



Washington, D.C., USA

7 – 9 November 2025



# United Nations Environment Assembly Background Guide 2025

Written by Ashley L. Rutenbeck and Eli Sepulveda



# NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2025 National Model United Nations Washington DC Conference (NMUN•DC)! We are pleased to introduce to you our committee, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA). Your committee's work is facilitated by volunteer staff. This year's committee staff are Director Ashley Lynn Rutenbeck and Assistant Director Elias Sepulveda. Ashley, is the vice president of a nonprofit for veterans, and holds a Bachelor's in Public Policy and Administration with certifications in Advancing Sustainable Development and Green Fiscal Policy. Elias (Eli) studies international development and researches global catastrophic risk interventions for a philanthropic fund. The preparation of these materials was supported by Under-Secretary-General Ashlee Ann Rolheiser, and Secretary-General, Alliyah Edwards.

The topics on the agenda for this committee are:

1. Ensuring Sustainable Tourism
2. Promoting Regional Cooperation on Air Pollution to Improve Air Quality Globally

The United Nations Environment Assembly is the highest-level decision-making body on the environment, with universal membership of all Member States and biennial sessions in Nairobi under UNEP's auspices. UNEA sets global environmental priorities, shapes international law, mobilizes financing, and tracks progress toward the 2030 Agenda through resolutions, ministerial declarations, and a multi-stakeholder forum led by an elected Bureau.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the conference, each delegation should submit their Position Papers by 11:59 p.m. (DC Time) on 15 October in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [DC Position Papers page](#).

Two resources, available to download from the NMUN website, serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions:

- The [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#), which explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions.
- The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#), which includes the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for this committee, please contact Under-Secretary-General Ashlee Rolheiser at [usgashlee.dc@nmun.org](mailto:usgashlee.dc@nmun.org) or the Secretary-General, Alliyah Edwards at [secgen.dc@nmun.org](mailto:secgen.dc@nmun.org)

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Ashley Rutenbeck, Director  
Elias Sepulveda, Assistant Director



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## Committee Overview

### Introduction

The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) is the primary governing body of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and is the international community's highest-level decision-making body on environmental matters.<sup>1</sup> In partnership with other United Nations institutions, it outlines the international environmental agenda and sets priorities for the international community.<sup>2</sup> Although its resolutions are not binding, UNEA brings together relevant international actors to address global environmental issues and shape environmental governance.<sup>3</sup>

### Mandate, Function and Powers

Twenty years after the adoption of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992), the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development called for the strengthening and upgrading of UNEP so it could better execute its mandate.<sup>4</sup> UNEA was created in 2012 as the successor to UNEP's Governing Council.<sup>5</sup> Whereas the Governing Council was composed of 58 Member States and sat within UNEP, UNEA is structured as a distinct entity and enjoys universal membership with 193 Member States.<sup>6</sup> As a high-level governance body, UNEA reviews and coordinates the work of the international community on environmental matters while serving as a forum for and initiator of debates to be continued by other, more specialized bodies.<sup>7</sup>

While the following list is not exhaustive, the mandate of UNEA can be summarized as:

- **UNEA will generally:** set broad priorities for global environmental policy; identify emerging themes in environmental governance; progressively develop international environment law and begin negotiations on environmental treaties; define the work and priorities of UNEP; create ad-hoc committees and subsidiary bodies to further discussions on specific areas of environmental concern when necessary; make recommendations to Member States and other international organizations.<sup>8</sup>
- **UNEA will not generally:** engage in operational projects; complete negotiations on environmental treaties, but rather identify emerging issues and promote an architecture for future environmental governance.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *About the United Nations Environment Assembly*. N.d.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Q&A: UN Environment Assembly*. 2024.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. *The future we want (A/RES/66/288)*. 2012. p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *About the United Nations Environment Assembly*. N.d.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.; United Nations Environment Programme, Governing Council. *Proceedings of the Governing Council at its Nineteenth Session (UNEP/GC.19/34)*. 1997.

<sup>7</sup> International Institute for Sustainable Development. *The United Nations Environment Assembly's Role as a Governance Architect*. 2022.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *What you need to know about the United Nations Environment Assembly*. 2024.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.; International Institute for Sustainable Development. *The United Nations Environment Assembly's Role as a Governance Architect*. 2022.





UNEA and UNEP are distinct entities. UNEA is the primary governing body and priority-setting mechanism of UNEP and does not operationalize these priorities itself.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, UNEP undertakes programs, projects, and awareness campaigns and provides support to national governments to achieve environmental obligations in line with the priorities set out by UNEA.<sup>11</sup>

### **Governance, Funding and Structure**

All 193 United Nations Member States are represented in UNEA.<sup>12</sup> The Assembly meets every two years to set priorities for global environmental policy, discuss developments in the area of environmental legislation, and assist in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) (2015).<sup>13</sup>

Consisting of ten Ministers who each serve a two-year term and are selected based on geographical rotations, UNEA's Bureau is responsible for the general conduct of business.<sup>14</sup> UNEA also has a Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), a subsidiary inter-sessional organ of UNEA that meets at least four times a year.<sup>15</sup> The CPR contributes to the preparation of the UNEA agenda, holds an advisory role in policy matters, and monitors the implementation of decisions.<sup>16</sup> The CPR also holds discussions on key issues, promotes the inclusion of non-resident members of the Committee, and performs other tasks given by UNEA.<sup>17</sup> The CPR consists of all accredited Permanent Representatives to UNEP and is led by a five-member Bureau that is elected for two years.<sup>18</sup>

UNEP relies on three main financial sources: earmarked funds, the Environment Fund, and the United Nations's regular budget.<sup>19</sup> Earmarked funds, also known as earmarked contributions, are funds appropriated for specific projects, themes, or countries.<sup>20</sup> These funds aim to expand and/or replicate the results of United Nations Environment's work in more countries and in cooperation with more partners.<sup>21</sup> The Environment Fund aids in maintaining the capacity, balance, and efficiency needed for UNEP to function.<sup>22</sup> Earmarked contributions and the Environment Fund are comprised of voluntary contributions; hence, 95% of UNEP's income is received on a voluntary basis from Member States.<sup>23</sup> The United Nations' regular budget supports the regular work of UNEA and the UNEP Secretariat.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Office of the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. *UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme*. N.d.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *About the United Nations Environment Assembly*. N.d.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Committee of Permanent Representatives*. 2024.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *How is UNEP funded*. 2024.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.; United Nations Environment Programme. *Earmarked Contributions*. 2024.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *How is UNEP funded*. 2024.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.



