma \frac{1}{2} [\boldsymbol{\sigma} - \boldsymbol{\sigma}_{a}]^{T} \mathbf{S}_{a}^{-1} [\boldsymbol{\sigma} - \boldsymbol{\sigma}_{a}]$$
(1)

where σ is used to adjust elements of the vector of anthropogenic SO₂ emissions, **p**, via application as scaling factors, $p = p_a e^{\sigma}$, **p**_a is prior anthropogenic SO₂ emission state vector, **c**_{obs} is the vector of OMI slant column densities in four-dimension space Ω , M is the GEOS-Chem model, H is the observation operator which maps simulated SO₂ concentration to slant column SO₂ density, γ is a regularization parameter, **S**_{obs} is observation error covariance matrix, σ_a is the prior estimate of σ , and **S**_a is the background error covariance for σ_a . The sensitivities of the cost function with respect to σ calculated from GEOS-Chem adjoint are used to minimize the cost function iteratively with the quasi-Newton L-BFGS-B algorithm [*Byrd et al.*, 1995].

In the development of OMI SO₂ observation operator H, the vertical columnar SO₂ from GEOS-Chem is first converted to the slant column by applying a local air mass factor (AMF) that corresponds to the OMI observation. Local AMF is calculated according to equation (2)

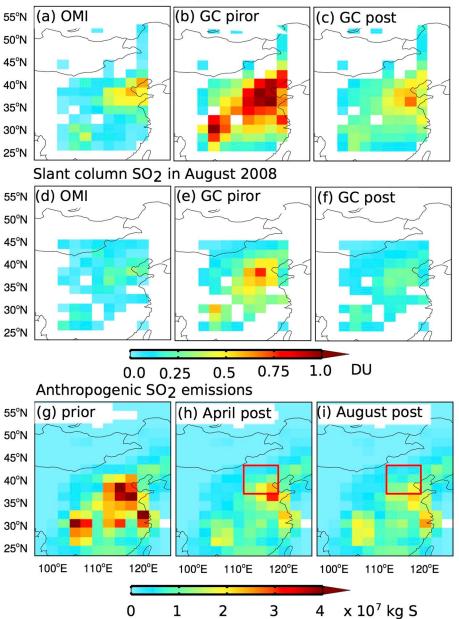
$$AMF = AMF_G \int_0 w(z) S_z(z) dz$$
⁽²⁾

where AMF_G is the geometric air mass factor, w(z) are scattering weights calculated using the VLIDORT radiative transfer code [*Spurr*, 2006], and $S_z(z)$ is SO₂ shape factor from GEOS-Chem simulation. *Palmer et al.* [2001] and *Lee et al.* [2009] give details of derivation and application of this AMF calculation method. The accuracy of the adjoint sensitivities is evaluated with finite difference sensitivities. Figure 1 shows that the sensitivities of column cost function with respect to anthropogenic SO₂ emission scale factors from adjoint model agrees quite well with that of finite difference method [*Henze et al.*, 2007] in terms of linear correlation coefficient (1.00) and linear regression slope (1.02), hence verifying the addition of our new observation operator to the adjoint model.

In inverse modeling, balancing the contribution of total prediction error and penalty error in the cost function is a key aspect. Due to the lack of rigorous statistical information on the error covariance of the emissions, we assume the error is uncorrelated and use the L-curve method [*Hansen*, 1998] to determine a regularization parameter, γ . The relative errors of SO₂ emissions are taken to be 50%. Observation errors are also considered as uncorrelated and set as 0.25 DU which is the standard deviation of OMI SO₂ over the presumably SO₂-free Pacific Ocean (http://disc.sci.gsfc.nasa.gov/Aura/data-holdings/OMI/documents/v003/omso2readme-v120-20140926.pdf).

