Inputs for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly pollution theme

Dear UNEA Secretariat,
Greetings from Pure Earth/Global Alliance on Health and Pollution (GAHP), and best wishes for 2017!
Thank you for the opportunity to continue to provide input into the UNEA3 theme on pollution.

We would like to encourage the theme to focus as much as possible on health, and achieving tangible improvements in health outcomes for communities affected by toxic pollution. The reasons for doing so were included in the attached document, which was circulated prior to the decision to adopt pollution as the theme - and also because health as a sector traditionally draws more resources and attention than the environment. A key point would be to encourage countries to tackle their pollution problems based on impact to human health - meaning, interventions and resources should be allocated based on number of people impacted and the returns for public health, and where gaps are. In other words, interventions should be planned and implemented based on where they can achieve the most results (improvements to health).

We are embarking on exactly this process in a number of countries, including Thailand, Madagascar, Senegal, Philippines and Vietnam among others, in collaboration with key government agencies. This health and pollution planning process experience should yield valuable insights for discussion and sharing at UNEA3. We are coordinating of course with local UNEP offices throughout this process.

We would also like to focus the language introducing the topic away from just air pollution to address pollution more broadly. For example, in the rational section of theme text, the examples are quite restricted to marine litter and air pollution. We suggest to consider the below language:

Rationale: Pollution affects everyone, and it is currently the largest cause of avoidable death on the planet. The impact of pollution on ecosystems and health has become increasingly global in scale and extent, the need to recognize and to address the health risks associated with environmental pollution has become even more urgent. Whether it is marine litter in the ocean, car emissions filling the skies, or exposures to dangerous chemicals and heavy metals in contaminated water or soil, the impact of pollution is

significant... [RV1] :

> [RV1]These examples focus primarily on air pollution, and should be expanded to be more representative. In addition, Sand or Dust storms are not caused by humans, and are not something we can do much about, aside from reforestation projects. Our definition o pollution related to what humans put into the environment that in turn causes us harm. Thus, examples relating to something humans have done to the planet and directly causes adverse health impacts, such as lead or mercury contamination of the water and soil, are more pertinent examples. Mercury is a good example to use because it impacts humans and biodiversity

In addition, we would like to reiterate our offer to provide scientific references related to the impact of pollution on health and sustainable development more generally. We are coauthoring, in collaboration with UNEP, a Global Commission on Health and Pollution, which has some extremely important findings related to the burden of disease and costs of inaction of pollution. This report will be published in April 2017 in *The Lancet* but we would be pleased to send you an advance copy separately so that its findings can be used and disseminated at UNEA3, including in preparatory documents and discussions (as long as they are not publicized generally, as the findings are still under embargo by *The Lancet*).

We look forward to contributing to the discussion, and answering any questions you may have. Please do let us know of any specific needs for scientific references. Otherwise, we have many existing publications that should suffice.

Best regards,
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