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United Nations, General Assembly. *The future we want (A/RES/66/288)*. 2012. Retrieved 27 October 2024 from: <http://undocs.org/en/A/RES/66/288>



## 1. Ensuring Sustainable Tourism

*“We need a global tourism sector that is sustainable – one with deep local value chains that expand demand for locally made products and services in ways that also directly and positively benefit local communities.”<sup>25</sup>*

### Introduction

According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing industries globally, representing approximately 10% of the world's total economic output while employing one out of every ten workers globally.<sup>26</sup> Tourism serves as a core component of economic growth as it attracts economic investment, increases exports, and contributes to job opportunities.<sup>27</sup> For Small Island Developing States (SIDS), this economic importance is particularly pronounced, with revenue from international tourism accounting for approximately 38% of total export revenue, and some destinations seeing figures as high as 85%.<sup>28</sup> However, consumption patterns in the tourism industry can have negative impacts on Member States, communities, and ecosystems.<sup>29</sup> In 2011, UNEP's Green Economy Report revealed that if the tourism industry continues to operate as it has been, by 2050, it will have generated increases of 154% in energy consumption, 131% in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, 152% in water consumption, and 251% in solid waste disposal.<sup>30</sup> For SIDS specifically, unsustainable tourism practices can undermine sustainable economic growth by harming aquatic environments that generate tourism such as coral reefs, beaches, and coastal waters.<sup>31</sup>

Given these challenges, the World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism) emphasizes that ensuring sustainable tourism involves incorporating practices that can maintain the industry's long-term viability through balancing environmental, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions.<sup>32</sup> One of these practices is sustainable consumption and production (SCP), which UNEP characterizes as the use of services and goods that support basic needs and improve quality of life while minimizing negative environmental impacts throughout the life cycle of the service or goods provided.<sup>33</sup> This includes practices like prioritizing locally sourced goods, improving energy efficiency, and reducing emissions from transportation.<sup>34</sup> Another practice for ensuring sustainable tourism involves protecting biodiversity.<sup>35</sup> UNEP defines biodiversity as the diversity within species, between species, ecosystems, and living organisms.<sup>36</sup> Given that natural resources, such as beaches and wildlife, account for over 80% of the value generated by the tourism

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<sup>25</sup> United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Opening Remarks by the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Dennis Francis, at the High-Level Thematic Event on Tourism*. 2024.

<sup>26</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Tourism*. N.d.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> World Tourism Organization. *Tourism in Small Island Developing States (SIDS)*. N.d.

<sup>29</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Primer 2: Nature-based Solutions in Oceans and Coastal Ecosystems*. 2023.

<sup>30</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*. 2011. pp. 8, 15, 25.

<sup>31</sup> United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Tourism 'intrinsically susceptible' to climate shocks, political unrest, pandemic threat*. 2024.

<sup>32</sup> World Tourism Organization. *Sustainable Development*. N.d.

<sup>33</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Sustainable Consumption and Production Policies*. N.d.

<sup>34</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *ABCs of SCP: Clarifying Concepts on Sustainable Consumption and Production*. 2010.

<sup>35</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Sustainable Consumption and Production Policies*. N.d.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.





industry, preserving biodiversity is an important part of ensuring sustainable tourism because it helps maintain ecosystem health, which supports the industry's resilience to environmental shocks and can attract tourist interest.<sup>37</sup>

For communities that live near tourism destinations, tourism can have both positive and negative effects.<sup>38</sup> When employed in the sector, tourism can be a source of economic inclusion for women, young people, immigrants, and rural communities.<sup>39</sup> Conversely, it can also have negative effects on Indigenous communities, small-scale fishers, and rural populations through environmental degradation if done without consideration for the cultures and environments that may have initially attracted tourists.<sup>40</sup> To address these challenges, ecotourism can help include local communities in the economic benefits of tourism and mitigate negative social and environmental impacts of tourism.<sup>41</sup> This form of tourism, which UN Tourism defines as travel motivated primarily by appreciating nature and traditional cultures while supporting the maintenance of natural areas, creates opportunities for local communities to benefit economically from the tourism industry.<sup>42</sup> Ecotourism, sustainable public procurement (SPP), and SCP practices all support UNEA's efforts toward making tourism more sustainable in accordance with the *10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns* (10YFP) (2012).<sup>43</sup>

### *International and Regional Framework*

In 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development was held in Rio and marked the 20-year anniversary of the original 1992 Earth Summit.<sup>44</sup> The conference recognized the need for collaboration to achieve SCP, and culminated with the adoption of the *10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns* (10YFP).<sup>45</sup> This framework established six programs; Sustainable Public Procurement, Consumer Information for SCP, Sustainable Tourism, Sustainable Lifestyles and Education, Sustainable Buildings and Construction, and Sustainable Food Systems.<sup>46</sup> These initiatives aim to transform global consumption toward more sustainable patterns that advance broader development goals.<sup>47</sup> The program on sustainable tourism aims to make SCP a priority in tourism policies to address pollution, biodiversity decline, and climate change, and has since

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<sup>37</sup> International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. *Achieving 30x30: The Role of Nature Positive Tourism in Meeting Global Biodiversity Targets*. 2024; World Tourism Organization. *Biodiversity*. N.d.

<sup>38</sup> World Tourism Organization. *Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism*. pp. 51, 113.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 51.

<sup>40</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Primer 2: Nature-based Solutions in Oceans and Coastal Ecosystems*. 2023; Ocean Panel. *Opportunities for Transforming Coastal and Marine Tourism*. 2020. p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> World Tourism Organization. *Ecotourism and Protected Areas*. N.d.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Targets and Indicators and the SDGs*. 2014. p. 8.

<sup>44</sup> United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3-14 June 1992*. N.d.

<sup>45</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *10YFP - 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns*. N.d.

<sup>46</sup> United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. *Letter dated 18 June 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development*. 2012.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.



contributed to guiding national tourism policies.<sup>48</sup> One of the ways the program aims to do this is through its Global Tourism Plastics Initiative that encourages multi-stakeholders commitments in the tourism industry to report publicly on their environmental impacts and eliminate the use of plastic packaging and single use items by 2030.<sup>49</sup> Additionally, in 2015, the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/313, “Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development” (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (AAAA).<sup>50</sup> The AAAA emphasizes the importance of sustainable tourism for economic growth and calls for improved economic monitoring, specifically for measuring the development impacts of sustainable tourism.<sup>51</sup>

Pursuant to this, in September 2015, the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/1, “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (2030 Agenda), which established the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>52</sup> Notably, SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) targets 8.4 on “improving global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation” and 8.9 on “devising and implementing policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products” build upon the 10YFP to encourage resource efficiency in consumption and production, and promote sustainable tourism that supports local cultures and economies.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) targets 12.8 on “ensuring that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature” and 12b on “developing and implementing tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products” demonstrate further international commitment.<sup>54</sup> SDG 14 (life below water) target 14.7 on “increasing the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism” further highlights the 2030 Agenda commitments to SIDS.<sup>55</sup>

In 2024, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report* highlighted the need for greater progress on data monitoring environmental impacts of tourism to achieve the goals.<sup>56</sup> Building upon the framework of the SDGs, the *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* also contributes to sustainable tourism and was adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) in 2022.<sup>57</sup> This framework emphasizes the importance of biodiversity and conservation in sustainable economic development with

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<sup>48</sup> One Planet. *Sustainable Tourism Programme*. N.d.

<sup>49</sup> One Planet. *Global Tourism Plastics Initiative*. N.d.

<sup>50</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*. 2015.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p. 36.

<sup>52</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

<sup>53</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*. 2022.

<sup>54</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns*. N.d.; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 14: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns*. N.d.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report*. 2024. p. 33.

