

Towards a Pollution Free Planet

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Outline

- I. The growth and pollution paradox**
 - II. The case for action on pollution: for people, prosperity and the planet**
 - III. Towards a pollution free planet**
 - IV. The domains for environmental diplomacy**
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I Growth and the pollution paradox

Overall, Africa has achieved impressive economic growth over the past 15 years, with different sectoral patterns and with economic diversification that has enabled to withstand shocks linked to commodity price declines

- Poverty levels have reduced
- Fewer people sleep hungry
- People are better educated, live longer, and have more choices due to technological advances
- Consumption levels have increased

This overall improved economic and social well-being is however accompanied by increased pollution: indoor and outdoor air pollution, water pollution, land salinization and contamination, poor solid waste management, and marine litter.

Air pollution

- 90 per cent of the region's population is exposed to indoor air pollution due to the use of biomass sources of energy for cooking, lighting and heating
 - Dust storms originating from the Sahara Desert affect West Africa and areas beyond the region.
- **700,000 deaths from outdoor and indoor pollution**
 - **Annual costs of air pollution: US\$ 450 billion; 7.9% GDP**

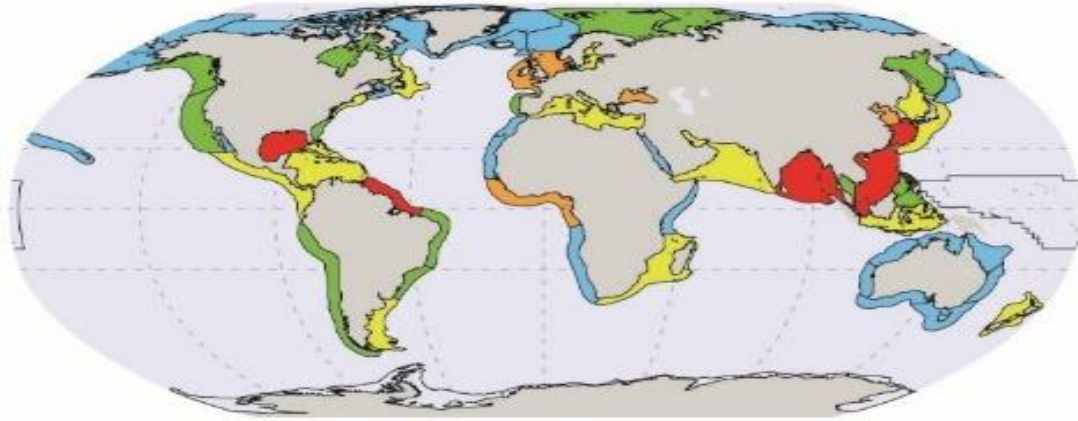
Fresh water pollution

- Despite recent improvements:
 - ❑ about 32 per cent of Africa's population still does not have access to potable water
 - ❑ 70 per cent lack adequate sanitation facilities, largely due to inadequate and deteriorating infrastructure resulting from underinvestment
- High pollutant loads of heavy metals, persistent organic pollutants and biological contaminants are observed in water
- In addition:
 - ❑ the discharge of chemicals into surface waters, and the identification of new and emerging pathogens pose challenges to maintaining water quality
 - ❑ The degradation of inland and coastal wetlands is leading to a loss of their water retention and purification functions and further affecting water quality.
 - **542 855 premature deaths in 2013 from unsafe water**
 - **Human costs of unsafe water: \$ 252.5 billion; 4.3%GDP**

