Draft resolution on air pollution

Submitted by Canada and co-sponsored by the European Union and its Member States

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Recalling United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 1/7 of 27 June 2014, by which the Assembly endorsed strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in promoting air quality,

Acknowledging the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe’s (UNECE) work on the Batumi Action on Cleaner Air (BACA) initiative, a tool that inspires countries to improve air quality and protect human health,

Reaffirming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which outlines a roadmap to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection and prosperity for all, and recognizing that air pollution abatement is key to the attainment of many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),

Concerned that air pollution is a global problem that has impacts beyond country borders and that it is the single greatest environmental risk to health and one of the main avoidable causes of death and disease globally,

Noting the high costs to society due to air pollution as analyzed extensively\(^1\), and therefore understanding there is also an economic rationale to act and that cost-effective solutions exist to address air pollution,

Mindful that poor air quality is a challenge in the context of sustainable development, in particular in cities and urban areas,

Recognizing that some air pollutants such as black carbon, methane and ground-level ozone are also short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs), which have significant near-term warming effects and are responsible for a significant portion of air pollution-related deaths, as well as impacts on crops and hence food security,

Acknowledging that air pollution permeates all aspects of our society and addressing air pollution results in multiple benefits – to human health, the economy, ecosystems and to climate, and that efforts across sectors are needed to improve air quality,

1. **Urges** all Member States to take action to reduce air pollution by:

   (a) Establishing relevant systems to monitor air pollution, in order to be well informed on the state of air quality and sources of pollution in affected areas;
   (b) Setting ambitious air quality goals having in mind the guidance from the World Health Organization; and
   (c) Putting in place policies and measures for relevant sectors for improving air quality;

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\(^1\) by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and the [Global Alliance on Health and Pollution (the Lancet Report)]
2. **Encourages** Member States when undertaking activities in paragraph 1 above to:

   (a) Use the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air (BACA initiative), developed by the UNECE, to inspire, as appropriate, national action to improve air quality and protect public health and ecosystems;
   
   (b) Join the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) and the Global Methane Initiative;
   
   (c) Have major cities within their borders recognized as “Breathelife” cities under the CCAC/World Health Organization (WHO) BreatheLife campaign, and benefit from the solutions available through that network;

3. **Also encourages** Member States when undertaking activities in paragraph 1 (c) above to also:

   (a) Develop and implement methane emission regulations and national methane reductions strategies that could target key sectors such as oil and gas, agriculture and waste management;
   
   (b) Prioritize measures to reduce particulate matter that also reduce black carbon emissions;

4. **Further encourages** governments to pursue synergies and co-benefits between national clean air policies and policies in key areas such as transport and urbanization, climate change mitigation, energy access and agriculture, and to take advantage of synergistic effects of efficient nitrogen management on reducing air, marine and water pollution;

5. **Stresses** the need for further sharing of existing knowledge by:

   (a) Engaging in regional cooperation on science, technology, policy, measures and enforcement issues related to air pollution;
   
   (b) Sharing of knowledge between existing and any future regional cooperation fora;
   
   (c) Inviting Member States to engage with the UNECE Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP) to draw on its extensive experience on science, technology, policy, measures and enforcement with other regions globally;

6. **Calls on** Member States to raise awareness, identify solutions, and pursue a shared response to air pollution including by:

   (a) Promoting increased cooperation between the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), WHO, CCAC, the Arctic Council and World Bank and implementing the actions these organizations endorse;
   
   (b) Maximizing the efficiencies and synergies between the commitments of donors and International Financing Institutions to facilitate actions;
   
   (c) Participating in workshops for experts to share information and best practices on approaches, measures and capacity building;

7. **Requests** the Executive Director to, within available resources:

   (a) Promote the commitments in the CCAC’s Marrakesh Communiqué to take action on black carbon through seeking global endorsement of the *Global Strategy to Introduce Low Sulphur Fuels and Cleaner Diesel Vehicles* and for the commitment to develop or continue to refine black carbon inventories and projections;
   
   (b) Assist in the implementation of the *Roadmap for Clean Fuel and Vehicle Standards in Southern and Western Africa* as proposed by the Heavy-Duty Diesel and Engines Initiative of the CCAC;
   
   (c) Continue enhancing regional cooperation on transboundary air pollution in close cooperation with the CLRTAP, including on science, technology, policy, measures and enforcement, and organize regional communities of practice, through UNEP’s regional offices, for air quality management;
(d) Provide a platform for cooperation and information-sharing between Member States and interested and relevant organizations working to reduce air pollution, such as the CRLTAP, and house capacity-building resources and online tools that enable Member States to use existing air quality data to support policy and decisions-making;

(e) Continue to support countries in putting in place affordable air quality networks that will raise awareness among citizens about pollution levels and their impact on human health and the environment, and produce regional assessments of capacity needs based on input from the communities of practice;

(f) Support Member States in identifying, prioritizing and addressing key sources of air pollution;

(g) Assess gaps in, and opportunities for, mitigation and cooperation and advance the discussion on a global response to air pollution by examining possible synergies, co-benefits and gaps in international law on air pollution;

(h) Undertake a regular assessment of progress being made by Member States to adopt and implement key actions that can significantly improve air quality, building on the ‘snapshot’ prepared for the 2nd session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.