<sup>57</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*. 2022.



the goal of halting and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030.<sup>58</sup> UNEA's work towards ensuring sustainable development has built upon these frameworks through recent sessions, including UNEA's 5th session in 2022 (UNEA-5), where UNEA adopted resolution 5/5, "Nature-based Solutions (NBS) for Supporting Sustainable Development", which emphasizes the need for environmentally beneficial development to improve social, economic, and environmental resilience.<sup>59</sup> UNEA resolution 5/5 also requested UNEP to support the implementation of NBS.<sup>60</sup> In addition to this, UNEA-5 also culminated with the adoption of resolution 5/11, "Enhancing Circular Economy as a Contribution to Achieving Sustainable Consumption and Production", which advocates for the implementation of SCP broadly across sectors.<sup>61</sup> Following this, in 2024, the General Assembly adopted resolution 78/260, "International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism, 2027", which declared 2027 as the international year of tourism.<sup>62</sup> The goal of resolution 78/260 is to promote collaboration between the United Nations system, Member States, and public and private sectors toward making tourism more sustainable.<sup>63</sup> The resolution also advocates for inclusive decision-making at all levels through the equal participation of women, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities as stakeholders.<sup>64</sup>

### ***Role of the International System***

UNEP is the main coordinating body within the United Nations system for environmental action, working with governments, organizations, and stakeholders to implement environmental policies and programs across various areas like climate change, biodiversity, and pollution, as outlined by UNEA.<sup>65</sup> In support of the 10YFP, UNEP also supports the Life Cycle Initiative, which is a public-private partnership that provides life cycle knowledge of goods and services to public and private stakeholders in support of sustainable tourism.<sup>66</sup> The initiative focuses on hotspots or areas facing large environmental impacts from tourism, and identifies causes and engages in multi-stakeholder interventions to address them.<sup>67</sup> Previously, the Life Cycle Initiative has focused on improving hotel energy efficiency, reducing single-use plastics, and limiting food waste in the Dominican Republic as a hotspot area, and is projected to reduce emissions and food waste 25-50% by 2030.<sup>68</sup> In addition to the Life Cycle Initiative, UNEP also works with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which helps fund projects that integrate biodiversity conservation and sustainable tourism, particularly in protected areas and developing economies.<sup>69</sup>

Created in 1990, GEF is jointly managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNEP, and the World Bank to fund climate change, biodiversity, ozone depletion, and international waters projects in developing countries, with 186 member countries participating.<sup>70</sup> In 2024, UNEA restructured

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *Nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development (UNEP/EA.5/RES.5/5)*. 2022.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. *International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism, 2027 (A/RES/78/260)*. 2024.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *About the United Nations Environment Programme*. N.d.

<sup>66</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *The Life Cycle Initiative*. N.d.

<sup>67</sup> Life Cycle Initiative. *Implementation of Life Cycle Thinking in the Tourism Sector*. N.d.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Global Environment Facility. *Projects*. N.d.

<sup>70</sup> Global Environment Facility. *GEF: How it all Began*. 2016; Global Environment Facility. *Partners*. N.d.



the GEF through the adoption of UNEA resolution 2: “Amendments to the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility”, which aimed to improve the GEF’s capacity for funding partners’ conservation and sustainable programs.<sup>71</sup> Its projects have specifically supported initiatives towards protecting freshwater, incorporating SCP practices in businesses, and ecosystem restoration across international organizations such as UNEP, the World Bank, and UNDP.<sup>72</sup> GEF also supports regional initiatives hosted by the Asian Development Bank, the African Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to help fund environmental restoration projects.<sup>73</sup>

Beyond these partnerships, UNEP also collaborates with UN Tourism, a specialized United Nations agency, towards promoting and supporting sustainable tourism practices.<sup>74</sup> In 2001, UN Tourism adopted their Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, which encourages sustainable tourism by providing governments and private actors with guiding principles that advocate for local communities, preserving cultural heritage, and implementing environmentally conscientious policies in the tourism sector.<sup>75</sup> The code was officially recognized by the General Assembly in 2002 through resolution 56/212, “Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.”<sup>76</sup> In addition to promoting sustainable tourism practices, UN Tourism also supports the SDGs by providing data monitoring via annual questionnaires for Member States to inform SDG targets 8.9.1 on “tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate” and indicator 12.b.1 on “implementation of standard accounting tools to monitor the economic and environmental aspects of tourism sustainability.”<sup>77</sup> These surveys measure self-reported tourism expenditure, employment by tourism, consumption flows of water and energy, and waste.<sup>78</sup> Another way UN Tourism conducts data monitoring is through the Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST).<sup>79</sup> MST was developed by UN Tourism and adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2024 to define key concepts and data metrics for producing data on the tourism industry.<sup>80</sup> UN Tourism also leads the One Planet Initiative in partnership with UNEP to promote knowledge sharing and networking opportunities through best practice guidelines and consultations with public private partnership in support of the 10YFP’s Sustainable Tourism Programme.<sup>81</sup> One Planet also supports the Global Strategy on SCP, which outlines four pillars for implementing SCP through regional and thematic consultations that emphasize biodiversity friendly policies in private sector tourism.<sup>82</sup> These four pillars focus on positioning SCP as essential for sustainable development, enabling multi-stakeholder partnerships, empowering

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<sup>71</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *Amendments to the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility (UNEP/EA.6/RES.2)*. 2024.

<sup>72</sup> Global Environment Facility. *Projects*. N.d.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> World Tourism Organization. *About Us*. N.d.

<sup>75</sup> World Tourism Organization. *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*. N.d.

<sup>76</sup> World Tourism Organization. *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*. N.d.

<sup>77</sup> World Tourism Organization. *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*. N.d.

<sup>78</sup> World Tourism Organization. *Economic Contribution and SDGs*. N.d.

<sup>79</sup> World Tourism Organization. *Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism*. 2024.

<sup>80</sup> World Tourism Organization. *UN Adopts a New Global Standard to Measure the Sustainability of Tourism*. 2024.

<sup>81</sup> One Planet. *Sustainable Tourism Programme*. N.d.; World Tourism Organization. *One Planet*. N.d.

<sup>82</sup> One Planet. *Global Strategy on Sustainable Consumption and Production*. N.d.



countries to implement SCP, and developing a global movement for action.<sup>83</sup> These pillars were outlined in the original 10YFP and have been supported by subsequent UNEA and UNEP partnerships.<sup>84</sup>

Beyond United Nations agencies and specialized bodies, civil society and regional organizations also host important programming that support sustainable tourism.<sup>85</sup> The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) is a think tank that functions as a SDG knowledge hub and provides technical research and guidance on green public procurement in addition to providing policy analysis on tourism practices.<sup>86</sup> Green public procurement is centered on reducing environmental impacts of public procurement and has the common goal of reducing negative environmental impacts as SCP practices.<sup>87</sup> Additionally, regional initiatives such as the Asia Pacific Green Public Procurement (GPP) Network, Compras Sostenibles, and the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) working group, all support sustainable public procurement practices that directly impact the tourism sector's environmental footprint, aligning with the goals of 10YFP and supporting One Planet's sustainable public procurement programme.<sup>88</sup>

### ***Leveraging Sustainable Consumption and Production in Tourism***

SCP is a guiding practice for reducing the environmental footprint throughout the life cycle of providing goods or services.<sup>89</sup> It promotes changes throughout production and consumption systems by helping separate environmental degradation from economic growth, applying life cycle thinking, and supporting opportunities for countries to implement sustainable technologies and practices early in their sectoral development.<sup>90</sup> One practice within SCP is SPP, a method for public organizations to procure goods and services that consider the entire lifecycle of a product from design to disposal.<sup>91</sup> When applied in the tourism sector, SPP can help to minimize the ecological footprint of tourist supply chains by sourcing goods and services from local businesses and producers, thereby resulting in fewer emissions from transport.<sup>92</sup> Two key programmes established by the 10YFP to implement SCP and SPP principles are the Sustainable Tourism Programme and the SPP Program.<sup>93</sup> The Sustainable Tourism Programme specifically emphasizes SCP practices to support environmental health by reducing negative

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *10YFP - 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns*. N.d.; One Planet. *Sustainable Tourism Programme*. N.d; World Tourism Organization. *One Planet*. N.d.

<sup>85</sup> One Planet. *Sustainable Tourism Programme Members*. N.d.

