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Clean Air Globally – Policy Track

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Recommendations

- Continue and enhance the good collaboration already happening between organizations working on reducing air pollution. (*all, see conclusions for list of organizations*)
- Work to implement the UNEA-3 resolution “Preventing and reducing air pollution to improve global air quality”. (*UN Environment in cooperation with countries and/or regional networks such as CLRTAP*)
- Establish a dialogue on a broader geographic scope in addressing air pollution, taking a step-wise approach at the outset, with an initial focus on increasing regional cooperative efforts. (*LRTAP/EB Bureau, UN Environment*)
 - Follow up on LRTAP’s planned information/expertise sharing with UN Environment, as well as its offer to help in the design and operation of the platform for cooperation and sharing information. (*LRTAP, UN Environment, countries and other organizations*)
 - Establish the platform called for by the UNEA-3 resolution, helping to organize the worldwide exchange of knowledge and techniques for solving similar air pollution problems at different places. (*UN Environment in cooperation with countries and/or regional networks such as CLRTAP*)
 - Ensure that the platform is both a repository for information, resources and tools as well as a framework for facilitating cooperation, and that it function in a straight-forward way that adds value to the existing stock of information already available online and provides a mechanism for support and technical advice across regions and organizations. (*UN Environment*)
 - As a first step, to ensure broad participation, invite countries from all UN regions and organizations to an informal session at the EB meeting in December 2018 in Geneva, subject to appropriate funding. (*LRTAP/EB Bureau, UN Environment, countries and/or regional networks*)
 - Consider creating and co-chairing a taskforce for the design and operation of the platform, and decide on appropriate representation on the taskforce and its tasks. (*UN Environment and CLRTAP*)
 - Include lessons learned for abatement measures in the platform, including policies and specific measures such as open burning of crop residue (e.g., rice straw), forest clearance, dust, brush fires and solid waste burning, and potentially link to the clearinghouse on abatement techniques, developed by CLRTAP’s Task Force on Techno-Economic Issues. (*UN Environment with support from other organizations*)

- Implement technical infrastructure for monitoring, capacity-building for emissions inventories and modelling, and health and ecosystems impact assessments in developing countries and work to provide and communicate the information to policy-makers. (*international capacity-building projects and partnerships*)
- Ensure equality in the distribution of resources and technical support to countries and ensure project ownership when capacity-building projects are implemented to maintain long-term success. (*international capacity-building projects and partnerships*)
- Initiate an overarching coalition, dialogue or mechanism to spur regional action and cooperation worldwide, work through existing regional agreements if available, or facilitate the establishment of such regional coordination mechanisms, and raise awareness through proactive communication. (*UN Environment with support from other organizations including CLRTAP as one possible model*)
- Work to ensure an integrated approach to air pollution policy development is pursued where possible, considering that air pollution is a central link for interactions between climate change, nitrogen, ecosystems and human health. (*All*);
- Continue work related to international law aspects of protection of the atmosphere. (*International Law Commission*)

Background

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in global interest in improving air quality. This is due in part to a number of landmark studies that have highlighted the tremendous and growing health and environmental impacts of air pollution. For example, the Global Burden of Disease Project estimated that exposure to outdoor air pollution was responsible for 4.5 million premature deaths in 2015.

Advancing the policy discussion related to addressing global air pollution and enhancing cooperation between the various organizations with common interests is an important step to achieve the needed emissions reductions to improve health and the environment. There are synergies between the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (Air Convention or CLRTAP) and the Minamata and Stockholm Conventions, the Arctic Council, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, and UNEA resolutions that are related to reducing global air pollution, focusing in particular on best practices in reducing air pollution, specific air quality management tools, air quality data and harmonizing common data systems and information.

Joint Session Conclusions

- Although in some regions (e.g. west-coast of Europe) ozone concentrations are currently stagnating or slightly declining, in other regions (e.g. North-west USA, Asia) they are still increasing due to hemispheric transport. Model analyses suggest that the impacts on health, ecosystems, and climate of ozone produced by extra-regional emissions remain of large concern, and merit targeted assessments for policy makers. It is likely that tropospheric ozone concentrations

will increase again after 2020-2030, with a particularly important role for methane emissions.

- Ground-level ozone, along with methane and black carbon, affect both air quality and climate. Ozone affects climate in two ways both by being a greenhouse gas and by inhibiting ecosystem uptake of carbon dioxide. Besides being a precursor of ozone, methane is the second most important greenhouse gas. Though the climate impacts of black carbon are less certain, actions to reduce all of these pollutants can provide benefits for addressing both climate change and air pollution.
- Ground-level ozone is increasingly recognized as a hemispheric, or even global pollutant; in addition to continued domestic efforts to reduce ozone precursors such as NO_x, VOCs and CO, global reductions in methane are increasingly needed to address rising global background ozone levels.
- Integrated, multi-pollutant environmental policies are needed to effectively address health, ecosystem and climate effects. In addition, integration of different decision-making levels (international, regional, national and local policies for microscale, urban, regional and transboundary sources) are also needed to evaluate win-win and win-lose policies.
- Behavioral measures are also important for implementing integrated environmental policies. Awareness and public citizen involvement is now very important to adequately address pollution from sources (e.g., household, energy, transportation choices including shipping, agriculture) other than industrial sources.

Policy Track Conclusions

- Global cooperation and collaboration is essential to effectively address air pollution and the time is ripe for improving the linkages between existing organizations and initiatives.
- Collaboration already happening between organizations working on reducing air pollution should continue and be enhanced. Existing organizations (UN Environment, WMO, WHO, UNECE, Arctic Council, CCAC, IEA, IUPAA, European Commission, IIASA, GMI and others) have a wealth of technical and scientific expertise and information that can be leveraged as we move forward both regionally and globally.
- The UNEA-3 resolution, in particular, paragraph 7(d) on a platform for cooperation, can be a basis to work to enhance both global and regional cooperation, strengthen existing initiatives and provide a menu of services for countries that need to address all aspects of air quality management given available resources.
- Efforts are needed to take into account the local political situation of each country.
- Concrete cooperation that includes a place for all countries and involves sharing experiences and data will result in progress globally.

Annex: Background Documents

Report from Saltsjobaden 5, 2013

<http://saltsjobaden6.ivl.se/download/18.449b1e1115c7dca013ad1ad/1498486141045/Saltsjobaden%20V.pdf>

Scientific Assessment Report <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=42861> and the North American Assessment Report <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=42947>

Policy Response to the Scientific Assessment Report

https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2015/AIR/WGSR/E_unece_eb_air_wg_5_2017_3.pdf

UN International Law Commission, 2013, "Protection of the atmosphere"

http://legal.un.org/ilc/summaries/8_8.shtml

WHO resolution: http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA68/A68_ACONF2Rev1-en.pdf

[UNEA-1 air quality resolution 1/7](#) (2014) (page 23).

UNEA-3 Preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally resolution

<https://papersmart.unon.org/resolution/index> (draft/unedited)