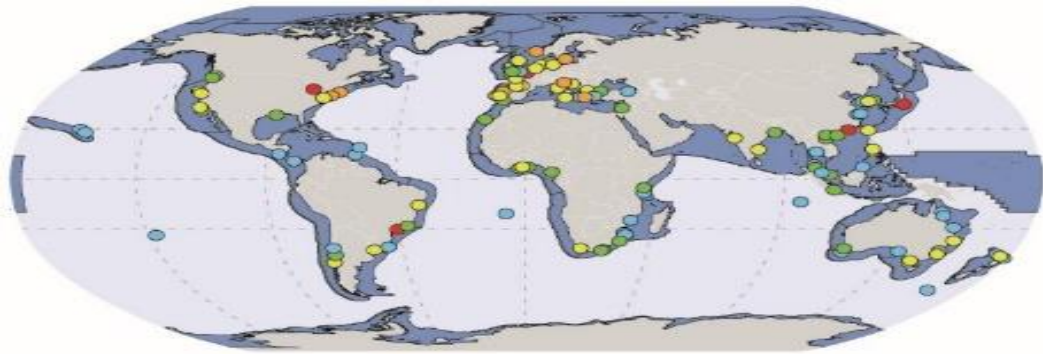
Land pollution

- Inefficient use of fertilizers in the rural areas result in patches of salinization
 - nutrient pollution from land-based runoff is a significant aspect of pollution that affects freshwater and marine environments.
 - Plastics often originate on land and find their way to the marine environment through rivers, waterways, and streams
 - Some health impacts result from chronic exposure to use of pesticides for men, women and children
 - Open waste dumps and burning affect lives, health and livelihoods and affect soil chemistry and nutrition, in addition to air quality
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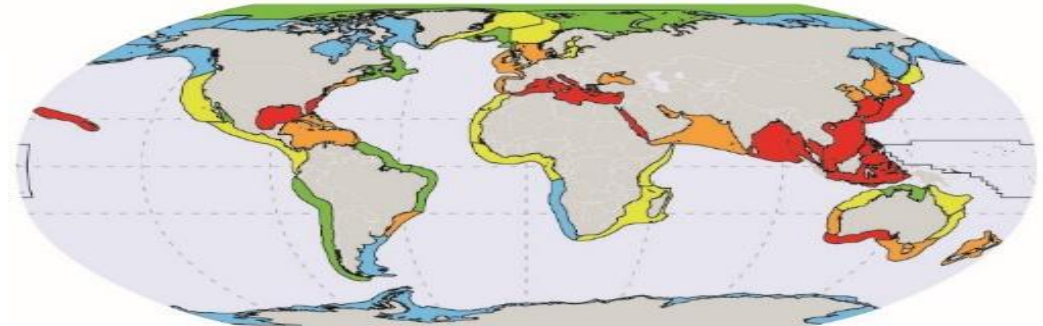
Coastal Pollution



Nutrient risk indicator categories



PCBs concentration range (nanograms per gram pellet)



Floating plastic debris risk categories

Lowest Low Medium High Highest

- Nutrients, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), plastic debris are evident along the coast of Africa
- 33 of the region's 48 mainland countries have a coastline; six others are island nations) which faces a threat from these sources.
- There are also 320 coastal cities in Africa, with associated high levels of economic activity, such as mining, oil and gas exploration, extraction and refining, and transportation.

Waste pollution

- High rates of urbanization in Africa, one of the consequences being growing waste management challenges
- An average of less than 50 per cent of solid waste in urban areas is being collected and properly disposed.
- Recycling rate is between 5-30%
- **Most of African countries lack waste data**



Source: UN Environment (2015) *Global Waste Management Outlook*

19 of the 50 biggest dump sites are in Africa

What is the 'pollution problem' from an environmental diplomacy perspective?