4. Experiments and Results

We conduct a series of numerical experiments to evaluate the new approach to constraining anthropogenic SO_2 emissions with OMI SO_2 observations using the GEOS-Chem adjoint model. First, the method is applied to April and August 2008 over East Asia. The real anthropogenic SO_2 emissions over Beijing and its surrounding areas in August 2008 should be smaller than those in April 2008 as special emission controls were implemented in August 2008 over this region for the 29th Olympic Games. Thus, evaluating the results between the two months provides a first check of the effectiveness of the new approach. This is then followed by applying our method for 1 year (December 2008 to November 2009) to evaluate the potential of our



Slant column SO₂ in April 2008

Figure 2. Slant column SO₂ and anthropogenic SO₂ emissions. (a–c) The slant column SO₂ from OMI, prior, and posterior GEOS-Chem simulation for April 2008, respectively. (d–f) Same as Figures 2a–2c but for August 2008. (g–i) Prior anthropogenic SO₂ emissions and posterior anthropogenic SO₂ emissions for April and August 2008, respectively. The red box represents the region where strong emission controls occurred in August 2008.

approach for air quality forecasts and chemical composition reanalysis. Evaluations are conducted to (a) compare the posterior simulation with in situ surface SO_2 data and (b) apply the posterior anthropogenic SO_2 emissions from the previous month (e.g., January or February of 2009) to forecast the air quality in the current month of interest (e.g., February or March of 2009) and evaluate the forecasts with OMI slant column SO_2 and in situ SO_2 data. Hence, there are 14 months of results (including April and August 2008) to be evaluated in (a) and only 13 months (August 2008 is not included due to special emission control) of results to be evaluated in (b). Evaluation from (b) can reveal the practical applications for this approach for operational air quality forecast.

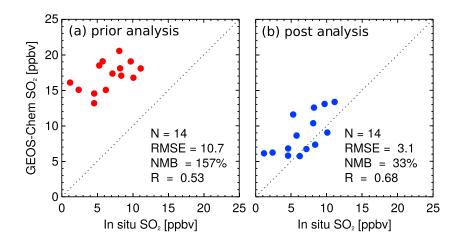


Figure 3. Scatter plot of GEOS-Chem monthly mean surface SO_2 simulated with (a) prior emission and (b) posterior emission versus in situ observations in Miyun for monthly cases of April 2008, August 2008, and December 2008 to November 2009. The number of months (*N*), root-mean-square error (RMSE), normalized mean bias (NMB), and linear correlation coefficient (*R*) are also shown.

4.1. Results for April and August 2008

During 8-24 August 2008 the 29th Olympic Games were held in Beijing, and emission control policies were implemented in Beijing and its surrounding regions. Vehicles were restricted, production was limited or even stopped at heavily polluting factories in Beijing, and power plants located in surrounding regions were required to use cleaner desulfurized coal from 20 July to 20 September [Wang et al., 2009]. Thus, significant reduction of SO₂ emissions occurred in Beijing and its surrounding regions in August 2008. We consider April 2008 to be a representative of a month with normal emissions, as there was no special emission control during that month. Figures 2b and 2e show simulated prior slant column SO₂ in April and August. Although the same SO₂ emission inventory is used in each of these months, the slant column SO₂ in August is much smaller than in April due to larger wet deposition in August. Inverse modeling leads to improved agreement of simulated slant column SO₂ compared to OMI observations in April (Figures 2a–2c) and August (Figures 2d–2f). Figures 2g–2i show the geographic distribution of the prior and posterior anthropogenic SO₂ emissions for April and August 2008. The anthropogenic SO₂ emission in April 2008 over China decrease from 1300 Gg S in the prior INTEX-B inventory to 843 Gg S (~35.2% decrease) in the posterior which is in good agreement with the 865 Gg S (~33.5% decrease) retrieved through integration of MODIS AOD and GEOS-Chem adjoint model [Xu et al., 2013], and the spatial linear correlation coefficient of the two posterior emission inventories is 0.97. These consistencies provide a basis for simultaneously using both SO₂ and AOD measurements to constrain SO₂ emissions for future studies. A decrease trend of China SO₂ emissions from 2006 to 2008 has been found based on bottom-up estimates by Lu et al. [2011] from 17 to 16 (~5.9% decrease) Tg S. The reduction of 35.2% in April can be interpreted by the joint contribution of a decrease trend and a possible overestimation in INTEX-B bottom-up inventory [Xu et al., 2013]. Compared to the prior anthropogenic SO₂ emissions, posterior anthropogenic SO₂ emissions for both April and August decrease, which is consistent with the SO₂ emissions decreasing trend from 2006 to 2008 [Lu et al., 2011]. Besides, the distribution of posterior anthropogenic SO₂ emission captures a \sim 20% decline of SO₂ emissions in Beijing and its surrounding regions (red box in Figure 2) from 89 Gg S for April to 71 Gg S for August. S. Wang et al. [2010] estimated with a bottom-up method that SO₂ emissions during the Olympic Games in Beijing were 41% lower than in June 2008. The lower reduction in our estimate is likely due to our model horizontal model resolution of 2° latitude by 2.5° longitude, which covers an area larger than the Beijing metropolitan area, and that stronger emission control occurred in Beijing than its surrounding regions during the Olympic Games.

