First WHO Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health: Improving air quality, combatting climate change – saving lives

Pre-Conference Workshop

Energy, health and cities: Improving air quality and reducing health risks in urban areas while improving energy access through renewable energy and energy efficiency

Monday 29 October 2018, 13:00–14:30
World Health Organization, Geneva – Salle A

Background

Cities are growing at a rapid rate. Sixty percent of people are expected to live in cities by 2030. Mayors and city governments are uniquely positioned to take swift and concerted action to address air pollution. This panel discussion will identify energy interventions for key air pollution sources in cities and discuss how the health and energy communities at the city-level can work together to clean the air and protect public health. The session will include a brief overview of health, air pollution and energy linkages in cities, some of the WHO resources available for choosing ‘health-wise’ sustainable energy interventions for transport, urban planning, waste, buildings and energy access, as well as include lessons from experiences on the ground working in cities.

WHO’s First Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health, 30 October - 1 November 2018

The first WHO Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health: Improving air quality, combatting climate change – saving lives, will take place at WHO Headquarters in Geneva from 30 October to 1 November this year. The conference is organized by WHO in collaboration with UN Environment, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

The conference will host about 400 participants, including representatives of WHO Member States, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, academia and the media. It aims to share with participants the current evidence on air pollution exposure and its health impacts; tools for informed decisions on healthy policy choices; and knowledge on effective interventions that may improve air quality and promote health. Several outcomes are anticipated, including a “Call for Urgent Action” by health and other sectors to reduce the number of deaths due to air pollution. The conference will call for commitments to improve air quality from countries, cities, relevant intergovernmental organizations and non-state actors.

Session objectives:

a. Provide an overview of the linkages between health, energy and air pollution in cities
b. Identify the opportunities to protect the health of urban populations through interventions addressing energy access, efficiency and enhanced reliance energy deployments

c. Sharing of experiences to tackle air pollution through energy interventions in cities

**Workshop Program / Provisional Agenda**

13:00 – 13:10 Opening: Breathe Life Video in cities

13:10 – 13:15 Introductions to session objectives & panelists – **Greg Carreau**, Director of the Water and Air Quality Bureau, Health Canada

13:15 - 13:30 Overview presentation outlining the opportunities for public health and air pollution through energy interventions at the city-level – **Sotiris Vardoulakis**, Director of Research, Institute of Occupational Medicine

13:30 – 13:40 Snapshot of WHO Urban Health Support – a brief overview presentation of the available tools and resources at WHO for addressing air pollution, energy and public health in cities – **Thiago Hérick de Sá**, WHO

(13:40-14:00) **Moderated Panel discussion** – each panellist is given the opportunity to give a brief introduction of their connections on energy, health and cities

*The discussion would address some of the following questions:*

a. What are some of the key energy interventions for reducing air pollution and improving public health in cities?

b. What are some opportunities for the energy and health communities in cities to work more closely together to improve public health?

c. What information, resources and capacity building are needed to further strengthen cooperation between the health and energy sectors, as well as to empower decision-makers in local and national governments to take action on energy, air pollution and health in urban areas?

**Chair: Greg Carreau**, Director of the Water and Air Quality Bureau, Health Canada

**Panel Participants:**

1) **Sr. Rafael Sosa Brizuela**, Paraguay – Commitment to Eliminate Polluting Fuel & Technology Use in Urban Areas access

2) **Felix Akrofi**, Officer, Low Carbon City, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability

3) **Ms. Pam Belcher-Taylor**, Mayor of Paynesville, Liberia

4) **Mr. Pindarous Allison**, Director, International Affairs, Monrovia City Corporation, Liberia

5) **Mr. Lule Richard**, Technical officer, City of Kampala (TBC)

(14:00-14:30) **Q & A, discussion**, with the identification of recommendations and key messages