- ✓ Complexity – many sectors, many actors, many levels
 - ✓ Interdependent and cross boundary/media in nature
 - ✓ Environmentally unjust
 - ✓ Involves uncertainty and need for precaution
 - ✓ A false dilemma/narrative exists to grow first and clean up later
 - ✓ Implications for the Competitiveness of nations
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II. The Case for Actions on Pollution - governments

- ✓ **Multiple benefits:** health, economic productivity, environmental justice
 - ✓ **Ensuring rights of people to a healthy environment**
 - ✓ **Competitiveness and first mover advantages:**
 - linked to societal demands, resource availability, ecosystem resilience;
 - ✓ **Markets are changing and expanding opportunities to grow but also be clean:**
 - Green technologies
 - Innovative project finance
 - Resources
 - ✓ **Societal perceptions are changing and demands for a healthy environment are increasing**
 - Civil society
 - Non governmental organizations
 - Media
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Acting on pollution is good for business

Improved environmental performance results in greater economic, social and financial performance

- ✓ **Reduces Costs:** Adopting circular measures reduces waste but also increases resource availability; reduces costs
 - ✓ **Increases societal latitude to operate:** more attractive to local community
 - ✓ **Creates a better work force:** healthier and more productive and happy
 - ✓ **Results in fewer downtime and managerial risks:** of strikes, consumer boycotts
 - ✓ **Generates greater brand loyalty:** customer & worker
 - ✓ **Enhances reputation:** so attracts the cream in terms of recruitments
 - ✓ **Greater regulatory support:** so easier to access finance, international partnerships
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Action on Pollution can contribute to achieving multiple Sustainable Development Goals

ACTING ON POLLUTION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



1 NO POVERTY
Cleaner environments improve health and worker productivity and work days



2 ZERO HUNGER
Growing food on non-contaminated soils helps to fight hunger and ensure the provision of safe food round



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
Actions on pollution substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination



4 QUALITY EDUCATION
A clean environment enables quality education and education enables acquisition of knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles



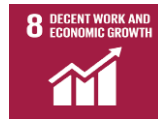
5 GENDER EQUALITY
Pollution reduction as well as equality, for example through reduced burden of fetching clean water, cleaner indoor air quality and better health enable gender equality



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
Better managed freshwater ecosystems and cleaner water significantly reduce the number of deaths from diarrhoeal diseases



7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy can cut air pollution indoors, which will particularly benefit women and children



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
Reduced exposure to pollution leads to improved health and well-being of workers and therefore increased productivity and economic growth



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
Pollution avoidance through adoption of green technologies and ecosystem based solutions fosters innovation and sustainability in industry and infrastructural sectors



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
Pollution governance and actions can ensure that no group or community is made to bear a disproportionate share of the harmful effects of pollution



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Sustainable transport, waste management, buildings and industry lead to cleaner air in cities



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
Resource efficiency and circularity in materials and input use reduce pollution and waste and contribute to sustainable consumption and production



13 CLIMATE ACTION
Clean energy and low carbon policies reduce air pollution and mitigate climate change impact at the same time



14 LIFE BELOW WATER
Action on marine pollution reduces potential bioaccumulation of toxic substances as well as habitat destruction, and help maintain healthy fisheries and ecosystems



15 LIFE ON LAND
Integrating ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts supports improved soil and land management and avoids dumping and other forms of pollution



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
Good 'pollution-related' governance reduces environmental burdens and injustices and can enhance availability of 'saved' resources for the underserved



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
Global partnerships to address pollution can have positive implications to health, jobs, worker productivity, planet and well-being

III. Towards a pollution free planet report: five overarching messages to achieve the goal

- ✓ A global compact on pollution would make pollution prevention a priority for all.
 - ✓ Environmental governance should be strengthened at all levels
 - ✓ Sustainable consumption and production should be promoted with waste reduction and management prioritized.
 - ✓ Investment in cleaner production technologies would help to counter pollution, alongside increased funding for pollution monitoring, infrastructure, management and control.
 - ✓ Multi-stakeholder partnerships/coalitions and collaborations would facilitate the addressing of gaps
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A Framework of Actions is proposed

- A. Targeted interventions**, based on risk assessments and scientific evidence of impacts, to address:
- i. 'hard-hitting' pollutants;
 - ii. Areas of pollution (air, water, marine and coastal, land/soil) including cross-cutting categories (e.g. chemicals, waste)

B. System-wide transformations at the economy level

Guided and underpinned by:

Principles : universality, sustainability, integration, precaution and inclusiveness
Enablers, or broader supporting actions, that aim to shift incentives, correct market and policy failures and address some of the gaps and issues that make pollution so pervasive and persistent.