4.2. Evaluation With In Situ SO₂

To evaluate the inversion results, we also use in situ SO_2 data from a site in Miyun to evaluate monthly mean surface SO_2 concentration simulated from GEOS-Chem using the prior and posterior emissions. As shown in Figure 3, the posterior estimates exhibit better agreement with SO_2 at the Miyun site than the prior estimates:

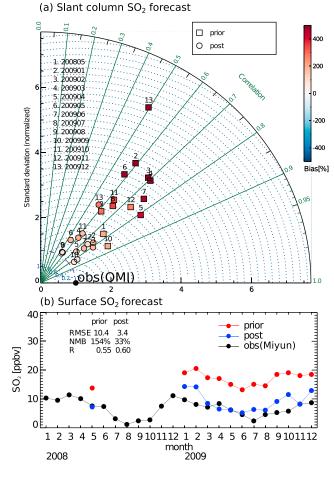
the linear correlation coefficient (*R*) increases from 0.53 for prior analysis

to 0.68 for posterior analysis; normal-

ized mean bias (NMB) decreases from

157% to 33%; and root-mean-square

error (RMSE) reduces from 10.7 to



4.3. Air Quality Forecast Applications

3.1 (Figures 3a and 3b).

The application of using posterior anthropogenic SO₂ emissions from the previous month to forecast SO₂ concentrations in a subsequent month is shown in Figure 4. Figure 4 a is a Taylor diagram which evaluates the slant column SO₂ from posterior forecasts (use posterior anthropogenic SO₂ emission of previous month) and prior forecasts (use INTEX-B anthropogenic SO₂ emission) with OMI slant column SO₂. It is clear from the Taylor diagram that posterior forecasts (circular points) are generally closer than the prior forecasts (square points) to the OMI slant column SO₂ reference point (obs point) and to the unity curve of normalized standard deviation. In addition, posterior forecasts exhibit remarkably decreased bias ranging from 127% to 342% in the 13 monthly cases. To further show the ability of the new approach for air quality forecast, we use in situ observations at the Miyun site to assess model surface SO₂ forecasts in Figure 4b. Although both prior and posterior forecasts capture winter enhancement and summer decline

Figure 4. Comparisons of GEOS-Chem SO₂ forecast using INTEX-B emission (prior forecast runs) and posterior emission of last month (posterior forecast runs) to observations during May 2008 and January to December 2009. (a) Taylor diagram of evaluating GEOS-Chem slant column SO₂ from prior forecast runs (squares) and posterior forecast runs (circles) against OMI slant column SO₂ observations (obs point). The color on each point indicates the normalized mean bias. (b) Time series of monthly mean surface SO₂ sampled at Miyun site from prior forecast runs (red) and posterior forecast runs (blue) and in situ observation (black). The root-mean-square error (RMSE), normalized mean bias (NMB), and correlation coefficient (*R*) are also shown.

of SO₂, NMB and RMSE decrease, respectively, from 154% and 10.5 in prior forecasts to 33% and 3.4 in posterior forecasts, while linear correlation coefficient increases from 0.55 to 0.60. Both evaluations indicate a notable improvement (reduction of bias more than by 100%) in the application of posterior anthropogenic SO₂ emission for air quality forecasting regardless of the observational data used for assessments.