<sup>86</sup> International Institute for Sustainable Development. *Publications*. N.d.; International Institute for Sustainable Development. *Tourism Recovery and Resilience in Commonwealth Small States: Driving circular economy pathways post-COVID-19*. 2021.

<sup>87</sup> Green Purchasing Network Malaysia. *A Sampling of Successes in Green Public Procurement*. 2017. p. 43.

<sup>88</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Asia Pacific Green Public Procurement (GPP) Network*. N.d.; United Nations Environment Programme. *Sustainable Public Procurement*. N.d.

<sup>89</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Sustainable Consumption and Production Policies*. N.d.

<sup>90</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Sustainable Consumption and Production Policies*. N.d.

<sup>91</sup> One Planet. *The Sustainable Public Procurement Programme of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP SPP Programme) Principles of Sustainable Public Procurement*. 2015; United Nations Environment Programme. *10YFP - 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns*. N.d.

<sup>92</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Sustainable Consumption and Production Policies*. N.d.

<sup>93</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *10YFP - 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns*. N.d.





environmental impacts associated with the procurement of goods and services in the tourism sector.<sup>94</sup> By promoting practices such as local sourcing, resource efficiency, and waste reduction, these SCP practices benefit local communities within touristic areas through localized economic growth.<sup>95</sup> These practices can include reducing emissions in transport, GHGs, energy consumption, solid waste, and plastics from products and services.<sup>96</sup> This supports SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) by improving resource efficiency while reducing waste and environmental impacts.<sup>97</sup>

In 2019, the first comprehensive review of SCP in tourism was published by UN Tourism and highlighted various challenges and recommendations.<sup>98</sup> The report revealed that, despite mentions of sustainability in national tourism policies, existing data monitoring was focused on the tourism sector's performance and economic outcomes and did not publicly present SCP specific indicators or monitor the sector's environmental impacts.<sup>99</sup> The lack of formally identified SCP Impact Areas in monitoring systems contributed to gaps in monitoring environmental impacts at national and subnational levels.<sup>100</sup> Given the large role of the private sector in tourism, the report highlighted that tourism policies could encourage public-private partnerships to support reporting and bolster environmental impact monitoring.<sup>101</sup> To help address these challenges, UNEA, through UNEP, has developed methodologies on implementing SCP that include policy recommendations and sustainability indicators, in addition to conducting global reviews of SPP to assess implementation.<sup>102</sup> With monitoring from Member States and UNEP, these SPP reviews assess the volume of new contracts with core sustainability focuses, as well as the environmental benefits of procurement, and their contribution toward achieving the SDGs.<sup>103</sup> UN Tourism has since supported SCP implementation through toolkits for policy makers that outline SCP indicators for projects.<sup>104</sup> Regional actors are also supporting the implementation of SCP in the tourism sector.<sup>105</sup> In LAC, the Regional Council of Government Experts on SCP work to provide recommendations to the Forum of Ministers of Environment of LAC in alignment with the 10YFP.<sup>106</sup> This Regional Council was established in 2003 with the express goal of supporting the 10YFP and making recommendations to LAC.<sup>107</sup> A key part of the Council's work involves promoting the Regional SCP Strategy, which specifically highlights sustainable tourism as one of its focal points for integrating SCP practices.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> One Planet. *Sustainable Tourism Programme*. N.d.

<sup>95</sup> World Tourism Organization. *Tourism in the 2030 Agenda*. N.d.

<sup>96</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *ABCs of SCP: Clarifying Concepts on Sustainable Consumption and Production*. 2010.

<sup>97</sup> World Tourism Organization. *Tourism in the 2030 Agenda*. N.d.

<sup>98</sup> World Tourism Organization. *Baseline Report on the Integration of Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns into Tourism Policies*. 2019.

<sup>99</sup> World Tourism Organization. *Baseline Report on the Integration of Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns into Tourism Policies*. 2019. pp. 8-9.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, pp. 8-9, 63.

<sup>101</sup> World Tourism Organization. *Baseline Report on the Integration of Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns into Tourism Policies*. 2019. p. 9.

<sup>102</sup> One Planet. *Factsheets on Sustainable Public Procurement in National Governments*. 2023.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>104</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *An Introduction to the Toolkit for 10YFP National Focal Points*. 2017.

<sup>105</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Regional Council of Government Experts on Sustainable Consumption and Production*. N.d.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean. *Regional Strategy on Sustainable Consumption and Production 2024-2030*. 2024. p. 19.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.



## Promoting Nature-Based Solutions for Tourism

NBS are actions that “protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage” ecosystems while supporting human wellbeing, resilience, and biodiversity.<sup>109</sup> NBS are especially critical in touristic areas that depend upon environmental activities, such as snorkeling or hiking, that could negatively impact SIDS if done without conservation efforts.<sup>110</sup> In the tourism sector, these solutions support SDG 15 (life on land) and SDG 14 (life below water) by prioritizing environmental preservation in touristic interactions with the environment.<sup>111</sup> A key part of NBS includes protecting biodiversity, which is important for the longevity of natural ecosystems and supports the tourism sector by attracting ecotourism and supporting resilience to environmental shocks.<sup>112</sup> Unsustainable tourism practices can specifically harm coastal ecosystems and result in a loss of wildlife, disruption of local fishing industries, and decline in tourist appeal.<sup>113</sup> In addition to negatively impacting the environment and tourism sector, unsustainable tourism practices can also threaten the economic and cultural livelihoods for communities that reside in coastal environments.<sup>114</sup> Unsustainable practices of overfishing, pollution, and habitat destruction threaten non-touristic livelihoods for local fishers, and can displace communities that rely on these environments.<sup>115</sup>

One challenge to implementing NBS has been the misunderstanding and misuse of the term in projects, which contributes to confusion around what NBS are meant to be.<sup>116</sup> UNEA has made efforts to address this challenge and formally defined NBS in 2022 through the adoption of resolution 5/5: “NBS for Supporting Sustainable Development.”<sup>117</sup> Beyond clarifying the definition, resolution 5/5 highlighted the need for sharing knowledge and best practices to support effective implementation of NBS across the international community.<sup>118</sup> To implement these practices, UNEP has hosted multi-stakeholder consultations, such as the Global Consultation on NBS, to support multiple projects aimed towards integrating NBS in tourism.<sup>119</sup> One example of these projects is the creation of the Integrated Collaborative Approaches for Sustainable Tourism Programme (iCOAST) in 2024.<sup>120</sup> iCOAST is a collaborative project supported by GEF that aims to incentivize multi-stakeholder partnerships ranging

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<sup>109</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *Nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development (UNEP/EA.5/RES.5)*. 2022.

<sup>110</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Primer 2: Nature-based Solutions in Oceans and Coastal Ecosystems*. 2023.

<sup>111</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Implementing Nature-based Solutions for Resilience in the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration*. N.d.

<sup>112</sup> World Tourism Organization. *Biodiversity*. N.d.

<sup>113</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Primer 2: Nature-based Solutions in Oceans and Coastal Ecosystems*. 2023.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid; Ocean Panel. *Opportunities for Transforming Coastal and Marine Tourism*. 2020.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>116</sup> International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. *Ensuring effective Nature-based Solutions*. N.d.

<sup>117</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *Nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development (UNEP/EA.5/RES.5)*. 2022.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>119</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *Information on the implementation of resolution 5/5 on nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development (UNEP/EA.6/INF/5)*. 2024. pp. 8-9; Ocean Panel. *Opportunities for Transforming Coastal and Marine Tourism*. 2020; United Nations Environment Programme. *First Global Consultation on Nature-based Solutions*. N.d.

