

Fighting Air Pollution on World Environment Day

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Air pollution claimed more lives than war. It is an estimate that 7 million people succumb to air pollution worldwide, with 57 percent dying in the Asia Pacific region. World Environment Day is celebrated across the world on 5th June every year. This year China is hosting the global World Environment Day celebrations on 5th June 2019 with a theme of 'Air pollution.' Joyse Msuya, Acting Head of UN Environment, announced that China would be a great host for this year's Environment day celebrations as the country has taken drastic steps to reduce air pollution in their country. Owing to its growing green energy sector, China has emerged a world leader. China will be able to display its energy-saving innovation. They own more than half of the world's electric vehicle, including 99 percent of the world's electric buses. Taking mandatory, practical, and logical steps to curb air pollution is the need of the hour.

Air pollution directly affects the poor the most. Developing countries record a substantial number of air pollution-related deaths. Owing to their weak laws, lax standards related to vehicle and industry emission, people staying near the garbage dumps, cramped, overcrowded places bear the brunt of air pollution. The lack of clean indoor air a result of burning wood and fossil fuels inside poorly ventilated homes for day-to-day activities also significantly [contributes to ill health and death](#).

Plastic is a hot topic in every field. However, its disadvantages outnumber its advantages. Plastic pollution is a severe problem affecting the water, soil, and the air the living organisms rely on. Toxic gases like dioxins, furans, polychlorinated biphenyls release during the burning of the plastics. These gases pose a threat to the animal, plant, and human health.

The burning of plastics releases toxic gases like dioxins, furans, mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (better known as BCPs) into the atmosphere. These gases pose a threat to vegetation, and human and animal health. "[Toxic Pollutants from Plastic Waste – A Review](#)" -study highlights 12 percent of most municipal solid waste is a form of plastic, and 40 percent is usually incinerated.

UN Environment urges the world to address the issue of air pollution. It proposes to use **4Rs: reduce, recycle, reuse, recover**. In addition to, burning less, wasting less, walking more and driving less, and adopting clean technologies. UN Environment urges governments to adhere to WHO guidelines to monitor and strengthen air quality in cities and rural areas alike. The initiative by the European Union to ban many single-use plastic items, from 2021 is a welcome relief, and other countries should follow suit.

Around the world, efforts are in progress to reduce the amount of plastic waste that ends up in landfills or our oceans. For instance, in March 2019, the European Union approved a law to ban many single-use plastic items. These include such as plastic cutlery, single-use plastic plates, plastic straws, and plastic balloon sticks, from 2021.

Lifestyle changes are mandatory requirements to ensure a pollution free and safe environment. Share how would you like to contribute to this initiative. *#BeatAirPollution*. Share your thoughts and comments below.

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