

Air Pollution and Health

Recent developments: World Health Resolution and
Global Platform on Air Quality and Health

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Health and the environment: addressing the health impact of air pollution

The Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on health and the environment: addressing the health impact of air pollution;¹

Reaffirming its commitment to the outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference “The future we want”, in which all States Members of the United Nations committed to promoting sustainable development policies that support healthy air quality in the context of sustainable cities and human settlements, and recognized that reducing air pollution leads to positive effects on health;²

Noting with deep concern that indoor and outdoor air pollution are both among the leading avoidable causes of disease and death globally, and the world’s largest single environmental health risk;³

Acknowledging that 4.3 million deaths occur each year from exposure to household (indoor) air pollution and that 3.7 million deaths each year are attributable to ambient (outdoor) air pollution, at a high cost to societies;⁴

Aware that exposure to air pollutants, including fine particulate matter, is a leading risk factor for noncommunicable diseases in adults, including ischaemic heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma and cancer, and poses a considerable health threat to current and future generations;

Concerned that half the deaths due to acute lower respiratory infections, including pneumonia in children aged less than five years, may be attributed to household air pollution, making it a leading risk factor for childhood mortality;

¹ Document A68/18.

² UNEA resolution 1/7, PP6.

³ Global Health Observatory <http://www.who.int/gho/phe/en/> (accessed 18 March 2015).

⁴ WHO. Burden of disease from ambient air pollution for 2012. http://www.who.int/phe/health_topics/outdoorair/databases/AAP_BoD_results_March2014.pdf?ua=1 (accessed 1 December 2014).

First World Health Assembly Resolution on Air Pollution and Health

7 million deaths a year due to household and ambient air pollution



The resolution:

- **key role health authorities** in raising awareness about the potential to save lives and reduce health costs, if air pollution is addressed effectively.
- Need for strong **cooperation between different sectors** and integration of health concerns into all national, regional and local air pollution-related policies.
- It urges Member States to **develop air quality monitoring systems and health registries** to improve surveillance for all illnesses related to air pollution;
- It urges Member States to strengthen international **transfer of expertise, technologies and scientific data** in the field of air pollution.

Asks the WHO Secretariat:

- To **build capacity to implement** the "*WHO air quality guidelines*" and "*WHO indoor air quality guidelines*";
- Regularly update the WHO guidelines
- **Compile and analyse** data on air quality, health
- Conduct **cost-benefit assessment of mitigation** measures;
- disseminate **evidence-based best practices** on effective indoor and ambient air quality interventions and policies related to health
- Advance **research** into air pollution's health effects and effectiveness.
- **Propose a road map for an enhanced global response** by the health sector that reduces the adverse health effects of air pollution.

to create, enhance and update, in cooperation with relevant United Nations agencies and programmes a **public information tool** of WHO analysis, including policy and cost-efficiency aspects, of specific and available clean air technologies to address the prevention and control of air pollution, and its impacts on health;

raise awareness of the public health risks of air pollution and the multiple benefits of Improved air quality, in particular in the context of the discussions on the post - **2015 development agenda**

cooperation with relevant United Nations advise and support tools to assist the health and other sectors at all levels of government, especially the local level and in **urban areas**, taking into account different sources of pollution in tackling air pollution and their health effects;

collaborate, as appropriate, with relevant international, regional and national stakeholders, to **compile and analyse data on air quality**, with particular emphasis on health related aspects of air quality

Global Platform on Air Quality and Health

- To ensure best estimates of human exposure to air pollution will continue to be regularly available for Burden of Disease estimates, as well as to ensure accountability, transparency and wide access of these results worldwide.
- Established in January 2014,
- A wide collaboration with international agencies including UNECE, WMO, UNEP, JRC, IIASA, World Bank, space research agencies (e.g. NASA, JAXA), as well as national agencies and research institutions.
- Yearly meetings to update on progress and results.
- Task forces to provide improvements in methods and outputs from one year to the next.

First year

- improvements in data integration and statistical fusion, (using data from monitors, atmospheric transport models and satellite remote sensing).
- First database of source apportionment studies (n=500)



Second year:

- Data fusion: Global air quality data as a result of fusion from various data sources, report on progress and work ahead,
- Emission sources information, including from emission inventories and source apportionment
- Exposure-risk relationship: Integrated dose-response functions that relate levels of air pollution indoors and outdoors to a range of diseases, report on progress and work ahead.
- Surface monitoring: key air pollution indicators to be monitored, minimum data sets for health purposes; systematic data collection and display;
- Automated Data acquisition, portable monitors etc. quality of outputs from different sources,
- Household air pollution: exposure assessment, progress in IAP data, availability of exposure data from Europe

New task forces proposed:

- Data fusion and synthesis – further improvements
- Models for integrating Household and Ambient Air Pollution exposure estimates
- Guidance on the collection of ground measurement data.
- Guidance on source apportionment studies.
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Establishment of a web-based resource providing access/ web linkage to:

- Results from the platform – methods, tools, results
- Tools for estimating health impacts from air pollution at local level (~~currently developed by EURO~~)
- Exposure-response functions
- Air quality databases:
 - WHO ambient air quality in cities,
 - WHO household air pollution database,
 - Joint ambient/ household air pollution (future)
- Analysis of trends.
- Burden of disease estimates.
- Awareness raising and communication tools.
- Collection of cost-effective interventions/ best practices to address air pollution and health.

Thank you