<sup>120</sup> Global Environment Facility. *Integrated Collaborative Approaches for Sustainable Tourism (iCOAST)*. N.d.



from local communities, governments, and the private sector to sustainably transform local tourism supply chains.<sup>121</sup> While still in progress, iCOAST's sub-projects are expected to produce assessments of eco-labels for tourism entities, and support low waste technologies for businesses to adopt.<sup>122</sup> This project is implemented through multiple United Nations agencies and executed by local Member State ministries, demonstrating the broad scope of implementation that can be achieved through collaborative mechanisms.<sup>123</sup>

The collaborative efforts between the GEF, UNEP, and other United Nations agencies aims to incentivize public, private, and local community partners across 17 Member States to implement sustainable tourism practices to reduce biodiversity loss and resource waste while creating jobs in local communities.<sup>124</sup> These partnerships support projects that have successfully incorporated aspects of NBS to protect biodiversity in the tourism sector.<sup>125</sup> In 2024, Chile, in partnership with UNEP, implemented observation posts to protect bird eggs and set regulatory protections for local wetlands that had been receding as a result of unsustainable tourism in the area, resulting in more wetland biodiversity and a rebound of more sustainable tourism.<sup>126</sup> This project aligns with targets 2 and 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which encourage the restoration and conservation of ecosystems, like wetlands.<sup>127</sup> As another example of NBS, in 2023 Albania created the Vjosa Wild River National Park to address tourism-related environmental concerns while sustainably attracting visitors in consultation with local communities.<sup>128</sup> These two projects align with the best practice of collaborating with local communities in the development of NBS outlined in the UNEA resolution 5/5.<sup>129</sup>

## Conclusion

Tourism presents various economic and environmental opportunities and challenges in the international community.<sup>130</sup> Unsustainable tourism can be environmentally damaging and threaten the livelihoods of local communities, ecosystems, and undermine sector longevity when dependent upon environmental attractions.<sup>131</sup> Transitioning the tourism sector towards sustainable practices is key to combating projected increases in energy consumption, GHG emissions, water consumption, and waste disposal.<sup>132</sup> UNEA has taken various efforts to help ensure tourism is sustainable for the long term future by emphasizing SCP

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Global Environment Facility. *GEF-8 Program Framework Document*. 2024. pp. 22-26.

<sup>123</sup> Global Environment Facility. *Integrated Collaborative Approaches for Sustainable Tourism (iCOAST)*. N.d.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *In Chile, wetlands spring back to life, bringing with them economic opportunities*. 2025.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*. 2022. p. 9.

<sup>128</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *In Albania, coupling ecotourism with conservation for economic growth*. 2025.

<sup>129</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *Nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development (UNEP/EA.5/RES.5)*. 2022.

<sup>130</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Tourism*. N.d.

<sup>131</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Primer 2: Nature-based Solutions in Oceans and Coastal Ecosystems*. 2023.

<sup>132</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Tourism*. N.d.



practices and NBS.<sup>133</sup> This work includes building sustainable practices into key frameworks such as the 10YFP and the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism that encourage SCP and engagement with local communities as equal stakeholders.<sup>134</sup> These efforts are further strengthened through partnerships with organizations like GEF and One Planet, which support programming aligned with the 10YFP toward environmental stability and economic growth that benefits local communities.<sup>135</sup> Building on these partnership efforts, collaborative engagement between governments, private sector stakeholders, civil society groups, and local communities remain important for effectively implementing sustainable tourism practices and addressing existing gaps in monitoring and planning.<sup>136</sup>

### **Further Research**

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider: How can environmental sustainability be integrated into the tourism sector? How can multi-stakeholder partnerships support sustainable tourism? How can sustainable tourism practices be leveraged to include local communities in economic growth? How can financial barriers to sustainably transitioning the tourism sector be overcome? What role can technology and innovation play in supporting sustainable tourism practices? How can the international community improve the MST and data collection systems for sustainable tourism goals?

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<sup>133</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *Nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development (UNEP/EA.5/RES.5)*. 2022.

<sup>134</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *10YFP - 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns*. N.d.; World Tourism Organization. *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*. N.d.

<sup>135</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *10YFP - 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns*. N.d.

<sup>136</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *Nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development (UNEP/EA.5/RES.5)*. 2022.



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## 2. Promoting Regional Cooperation on Air Pollution to Improve Air Quality Globally

### Introduction

Air pollution remains one of the most pressing environmental challenges globally, with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) reporting that it is the cause of over 8 million premature deaths annually around the world.<sup>137</sup> Air pollution, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), is the presence of harmful chemical, physical, or biological substances in indoor or outdoor environments that disrupt the natural composition of the atmosphere.<sup>138</sup> Nearly the entire global population, at 99%, breathes air with pollutant levels exceeding WHO guidelines, making it a critical factor in both climate change mitigation efforts and addressing the impacts of urbanization on air quality globally.<sup>139</sup> Recognizing the need for collective action, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) recently adopted resolution 6/10 (2024), "Promoting Regional Cooperation on Air Pollution to Improve Air Quality Globally", emphasizing the critical role of regional collaboration in tackling transboundary air pollution by urging Member States to enhance frameworks, share best practices, and invest in clean technologies across key sectors like energy and transportation.<sup>140</sup> UNEA underscores that fostering such partnerships can not only improve air quality but also contribute to mitigating climate change, protecting biodiversity, and reducing the economic burden of pollution-related healthcare costs.<sup>141</sup>

According to the World Bank, air pollution's economic burden on health and well-being reaches an estimated USD \$8.1 trillion globally each year.<sup>142</sup> Regional cooperation plays a vital role in tackling air pollution, although 95% of the world's population lives in countries that have signed international agreements to reduce it, there are still significant gaps in implementation, infrastructure, and knowledge-sharing.<sup>143</sup> UNEA operates alongside UNEP to further sustainable development practices that balance the needs of economic advancement and environmental preservation.<sup>144</sup> The United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) emphasizes that strengthening regional cooperation is vital to overcoming persistent challenges such as differing institutional structures, limited capacities, and communication gaps that have hindered effective coordination in the past.<sup>145</sup> As the United Nations core body for conflict prevention and mediation, DPPA highlights the value of regional organizations, which often have deeper insight into local political, social, and environmental dynamics.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Pollution Action Note - Data you need to know*. 2023.

<sup>138</sup> United Nations, World Health Organization. *Air pollution*. 2025.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *Promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally (UNEP/EA.6/RES.10)*. 2024. p. 2.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid. p. 1.

<sup>142</sup> BioMed Central. *The costs, health and economic impact of air pollution control strategies: a systematic review*. 2024.

<sup>143</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Why does environment, health and pollution matter?*. 2025; United Nations Environment Programme. *Pollution Action Note - Data you need to know*. 2023.

<sup>144</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Why does environment, health and pollution matter?*. 2025.

<sup>145</sup> United Nations, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. *Partnerships and Cooperation*. 2018.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.