5. Summary and Discussions

We develop a method that assimilates OMI SO₂ observations using the GEOS-Chem adjoint model for timely updates to anthropogenic SO₂ emissions and for improved air quality forecasts. The approach and application are tested on a monthly basis over China. Our approach captures a 20% reduction of anthropogenic emissions occurred in Beijing and its surrounding regions in August 2008 due to the Olympic Games as compared to April 2008. Additionally, GEOS-Chem surface SO₂ data simulated with posterior emissions exhibit a better agreement with in situ observations than the counterparts obtained using prior emissions; the linear correlation coefficient increases by 0.15 and NMB and RMSE both decrease by 124% and 7.6, respectively. The

posterior anthropogenic SO₂ emission in each month are applied to the subsequent month for SO₂ forecasts, which yields better agreement (reduction of bias more than by 100%) between forecasted and (OMI and in situ) observed SO₂ as compared to results that use the prior emission in GEOS-Chem. OMI SO₂ observations are available at near real time; thus, we can get timely update of SO₂ emission inventory through this approach and provide it to air quality forecast community. Considering that sulfate-nitrate-ammonium aerosol mass concentrations are most sensitive to SO₂ emissions among nitrogen oxides (NO_x), SO₂, and ammonia (NH₃) emissions during most of the year [*Kharol et al.*, 2013; *Wang et al.*, 2013], and SO₂ emissions have important influence on surface PM_{2.5} (e.g., SO₂ emissions contribute 14% to wintertime surface PM_{2.5} in Beijing [*Lin et al.*, 2015]), our approach for improving SO₂ forecasts would thus likely result in significant improvements of PM_{2.5} air quality forecasts. Furthermore, the application of our approach to the whole record of OMI SO₂ data since 2006 is now ongoing, and the resultant monthly SO₂ emission will be made publically available for chemistry transport modeling community that has a high interest in conducting reanalysis of atmospheric composition.

Although this study presents, for the first time, integration of satellite SO₂ observations and GEOS-Chem adjoint model to constrain anthropogenic SO_2 emissions, we expect to assimilate observational AOD, SO_2 , and NO₂ simultaneously to constrain SO₂ and NO₂ emissions in future research. Emissions of SO₂ and NO₂ can only be fully constrained with their satellite-based counterpart products and AOD, because they contribute both to the formation of sulfate and nitrate in the particle phase and to the atmospheric SO₂ and NO₂ in the gas phase, respectively. Thus, using either SO₂ or NO₂ alone can only provide partial constraint to the emission of the corresponding trace gases. Together with our past study that presented the ability of using MODIS AOD to invert species-specific aerosol emissions [Xu et al., 2013], this study supports the concept of using multisensor data (MODIS AOD, OMI SO₂ and NO₂) to constrain emissions of both aerosol primary and precursor emissions in near future. While the method developed in this study is illustrated with the GEOS-Chem adjoint model at a relatively coarse resolution of 2°×2.5°, it can be applied to the GEOS-Chem adjoint at finer resolution of $0.5^{\circ} \times 0.666^{\circ}$ or even $0.25^{\circ} \times 0.3125^{\circ}$ (albeit the needs of more computational power), thereby working in tandem with future high-resolution geostationary instruments to characterize local-to-regional aerosol sources and precursors. With the launch of Geostationary Environment Monitoring Spectrometer (GEMS), Sentinel-4, Tropospheric Emissions: Monitoring of Pollution (TEMPO), and Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite-R series (GOES-R) that will measure AOD, SO₂, and NO₂ at the high temporal resolution (<1 h) and spatial resolution (<4 km) in the coming decade, it is foreseeable that the bottom-up emission inventory can be updated timely to provide unprecedented opportunity to improve the air quality analysis and forecast. Evaluation of such analysis and forecast would require publically accessible observation data of air pollutants from more ground-based observation site, especially in developing countries.

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