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**Programme of work and budget, and other  
administrative and budgetary issues**

**Progress in the implementation of resolution 3/8 on preventing  
and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally**

**Report of the Executive Director**

*Summary*

In its resolution 3/8,<sup>1</sup> on preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally, the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) requested the Executive Director of UNEP to provide support to countries in implementing the resolution by various means, including continuing to support countries, in particular developing countries, in putting in place affordable air quality networks and producing regional assessments of capacity needs based on inputs from communities of practice; strengthening technical support provided by global and regional networks, and enhancing institutional capacity to develop air pollution action plans; supporting member States in identifying, prioritizing and addressing key sources of air pollution (generally implemented by means of monitoring and assessment of air quality); providing a platform for cooperation and information sharing between member States and relevant organizations working to reduce air pollution, such as the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution; and delivering information to stakeholders on the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants. In the same resolution, it requested the Executive Director to undertake an assessment of progress being made by member States in adopting and implementing key actions that can significantly improve air quality in time for the fifth session of the Environment Assembly.

Following the third session of the Assembly, UNEP strengthened the institutional positioning of air quality within the organization and started developing a UNEP-wide air quality programme with a view to offering an integrated menu of services to Governments at different levels. Both human and financial resources were mobilized to support that work, and partnerships with key actors have been strengthened at the regional and global levels. The present report provides an update on progress made in the implementation of resolution 3/8, as requested in paragraph 8 of the resolution.

\* UNEP/EA.4/1/Rev.1.

<sup>1</sup> UNEP/EA.3/Res.8.

## **I. Progress in the implementation of resolution 3/8**

1. In response to resolution 3/8, on preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally, UNEP strengthened the institutional positioning of air quality within the organization by integrating it as a distinct expected accomplishment under subprogramme 5 on chemicals, waste and air quality, and by creating a new organizational unit in the Economy Division of the Chemicals and Health Branch, namely the Air Quality and Mobility Unit, with a dedicated staff member appointed to coordinate activities. Seed funding was also allocated to kick-start support on air quality management to cities in the regions of Africa and Asia and the Pacific.

2. UNEP also initiated the development of an agency-wide air quality programme under subprogramme 5, in line with expected accomplishment (c) of the programme of work and its three performance indicators. The air quality programme has three components: monitoring and assessment; policy and technology support; and awareness-raising and communication, which together provide an integrated menu of services to Governments at different levels, combining normative and operational work.

### **A. Monitoring and assessment**

3. Integrated assessments of air quality and health are being carried out in three countries in Africa, namely Benin, Botswana and Ethiopia, and three countries in Asia, namely Mongolia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Furthermore, the role of networks has been crucial. For example, the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET) continued to promote regular monitoring of acid deposition and analysis in 13 participating East and South-east Asian countries in 2018, and UNEP and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants (CCAC) launched a regional assessment on short-lived climate pollutants in Latin America and the Caribbean. The assessment report highlights examples of measures to combat short-lived climate pollutants and good practices already implemented in the region, and additional mitigation measures that could be taken. In October 2018, a summary of the report entitled “Air Pollution in Asia and the Pacific: science-based solutions” was launched by CCAC in the margins of the first global conference on air pollution and health, organized by the World Health Organization (WHO). The report and its summary prioritize measures for improving air quality and provide evidence of the significant co-benefits of such measures for the climate. The full report will be launched in January 2019.

### **B. Policy and technology support**

4. A significant programme was launched to support air quality management in cities thanks to generous support provided by Norway and Sweden. The programme has been implemented in seven cities, five in Africa, namely Abidjan, Addis Ababa, Kigali, Nairobi and Ouagadougou, and two in Asia and the Pacific, namely Agra and Phnom Penh. The programme provides support to cities in better defining and measuring the scope of air pollution and its main sources, reviewing regulatory and institutional frameworks, and making policy recommendations through a consultative process with the key stakeholders involved. The programme is linked to the regional and sectoral work of UNEP and its partners on clean mobility, waste management and clean industries.

5. Partnerships have been strengthened with other United Nations entities, including WHO, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, as well as with the private sector, non-governmental organizations and academia. For example, a memorandum of understanding between UNEP and WHO was signed in January 2018 and initial priority for cooperation was placed on air quality. As a result, a joint implementation plan on air pollution between WHO, WMO, UNEP and CCAC was launched in the margins of the seventy-first World Health Assembly, in May 2018. UNEP was also a collaborating partner of WHO in the organization of the first global conference on air pollution and health in October 2018.