DPPA notes that stronger collaboration, including increased cross-border data sharing and air quality monitoring, is essential for a more coordinated and effective global response to improving air quality.<sup>147</sup>

### *International and Regional Framework*

In 1979, the *Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution* (CLRTAP) was adopted under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) to address the issue of air pollution crossing national borders.<sup>148</sup> This sets the foundation for international cooperation on air quality, leading to several protocols targeting pollutants like sulfur, nitrogen oxides, and volatile organic compounds.<sup>149</sup> The Convention demonstrated how regional collaboration can successfully reduce emissions, influencing later UNEP and UNEA initiatives for global air pollution governance.<sup>150</sup> UNEP supported the development of this landmark treaty, which became one of the first intergovernmental agreements to promote regional cooperation on air quality beyond a single region.<sup>151</sup>

UNEA adopted resolution 1/7 in 2014 “Strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in promoting air quality”, reaffirming UNEP’s existing mandate to lead efforts in improving air quality and calls for strengthened action to address air pollution globally.<sup>152</sup> UNEA resolution 1/7 highlights the importance of tackling transboundary air pollution by promoting regional and international cooperation, encouraging partnerships among governments and United Nations bodies, such as WHO and UNECE.<sup>153</sup> Resolution 1/7 requests UNEP to facilitate capacity building and the support of regional frameworks, such as the UNECE 1979 CLRTAP to ensure more coordinated and effective air quality management worldwide.<sup>154</sup> Subsequently, UNEA resolution 3/8, “Preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally”, was adopted in 2017, calling on Member States to take action to reduce and prevent air pollution by setting more effective pollution standards and strengthening air quality monitoring.<sup>155</sup> Resolution 3/8 is based on principles established by UNEA resolution 1/7 and called for enhanced efforts like encouraging governments to participate in clean air initiatives, promote synergies between clean air policies and other sectors, and strengthen intergovernmental cooperation to prevent and reduce air pollution, recognizing its significant impact on health, the environment, and economies.<sup>156</sup> Resolution 3/8 emphasizes knowledge-sharing and support on the financial level particularly for developing countries in order to address air pollution and mitigate its health, environmental, and economic impacts.<sup>157</sup> Since the

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. *1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution*. 1979. p. 1.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid. pp. 3-4.; United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. *2024–2025 Work plan for the Implementation of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution*. 2023.

<sup>150</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. *1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution*. 1979. p. 2; United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. *2024–2025 Work plan for the Implementation of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution*. 2023.

<sup>151</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. *Long-term strategy for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution for 2020–2030 and beyond (Decision 2018/5)*. 2018. p. 14.

<sup>152</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *Strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in promoting air quality (UNEP/EA.1/RES.7)*. 2014. pp. 2, 5-6.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. pp. 1, 5.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>155</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *Preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally (UNEP/EA.3/RES.8)*. 2017. pp. 3-4.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid. pp. 1-3.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.



adoption of UNEA resolution 1/7, UNEA resolution 6/10 (2024), “Promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally”, has built on its foundation by further promoting regional partnerships through a global network for air quality engagement called the Global Air Quality Cooperation Network.<sup>158</sup> The network fosters cooperation by helping Member States strengthen their monitoring capabilities, offering technical support, and providing a global online space to share information and best practices on air quality.<sup>159</sup> UNEA resolution 6/10 also encourages the implementation of updated WHO air quality guidelines.<sup>160</sup> The WHO European Centre for Environment and Health is responsible for updating the air quality guidelines based on the latest scientific evidence, UNEA encourages Member States to use these updated guidelines, to align national standards with current scientific understanding.<sup>161</sup>

UNEA has highlighted the critical importance of addressing air pollution, which undermines progress toward several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the General Assembly, in resolution 70/1, “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (2030 Agenda), in 2015.<sup>162</sup> SDG 3 (good health and well-being), particularly target 3.9, which seeks to decrease fatalities and health issues caused by harmful air pollution.<sup>163</sup> Similarly, SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), under target 11.6, seeks to improve urban air quality by reducing pollution’s environmental impact.<sup>164</sup> Additionally, SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), primarily Target 7.2 promotes the expansion of renewable energy sources, which is essential in reducing emissions.<sup>165</sup> According to the *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024*, the world is facing major challenges in achieving the SDGs, with just six years left, efforts are still falling short.<sup>166</sup> Under SDG 3 (good health and well-being), the global response to infectious diseases has advanced, but ongoing environmental threats like air pollution continue to persist.<sup>167</sup> For SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), despite a decrease in the number of people relying on polluting fuels, progress remains uneven.<sup>168</sup> Under SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), although some progress has been made in reducing pollution, cities are still growing which puts more pressure on air quality and sustainable development.<sup>169</sup> The World Bank Group, in collaboration with the United Nations, significantly contributes to the advancement of the SDGs by combining dual objectives of eradicating poverty and promoting equitable development.<sup>170</sup> The World Bank aids nations through financial support, data provision, and implementation assistance to facilitate the achievement of the SDGs.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *Promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally (UNEP/EA.6/RES.10)*. 2024.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> United Nations, World Health Organization. *WHO global air quality guidelines*. 2021; United Nations Environment Assembly. *Promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally (UNEP/EA.6/RES.10)*. 2024.

<sup>161</sup> United Nations, World Health Organization. *WHO global air quality guidelines*. 2021.

<sup>162</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. p. 16.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid. pp. 21-22.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid. p. 19.

<sup>166</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report*. 2024. p. 2.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid. p. 12.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. p. 22.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid. pp. 30-31.

<sup>170</sup> World Bank Group. *World Bank Group and The 2030 Agenda*. 2025.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.



The General Assembly adopted resolution 71/256 (2016) on the “New Urban Agenda” at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in 2016.<sup>172</sup> A universal action plan that reconceptualizes how cities are planned and developed to ensure they are safe, inclusive, and sustainable, fostering cooperation across all sectors of government.<sup>173</sup> The *New Urban Agenda* reaffirms a commitment to leaving no one behind, safeguarding the planet, and respecting all human rights.<sup>174</sup> In 2022, the General Assembly adopted resolution 76/300, “The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment”, highlighting the interconnection between environmental protection and human rights, emphasizing the severe impacts of pollution, climate change, and biodiversity loss on vulnerable populations.<sup>175</sup> Resolution 76/300 calls for Member States and international organizations to enhance international cooperation and adopt policies to ensure environmental sustainability.<sup>176</sup> Resolution 76/300 reaffirms existing international commitments like the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1945) which reinforces the fundamental human rights that are universal, indivisible, and interdependent.<sup>177</sup> Specifically, Article 25 highlights the right to an adequate standard of living, which includes access to a sustainable ecosystem, amplifying the importance of addressing pollution as a key factor in ensuring the health and well-being of all individuals.<sup>178</sup>

Resolution 76/300 also reaffirms the *Declaration on the Right to Development* (1986) adopted in General Assembly resolution 41/128 (1986), recognizing development as a human right that must integrate environmental sustainability.<sup>179</sup> The recent adoption of UNEA resolution 6/10, addresses the need to strengthen regional cooperation to combat air pollution, recognizing its severe health, environmental, and economic impacts.<sup>180</sup> Building on previous resolutions, UNEA resolution 6/10 highlights the disproportionate impact of air pollution on vulnerable populations and stresses the need for global collaboration, data-sharing, capacity-building, and policy coordination to improve air quality.<sup>181</sup>

### **Role of the International System**

UNEA, established as the governing body of UNEP, works to assess global air quality trends, track policy progress, and support Member States in implementing effective measures to mitigate air pollution.<sup>182</sup> By leveraging data from the *Actions on Air Quality Report* (2022), which evaluates national responses to UNEA resolution 3/8, UNEP helps identify gaps, promote best practices.<sup>183</sup> UNEP also facilitates international cooperation to reduce fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) exposure and improve public health

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<sup>172</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*. 2017. p. 1.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. pp. 3, 5.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

<sup>175</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. *The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment (A/RES/76/300)*. 2022. pp. 1-3.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>178</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*. 1948.

<sup>179</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. *The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment (A/RES/76/300)*. 2022. p. 1.

