

Towards a Pollution-Free Planet: BreatheLife, the UN Clear Air campaign

Air pollution, which causes one in nine deaths worldwide, is the biggest environmental health risk of our time. The BreatheLife campaign – a partnership between UN Environment, the World Health Organization and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition – was launched in 2016 to address this urgent global challenge. The campaign aims to inform citizens about air quality and inform them of actions they can take to protect themselves and reduce their contribution. The campaign also engages cities to join the campaign and set air quality targets.

Objectives:

The campaign aims to build public support in cities and national governments to reduce air pollution and contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 3 on health and well-being. By the end of 2017, the campaign aims to have more than 50 cities reporting on air quality targets and action plans, and five national governments supporting the campaign. The campaign will drive a global movement for action:

- Inspiring a concerted effort to reduce air pollution, climate change and non-communicable disease;
- Galvanizing and celebrating action at all levels, while offering solutions to prevent and reduce pollution; and
- Collecting information on the state of air pollution and data from over 3,000 locations.

So far:

- 22 cities – representing a combined population of 17 million – have begun reporting on 44 actions. Another 12 cities are in the process of joining.
- The BreatheLife network of partners is growing, with groups of 50 sub-national governments such as (ng4SD), ICLEI Asia and the Clean Air Institute showing support. Other collaborators include campaigns such as “Every Breath Counts” by UNICEF, “Unmask my City” by Global Climate and Health Alliance and “Clean Air Days” by Global Action Plan.
- UN Environment has established a partnership with Formula E to raise awareness through their global race schedule. Other private sector partners are keen to support. These include Aclima, which provides air pollution real-time data, and Build your Dreams, an electrical bus and car producer.

On the road to the UN Environment Assembly:

- Securing support from cities and governments: This year, we expect to have at least one event per month from July to December in cities including London, Paris and Medellin, among others. “Street Campaigns” will also be taken forward in Chile and Mexico.
- Formula E: UN Environment will work closely with Formula E to ensure that forthcoming races in locations such as New York and Mexico raise the profile of the campaign.
- Public engagement: The next phase of the campaign will be to design a public engagement ask that mobilizes citizens to take their own individual actions to keep the air clean and adapt the current BreatheLife platform to call for political action on this issue.

At the UN Environment Assembly we hope to:

- Announce major commitments: During the Assembly, we expect to announce that more cities and countries have joined the BreatheLife campaign as partners.
- Citizen action: Those who have signed up to the #BreatheLife campaign will be invited to show their support for the Clean Planet Charter and share their stories and solutions.
- Innovation in Nairobi: We are requesting that Formula E bring electric vehicles to Nairobi, and that other partners install new air quality monitoring devices in the city, so that journalists can cover such stories while here.