

DAY 1: Monday 25 – September 2023

15:45 – 17:00

THE ROLE OF LEGISLATION IN PROMOTING AMBIENT AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Second session within the framework of the Regional Consultation of the V Montevideo Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean region

Brief introduction

In a historic decision in July 2022, the United Nations General Assembly declared the universal human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The resolution explicitly recognized air pollution as contributing to the interference of the enjoyment of a healthy environment. This recognition is expected to go a long way in encouraging policymakers to take stronger action against pollution, as well as in enabling those impacted to hold governments to account where there is a failure to adequately do so. Importantly, the resolution raises the visibility of the seriousness of the air pollution problem and its intrinsic link to human life and environmental sustainability (UNEP, 2023)¹.

The key number: 99 percent of the world's population is breathing air that does not meet the health standards set by WHO². Experts say we must act urgently to preserve people's health and well-being, which is why collective action is urgent³. Legislation is fundamental to establish institutional responsibility for air quality standards, set mechanisms for accountability, public participation, and enforcement, and institutionalize processes in order to improve human health and well-being for all, but also to address the three planetary environmental crises of climate change, biodiversity and pollution (UNEP, 2023).

Objective

Under the Fifth Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law, national focal points representing countries worldwide identified air pollution as an initial priority area for implementation. UNEP has been working with countries to provide technical support

¹ UNEP 2023, Guide on Ambiente Air Quality Legislation:

https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/42536/ambient_air_quality_guide.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

² UN 2022, WMO warns of frequent heatwaves in decades ahead: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/07/1122822>

³ UNEP 2023, Activation across the Americas: International Clean Air Day for blue skies 2023: <https://www.unep.org/events/un-day/activation-across-americas-international-clean-air-day-blue-skies-2023>

and develop knowledge and capacity-building skills and tools, such as the development of the Guide on Ambiente Air Quality Legislation, seeking to develop or improve ambient air quality legislation and to promote robust national systems of air quality governance prioritizing human health.

The session will also deliver a panel of discussion on how the Guide can support countries of the region in drafting or updating air quality legislation and will bring national case studies with the objective of sharing legal challenges and opportunities to effectively improving air quality.

Agenda

Session Run Sheet				
Session		The role of legislation in promoting ambient air quality management		
Date and Time		15:45 – 17:00 (Panama Time GMT -5), 25 September 2023 Duration: 1 hour, 15 min		
Platform		In-person and online (Zoom)		
Language		Simultaneous interpretation English<>Spanish		
Time			Action/Task	Responsibility
Start	Finish	Duration		
15:45	15:55	10 min	Welcoming remarks	<p><u>Moderator</u></p> <p>Abi Márquez, Oficina de México, PNUMA</p> <p><u>Speakers</u> (5 min each)</p> <p>Jordi Pon, Regional Coordinator on Chemicals and Pollution</p>

				Juan José Castillo , Air Quality and Health Regional Advisor, PAHO
15:55	16:15	20 min	Launching of Guide on Ambient Air Quality Legislation	<p><u>Speakers</u></p> <p>Renée Gift, Legal Officer, UNEP</p> <p>Eloise Scotford, Dean, Faculty of Laws, University College London and co-author of the Guide on Ambient Air Quality Legislation</p>
16:15	16:35	20 min	Share lessons learned and future ambition related to legislation: national experiences	<p><u>Moderator</u></p> <p>Abi Márquez, Mexico Office, UNEP</p> <p><u>Panelistas</u></p> <p><i>Panel to present three National cases for South America, Central America and the Caribbean region.</i></p>
16:35	16:55	20 min	Discussion on how the Guide can support countries	<p><u>Moderators</u></p> <p>Andrea Brusco and María Candela Zaffiro Tacchetti, UNEP</p>
16:55	17:00	5 min	Conclusions and closing remarks	