<sup>180</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *Promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally (UNEP/EA.6/RES.10)*. 2024. p. 2.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

<sup>182</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Air Pollution Series Actions on Air Quality*. 2022.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.



outcomes worldwide.<sup>184</sup> Established in 2012 and operating under UNEP, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) is a voluntary alliance of over 160 partners, including governments, international organizations, and civil society groups, working together to tackle air pollution and climate challenges.<sup>185</sup> In 2024, the CCAC launched the Clean Air Flagship, a focused three-year effort aimed at accelerating action to improve air quality and safeguard public health.<sup>186</sup> The Clean Air Flagship supports countries in their efforts to cut harmful emissions and pollutants, while prioritizing regional collaboration, science-based policymaking, and public outreach to achieve cleaner air and broader societal benefits.<sup>187</sup>

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the leading international organization assessing the science of climate change and its impacts, including those on air quality.<sup>188</sup> Established in 1988 by UNEP and the World Meteorological Organization, the IPCC provides policymakers with scientific assessments that guide global efforts to address climate change.<sup>189</sup> Reports published by IPCC have shaped many well known international agreements like the *Kyoto Protocol* adopted in 1997 at the third session of the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (COP3) (1997), to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.<sup>190</sup> In 2007, the IPCC was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize for their work in raising awareness about human-induced climate change.<sup>191</sup> The IPCC worked with scientists from across the globe to compile reliable, evidence-based research so that individuals and governments could better understand the causes, impacts, and potential solutions to climate change.<sup>192</sup>

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) was established in 1947 by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and it is one of five regional commissions that primarily focuses on Europe, but can have global implications.<sup>193</sup> UNECE brings together 56 Member States from North America, Europe, and Asia to promote economic integration and regional cooperation.<sup>194</sup> UNECE is currently working alongside UNEA to address the triple planetary crisis, this includes pollution, climate instability, and ecosystem degradation.<sup>195</sup> The role of UNECE was acknowledged at the sixth session of the UNEA (UNEA-6) in 2024 for its longstanding efforts in areas such as air pollution and environmental rights.<sup>196</sup> UNECE has been successful in reducing pollution and promoting sustainable development by offering a variety of multilateral environmental agreements, like the *Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes* (1992) that helps enhance water quality and biodiversity, as well as the *Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context* (1991) which ensures environmental factors are at the center of the development of policies and programs.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC)*. 2025.

<sup>186</sup> The Climate and Clean Air Coalition. *Clean Air Flagship 2024-2026*. 2023.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. *History of the IPCC*. 2025.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. *Mission*. 2025.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. *UN Environment Assembly highlights rising global role of UNECE Multilateral Environmental Agreements to address triple planetary crisis*. 2024.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.





As part of its mission to promote sustainable urbanization, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) publishes the *World Cities Report* biennial, offering in-depth analysis of global urbanization trends and solutions.<sup>198</sup> The most recent edition, released in 2024 titled “Cities and Climate Action”, focuses on how cities can lead the fight against climate change through sustainable planning, improved air quality, and inclusive urban development.<sup>199</sup> As the world’s leading authority on environmental decision-making, UNEA-6 convened at UNEP headquarters in Kenya, bringing together global leaders from over 190 Member States to confront the triple planetary crisis.<sup>200</sup> With the adoption of 15 groundbreaking resolutions, UNEA-6 set the stage for bold, collective action to safeguard the planet and drive sustainable development.<sup>201</sup> Among these, UNEA resolution 6/6 (2024), “Fostering national action to address global environmental challenges through increased cooperation between the United Nations Environment Assembly, the United Nations Environment Programme and multilateral environmental agreements” emphasized the significance of regional collaboration and enhanced environmental policies that support joint action on transboundary air pollution challenges.<sup>202</sup> A central message from UNEA-6 was the urgent need for immediate action, as world leaders and experts warned that time is running out to address the interconnected crises of climate change and pollution.<sup>203</sup>

### *The Impacts of Urbanization on Air Quality*

Urbanization is a major driver of air pollution, with GHG emissions from transportation and buildings often spilling over into neighboring regions through transboundary pollution.<sup>204</sup> Buildings contribute to greenhouse gas emissions through the energy used for lighting, heating, cooling, as well as from the production of materials used during construction like cement and steel.<sup>205</sup> As urban areas expand, they account for a significant share of global GHG.<sup>206</sup> According to UNEP estimates, urban cities produce roughly 70% of global carbon dioxide emissions, with transportation being among the biggest sources.<sup>207</sup> Addressing air pollution from urbanization is particularly crucial for countries with large, densely populated cities in close proximity, as they share ecosystems and transportation networks, leading to common environmental challenges.<sup>208</sup> UNEP launched the Joint Work Programme on Cities and Climate Change, in partnership with the World Bank, and UN-Habitat in 2010, facilitated by Cities Alliance, a global partnership that supports sustainable urban development.<sup>209</sup> This initiative helps local and national governments, particularly in developing countries, advance urban climate adaptation and mitigation efforts

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<sup>198</sup> United Nations Human Settlements Programme. *Cities and Climate Action World Cities Report*. 2024.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *Outcomes of UNEA-6*. 2025.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Six key moments from UNEA-6*. 2024.

<sup>204</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *Promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally (UNEP/EA.6/RES.10)*. 2024; United Nations Environment Programme. *Cities and climate change*. 2025.

<sup>205</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Here’s how buildings contribute to climate change – and what can be done about it*. 2025.

<sup>206</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *Promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally (UNEP/EA.6/RES.10)*. 2024; United Nations Environment Programme. *Cities and climate change*. 2025.

<sup>207</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Cities and climate change*. 2025.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.



through awareness initiatives and training.<sup>210</sup> One notable outcome of this initiative is the successful application of the Urban Community Resilience Assessment (UCRA) (2017) in Rio de Janeiro, where the city engaged in local workshops, trained municipal staff, and developed targeted resilience strategies for vulnerable communities.<sup>211</sup> Building on this momentum, the city of Surat, India, utilized the UCRA to evaluate local climate risks, gather key insights from selected neighborhoods, and outline actionable measures to strengthen community resilience.<sup>212</sup>

The *New Urban Agenda* provides a global framework for sustainable urban development aimed at addressing the social, economic, and environmental challenges of growing cities.<sup>213</sup> It emphasizes the need for inclusive urban planning and governance that promotes cleaner air, improved public health, and reduced environmental degradation.<sup>214</sup> The *World Cities Report* (2024), published by UN-Habitat, found that local and regional governments were making notable strides in adopting sustainable practices, yet many continue to face significant challenges when it comes to putting climate solutions into action.<sup>215</sup> In many areas around the globe, monitoring air quality is limited or unreliable because equipment is outdated and there aren't enough resources to track pollution properly.<sup>216</sup> In a study done by the World Bank, published in their 2019 report *Lifelines: The Resilient Infrastructure Opportunity*, the critical importance of investing in climate-resilient infrastructure is emphasized.<sup>217</sup> The study highlights that every US \$1 invested in resilient infrastructure can deliver up to US \$4 in benefits, including reduced repair costs, stronger economic productivity, and an improved quality of life.<sup>218</sup> Allocating just over US \$12 billion in 2023 to aid in developing transportation and energy infrastructure and billions more in water and urban infrastructure projects in the same fiscal year.<sup>219</sup> As of 2024, the World Bank is focusing on a new goal to align its operations with climate risk management at its core, due to insights from the 2019 *Lifelines: The Resilient Infrastructure Opportunity* report.<sup>220</sup>

### **Data Sharing and Monitoring of Air Quality Across Borders**

In an increasingly interconnected world, sharing data and monitoring across borders is not just a technological advancement, it's a vital step toward safeguarding human health and ensuring a more sustainable future.<sup>221</sup> As UNEP's *Global Environment Outlook 6 (GEO-6): Healthy Planet, Healthy People* (2019) emphasizes, innovation and collaboration hold the power to decouple economic growth from environmental harm, offering the global community the chance to prosper while protecting the planet.<sup>222</sup> GEO-6 highlights that technological innovation particularly in areas such as energy efficiency and renewable energy, plays a crucial role in achieving economic growth without causing environmental harm as it offers practical solutions.<sup>223</sup> UNEP took a major step toward fostering global collaboration on air

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> The Cities Alliance. *JWP for Resilient Cities Projects*. 2025.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*. 2017.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> United Nations Human Settlements Programme. *Cities and Climate Action World Cities Report*. 2024. pp. 172-175.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid. pp. 184, 193, 259-260.

