

INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES FOR THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN REGION ON AIR QUALITY LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND:

Ambient air pollution represents a critical environmental health challenge that affects populations across low-, middle-, and high-income countries. Prolonged exposure to elevated levels of air pollutants is associated with a wide range of adverse health outcomes, including increased risks of respiratory infections, cardiovascular disease, and lung cancer. These impacts disproportionately affect vulnerable groups—particularly children, older adults, and women.

According to estimates from the World Health Organization (WHO), ambient air pollution contributed to approximately 4.2 million premature deaths globally in 2019. This mortality is primarily linked to exposure to fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), defined as particles with a diameter of 2.5 microns or less, which penetrate deep into the lungs and bloodstream, triggering health effects throughout the body.

In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), over 150 million people reside in urban areas where air pollution levels exceed WHO air quality guidelines, underscoring the urgent need for targeted mitigation strategies and policies and regional cooperation. The severe health impacts of air pollution and the widespread exposure in LAC highlight the need for stronger and more coherent policy responses. While technical measures are essential, lasting progress requires robust air quality legislation and governance frameworks that can guide emission reductions, protect vulnerable populations, and align national efforts with international best practices.

This priority has been increasingly recognized through key regional and global frameworks, including the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolution 6/10, entitled “Promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally”, as well as UNEA resolutions 1/7 and 3/8, the Fifth Montevideo Programme on the Progressive Development and Implementation of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme V), and the Regional Action Plan on Air Quality for Latin America and the Caribbean. These initiatives collectively emphasize the importance of coordinated action, public health protection, legal coherence, and institutional strengthening to achieve cleaner air and healthier communities.

In alignment with these frameworks, the webinars aim to enhance regional capacity and collaboration by supporting countries in advancing cleaner air and health related legislation and governance.

WEBINAR THEME

The webinar will consist of two sessions, one in Spanish for Latin America and one in English for the Caribbean, focusing on the following theme:

Strengthening Air Quality Legislation and Governance, aimed at harmonizing the legislations of Latin America and the Caribbean with human rights standards, regional commitments, and international best practices.

The webinar will address legal and governance frameworks for effective air quality management in Latin America and the Caribbean, with a focus on aligning national legislation with human rights principles, best international practices, and regional commitments. The sessions will draw on the Legislation Guide developed by UNEP's Law Division, highlighting practical experiences from Guatemala, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, and will build on the ongoing capacity-building work of UNEP to provide guidance for strengthening institutional frameworks and developing robust air quality policies.

ATTENDEES

The list of attendees will include UNEP's Network focal points, the Montevideo Programme focal points, and potentially PAHO/WHO focal points and Ministry of Health representatives, to promote broader engagement across the health and environmental sectors.

WEBINARS CALENDAR

Below is a table presenting the webinar calendar. The webinar will take place at 11:00 a.m. EST; 11:00 a.m. Panamá.

Webinar Topics	Date
1. Strengthening Air Quality Legislation and Governance – English version.	Nov. 24th, 2025
2. Strengthening Air Quality Legislation and Governance –Spanish version.	Nov. 26th, 2025

AGENDA

The event agenda is presented below.

November 24, 2025. English webinar.

Section	Description	Responsible	Time
Opening and intro	Welcome remarks and session overview <i>Stephanie Montero</i>	CAI	5 minutes
Webinar specific Theme	Air Quality Legislation Guide <i>Renee Gift</i>	UNEP Law Division	20 minutes

Section	Description	Responsible	Time
Best practice/ example	National efforts, legislative approaches, and institutional experiences in advancing air quality management. <i>Treina Dinoo</i>	Environmental Management Authority, Trinidad and Tobago	20 minutes
Q&A and comments	Questions and comments from the attendees <i>Stephanie Montero</i>	CAI	10 minutes
Final remarks and Closure	Announcements, next 'webinars', etc. <i>TBC</i>	CAI and UNEP	5 minutes

Registration: <https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/9076f034-b4de-4d14-8643-6fb99ae8ae58@b1b6e25e-d55f-4e03-ac56-845cd1b530e0>

Noviembre 26, 2025. Seminario web en español:

Section	Description	Responsible	Time
Apertura e introducción	Bienvenida e introducción al webinar <i>Marcos Cárdenas</i>	CAI	5 minutes
Tema específico del webinar	Guía de legislación de calidad del aire <i>Catalina Pizarro</i>	PNUMA	20 minutes
Mejores prácticas/ ejemplo	Experiencias, avances y perspectiva técnica sobre los procesos legislativos e institucionales relacionados con la gestión de la calidad del aire en Guatemala.	<i>Salvador Nieto,</i> consultor independiente <i>Ana Lucía Alfaro,</i> Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales de Guatemala	20 minutes
Preguntas y comentarios	Preguntas y comentarios de los asistentes <i>Marcos Cárdenas</i>	CAI	10 minutes
Anuncios y Cierre de la sesión	Anuncios y palabras de cierre. <i>TBC</i>	CAI y PNUMA	5 minutes