



SIDE EVENT OUTCOME SUMMARY TEMPLATE

Side Event Session Title: *Improving Air Quality in African Cities*

Date: 23 June 2014

FOCUS/BRIEF DESCRIPTION /MAJOR ISSUES DISCUSSED:

Because of the worsening air pollution in many parts of Africa, the Governments of Kenya and Senegal, UNEP and the World Bank sponsored a Side Event at UNEA: “*Improving Air Quality in African Cities*”. The Side Event was held on June 23, 2014 from 1:15 to 2:45. Over 90 UNEA delegates attended the event.

In the Side Event, discussion centered on the key sources of air pollution in African cities and the current gaps in understanding of air pollution in Africa. It emphasized the actions that countries and cities are taking now, and presented snapshots of what is happening in several countries in Africa, including Senegal, Kenya and Nigeria. The event capitalized on the WHO’s recent report on the health effects of air pollution, which is fast becoming one of the leading causes of illness and death in developing countries, and leads to 176,000 deaths annually in Africa from outdoor air pollution, 600,000 deaths from household air pollution, and 3.7 million deaths globally.

Speakers at the side event included:

- Ambassador Martin Kimani, the Head of Kenyan’s Mission to the UN in Nairobi
- A panel of African experts, with representatives from Kenya, Senegal, and Nigeria.
 - Jane Akumu, UNEP, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, Transport Unit
 - Eng. Bahijjahtu Abubakar, National Coordinator, Renewable Energy Programme, Federal Ministry of Environment, Nigeria
 - Mr. Assane Diop, Chief of Air Quality Monitoring Centre, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Senegal
 - Professor Geoffrey Wahungu, Director General, National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA), Kenya
- Mounkaila Goumandakoye, Regional Director, Regional Office for Africa, UNEP

The discussion focused on:



- **Air Quality and Health:** The discussion and presentations focused on the recent WHO report, and emphasized the importance of air pollution, both outdoor and household air pollution, as an emerging health and environmental issue in Africa.
- **Economic Costs of air pollution:** The presentations from UNEP and Kenya showed the toll that air pollution is taking in Africa, including the economic costs (1.3 million USD per year in Kenya) AND the health costs.
- **Urbanization:** Urban issues have not traditionally been part of the conversation in Africa. However, because of the current high rate of urbanization in Africa, these issues are now being recognized. There was discussion about how best to address these urban issues, including air pollution and transport.
- **Air Quality Monitoring and Data:** Air quality information is a key component of an air quality management system. Senegal presented a model for other African cities/countries about how to set up and manage an air quality monitoring network, how to share this information with the public. All participants emphasized the importance of better data on air quality across Africa.
- **Vehicle emissions:** Kenya shared information about the increase in vehicle emissions in Kenya and the successes they have had in mitigating emissions, including phasing out lead in gasoline, placing a 8-year age limit on imported vehicles, and reducing sulphur in fuel from 10,000 ppm to 500 ppm.
- **The US Decision on Air Quality for UNEA:** The US briefly presented its proposed UNEA Decision on Air Quality to the group. The decision was welcomed, especially the capacity-building component of it. The US praised UNEP for its good and successful programs, including the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles, but said that it can and should do more -- expand capacity building, raise awareness, play a leadership role, work with other UN organizations, including WHO, and expand UNEP work on regional and sub-regional assessments.
- **Regulation vs economic incentives:** There was a discussion about enforcement and regulation vs economic incentives. Mrs. Abubakar gave an example from Nigeria, where they switched the fuel in Lagos taxis from diesel to Compressed Natural Gas or CNG. It was much more economical for the drivers, but also reduced air pollution, and was effective.
- **Indoor Air Pollution in Nigeria:** Mrs. Abubakar discussed a variety of Nigerian programs on Indoor air pollution and cookstoves. She also highlighted the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, which is working globally to reduce emissions from combustion, including from cookstoves.



OUTCOMES and RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The Africa Sustainable Transport Forum:** Ambassador Kimani announced the newly launched Africa Sustainable Transport Forum, and the High-Level Conference on Sustainable Transport for Africa that will take place here in Nairobi October 28-30, 2014. Ambassador Kimani welcomed everyone to attend the Conference. The ASTF will start the conversation across Africa on sustainable transport and the impact of transport on air quality and health.
- **US Air Quality Decision:** The Africans expressed appreciation for the US proposed Decision on Air Quality, and have formed a task team to discuss the decision and provide recommendations.
- **Sharing experiences across Africa:** Participants brought up some key air pollution issues that are being grappled with across Africa, including incineration, transport, health, and stakeholder involvement, and there was a consensus that the region needed to begin to share experiences and data. Thailand described the air quality network in the Asia-Pacific region, and felt that it may be a model for what Africa could do, including sharing data and information. The Africans were keen to join networks and learn from other's experiences.
- **UNEP** is ready to provide support to Africa on air quality and Green Growth issues, and the intersection of these, and will rely on the Africans to define priorities and needs.

Kindly fill in the sections above and mail to Tamiza Khalid, with a copy to Mamadou Kane.