6. Global cooperation on clean air and the sharing of knowledge on the topic has intensified. For example, UNEP and CCAC collaborated with the Economic Commission for Europe in the international science-policy workshop held in Gothenburg, Sweden, in March 2018, whose main theme was “Clean air for a sustainable future: goals and challenges”, and participated in the special session of the Executive Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe in December 2018, whose main focus was cooperation on clean air.

7. Joint work has also intensified within CCAC, in particular the initiatives on urban health, on reducing black carbon emissions from heavy-duty diesel vehicles and engines, on supporting national action and planning on short-lived climate pollutants in 12 countries.

### C. Awareness-raising and communication

8. With regard to awareness-raising and communication, in 2017 UNEP, WHO and CCAC expanded their BreatheLife campaign on air quality. To date, 43 cities, as well as numerous countries and regions, have signed up to the campaign with 173 actions benefiting over 97 million citizens. Recent signups include Accra, Mexico City and Vancouver. The UNEP pollution campaign: *Beat Pollution*, which aims to reduce pollution in all its forms, also supports the work of the BreatheLife campaign. Clean air advocates, such as Lucas Di Grassi, the Formula E (electric car racing) champion, and Paula Radcliffe, athletics legend, provide powerful inspiration for behavioural change on transport habits and awareness raising on the health impact of air pollution.

9. In May 2018, UNEP, in collaboration with CCAC, announced a partnership with the International Association of Athletics Federations in a campaign to raise global awareness about air pollution, with the creation of an air quality monitoring network that will eventually link almost 1,000 athletics tracks around the world.

### D. Regional cooperation

10. Several regional cooperation efforts have been launched. The Asia-Pacific Clean Air Partnership Joint Forum, hosted by UNEP, was held in March 2018 in tandem with an Asia-Pacific Clean Air Week, including a capacity-building programme for national air quality managers. In Africa, UNEP and CCAC supported the Economic Community of West African States to organize a technical workshop to review the implementation of the 2009 West and Central Africa Regional Framework Agreement on Air Pollution (Abidjan Agreement) and define a road map for the following four years. A Western Balkans initiative on air pollution and human health has been launched jointly by UNEP and WHO to develop the first-ever evidence-based analysis of air pollution and assess its effects on human health and the environment in the countries of the Western Balkans. Several other activities to promote cooperation on air quality have taken place in other regions.

### E. Resource mobilization

11. The overall coordination of activities relating to resolution 3/8 rests with the Economy Division of UNEP. The resources required for the implementation of the resolution included the appointment of an air quality coordinator, supported by a consultant. Seed funding of \$50,000 was allocated from the Environment Fund to jump-start activities, with additional extrabudgetary resources (\$280,000) provided by Norway and Sweden made available to support cities in developing air quality action plans. The United States of America has provided extrabudgetary resources in the amount of \$980,000 to support two countries in Africa – Ethiopia and Uganda – and two countries in Latin America and the Caribbean – Costa Rica and Peru – with air quality monitoring and action planning, and to establish mechanisms for knowledge exchange and communities of practice in Asia and the Pacific.

## II. Recommendations and suggested action

12. UNEP will continue to develop activities on air quality in the areas of monitoring and assessment, and capacity-building on policies; measures to prevent and reduce air pollution from their significant sources; and regional and global cooperation, including in the context of its air quality programme.

13. UNEP will continue to prioritize the sharing of knowledge relating to air quality among existing and any future regional cooperation forums involving key international partners, civil society organizations, member States, local government and the private sector. It will also continue to work on the assessment report on progress achieved by member States to adopt and implement key actions that can significantly improve air quality, as requested in resolution 3/8.

14. The United Nations Environment Assembly at its fourth session may wish to note and support the work being undertaken by UNEP, in particular in:

- (a) Expanding policy and technology support to more cities around the world;
  - (b) Establishing communities of practice in the regions (in addition to that established in Asia and the Pacific);
  - (c) Producing the assessment report on progress achieved by member States to adopt and implement key actions that can significantly improve air quality in time for the fifth session of the Environment Assembly;
  - (d) Continuing to raise financial and technical resources to fulfil the ambitious mandate of UNEP on air quality.
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