IV. Domains for environmental diplomacy on pollution actions :

Addressing Gaps and Challenges

- ✓ Implementation gaps
 - ✓ Knowledge gaps
 - ✓ Infrastructure gaps
 - ✓ Limited leadership by financial institutions and industry
 - ✓ Mispricing, the invisibility of ecosystem values and externalization of pollution costs
 - ✓ Insufficient recognition by different actors that consumer choices have pollution consequences.
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Addressing Implementation

- ✓ Creating the political will to act
 - ✓ Mobilizing adequate resources
 - ✓ Strengthening capacity: inadequate administrative, financial, institutional and technical
 - ✓ Promoting inter-ministerial/inter-sectoral coordination
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Bridging the knowledge gap

Greater awareness of information on:

- *the sources of pollution,*
- *the pathways of exposure,*
- *impacts and solutions,*
- *on new research findings on the impacts to health and ecosystems and*
- *where emerging issues need to be taken into account.*
- *Solutions and technologies available*

Greater information disclosure

Heightened understanding of pollution's social, health and gender dimensions

Without broader public awareness, necessary socio-political pressure to prevent and mitigate pollution will not follow.

This will allow the public to play a role in ensuring government institutions and the regulated community and business meet their legal obligations and strengthen implementation.

Investing in infrastructure

Major forms of pollution exist due to the absence of infrastructure, such as monitoring systems, wastewater and sewage treatment plants, controlled waste collection, reception and disposal, recycling facilities, food storage, etc.

Funding, capacity and investments in infrastructure improvements is key to addressing pollution

Pollution control and management infrastructure enables **better practice**, and reduces **hazards associated with pollution**, such as waste dump collapses, flooding of sewage water or water runoff that leads to mobilization of dangerous chemicals from storage or remobilization of chemicals already in the environment, e.g. pesticides, or disease outbreaks after natural disasters.

Incentivizing leadership in financial institutions and industry

Example: development banks, finance institutions, and industry, in making pollution avoidance and control central to their decision making.

This gap is especially evident with regards to requirements related to **pollution information disclosure, due diligence, pollution prevention approaches, internalization of pollution costs, and green financing.**

Improved assessments and reporting of pollution exposure risks and internalization of environmental costs of activities and products are key to cleaner production and consumption investment decisions.

Integration of economic costs of pollution into product pricing would incentivize companies and consumers to **make more informed choices** and would create pressure on producers to reduce their pollution footprint and adopt better practices

Addressing mispricing, the invisibility of ecosystem values and externalization of pollution costs

Subsidies on e.g., energy, water, electricity, commodity crops, **also result in wastage and over-use.**

Lack of valuation of ecosystem goods and services, such as those from oceans, rivers, land, wetlands, and others result in the treatment of these ecosystems as dumps and sinks for waste.

Externality caused by upstream actions are often difficult to include in compliance downstream.

Plastics in the oceans is a case in point as the costs of their production and use on the environment are not internalized, lack of actions upstream of the value chain follow with impacts downstream through rivers and streams that open into the sea.

Removal of subsidies, making ecosystem values visible would reduce wastage and resource over-use; and avoid the treatment of ecosystems as dumps and sinks for waste

Recognizing that consumer choices have pollution consequences

Such choices, even when regulations and policy exist, suggest **the need of a serious engagement with their rationale**.

These can be due to

- Habit,
 - A feeling that one person/firm cannot make a difference,
 - A free rider problem,
 - Peer pressure or the lack thereof,
 - Social norms and practices,
 - Short termism,
 - Even the absence of information on products and alternative affordable options, and
 - Pro consumption messages.
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**Thank
you!**