<sup>217</sup> World Bank Group. *LIFELINES The Resilient Infrastructure Opportunity*. 2019. p. 22.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>219</sup> World Bank Group. *Harnessing technical expertise for infrastructure resilience*. 2024.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Global Environmental Outlook (GEO-6)*. 2019. p. 73.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid. p. 40.



quality by launching the Global Air Quality Cooperation Network, established under UNEA resolution 6/10 (2024).<sup>224</sup> While progress has been made in addressing air pollution through long-standing treaties, collaborative initiatives like the CCAC, and data sharing networks, stronger international cooperation is crucial for lasting solutions.<sup>225</sup> This network helps bridge that gap by uniting governments, organizations, and stakeholders to improve air quality management.<sup>226</sup> The Air Quality Management Exchange Platform (AQMx) was created to address gaps in air quality management resources and access to expert knowledge, especially in underserved regions.<sup>227</sup> AQMx will support knowledge sharing and technical collaboration, helping countries strengthen their air quality monitoring with tools like low-cost sensors and satellite data, the network also works to improve access to funding and resources.<sup>228</sup>

The Global Environment Monitoring System for Air (GEMS/Air) launched in 2020, established by UNEP, leverages science and technology to help developing countries create effective solutions for improving air quality and ensuring cleaner air for their citizens.<sup>229</sup> As part of this effort, GEMS/Air collaborates with partners to develop innovative tools, such as real-time interactive maps, that provide critical insights into air pollution levels and exposure on a global scale.<sup>230</sup> To enhance collaboration, GEMS/Air prioritizes building partnerships with governments, private sector entities, and research institutions to strengthen air quality initiatives.<sup>231</sup> A key aspect of this effort is the development of an open Data Management System (oDMS), hosted by UNEP, which facilitates data sharing, improves access to historical air quality records, and enhances monitoring capabilities.<sup>232</sup> In the same year that GEMS/Air was launched, the Real-time Air Quality Index was introduced at the Tenth World Urban Forum in 2020 by UNEP, UN-Habitat, and IQAir, a company specializing in air quality technology, to provide global real-time air pollution data.<sup>233</sup> This platform aggregates air quality information from over 4,000 contributors, incorporating governments and individuals, helping policymakers, citizens, and businesses take informed action to reduce pollution.<sup>234</sup> Including those regions with limited monitoring infrastructure, giving local governments direct assistance in developing strategies for cleaner air.<sup>235</sup> With a reach of over 15 million users, the platform is instrumental in broadening access to air quality data and aiding efforts to improve environmental conditions globally.<sup>236</sup>

Despite the ongoing efforts of non-governmental organizations, the international community, and national governments to address air pollution, major gaps in air quality monitoring remain.<sup>237</sup> According to *Open*

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<sup>224</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *GEMS/Air Strategy*. 2022; United Nations Environment Assembly. *Promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally (UNEP/EA.6/RES.10)*. 2024. p. 2.

<sup>225</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *Promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally (UNEP/EA.6/RES.10)*. 2024.

<sup>226</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Global Air Quality Cooperation Network*. 2025.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Monitoring air quality*. 2025.

<sup>230</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *GEMS/Air Strategy*. 2022. pp. 12, 68-69.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *World's largest platform for air quality data launched at Tenth World Urban Forum*. 2020.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> OpenAQ. *Open Air Quality Data: The Global Landscape*. 2024. p. 3.



*Air Quality Data: The Global Landscape* (2024), 36% of Member States are still not conducting government-led air pollution monitoring, leaving nearly one billion people, mostly in low and middle income countries without critical data about the air they breathe.<sup>238</sup> Among the Member States that do collect air quality data, only 55% make this information publicly available, and just 27% share it in a fully transparent and accessible way.<sup>239</sup> In many cases, governments release simplified air quality indexes to inform the public of pollution levels, but lack the detailed data needed by researchers and health professionals to develop effective long-term solutions.<sup>240</sup> Several Member States have made significant strides in air quality data transparency, India offers environmental updates through mobile apps, while Member States such as Senegal, Ghana, and the Philippines use social media as a tool for daily air quality reporting.<sup>241</sup> These highlight how open data policies can encourage collaboration between scientists, the international community, and other stakeholders, leading to faster, more effective solutions that protect health and improve lives.<sup>242</sup>

## Conclusion

According to UNEA, immediate action is necessary to protect our planet and ensure a healthy future for all.<sup>243</sup> As the world faces the triple planetary crisis, regional cooperation on air quality has never been more urgent, clean air is not bound by borders, and neither are the solutions that can protect the health and dignity of millions.<sup>244</sup> UNEA has emphasized that air pollution is deterring progress across various SDGs, negatively affecting both global populations and the environment.<sup>245</sup> Many Member States, particularly in developing regions, lack reliable air quality monitoring systems, making it difficult to fully understand and address the health risks associated with air pollution.<sup>246</sup> In response, UNEA continues to encourage global collaboration by emphasizing the importance of exchanging technology, expertise, and data, building upon national and regional frameworks that improve air quality for all.<sup>247</sup> Shown in efforts made at UNEA-6, including the adoption of UNEA resolution 6/10.<sup>248</sup> Urbanization has been identified as a powerful global trend that plays a critical role in air quality and climate change, with the potential to shape the future of communities and cities worldwide.<sup>249</sup> While urban growth brings complex, far-reaching impacts that cross borders, it also offers a unique opportunity to improve quality of life while reducing environmental harm if managed sustainably.<sup>250</sup>

## Further Research

As delegates conduct further research, they should consider the following: What strategies could enhance cross-border collaboration on air quality monitoring and ensure more consistent, transparent data

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid. p. 21.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid. pp. 3, 15.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid. pp. 15-16.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>243</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Six key moments from UNEA-6*. 2024.

<sup>244</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *A planet that sustains everyone, everywhere*. 2023.

<sup>245</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

<sup>246</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Global Environmental Outlook (GEO-6)*. 2019. p. 40.

<sup>247</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly. *Promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally (UNEP/EA.6/RES.10)*. 2024. p. 2.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> United Nations Human Settlements Programme. *Cities and Climate Action World Cities Report*. 2024. p. 215.

<sup>250</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Global Environmental Outlook (GEO-6)*. 2019. p. 108.



exchange? How might differing political agendas, power imbalances, and economic priorities between Member States affect efforts to share air quality data openly and honestly? What strategies could be employed to build trust and overcome these barriers? In an increasingly data-driven world, who should own and control air quality data? Should access to environmental data be considered a public good? What steps can be taken to make sure air quality data is accessible and understandable to the public?



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