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International environmental policy and governance

Progress in the implementation of resolution 6/10 on promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally

Report of the Executive Director

I Introduction

1. The present report provides an update on progress made in the implementation of resolution 6/10 of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) on promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally.

2. In paragraph 1 of the resolution, the Environment Assembly encouraged Member States to accelerate efforts to implement the relevant provisions of Environment Assembly resolution 3/8, including by developing national air quality programmes and setting national ambient air quality standards, bearing in mind the most recent air quality guidelines of the World Health Organization, as appropriate to their national circumstances.

3. In paragraph 2, the Environment Assembly requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), subject to the availability of resources, to form and facilitate a cooperation network on air quality [....].

4. In paragraph 3, the Environment Assembly requested the Executive Director of UNEP, subject to the availability of resources, to provide an updated global online platform for information sharing and communication.

5. The Environment Assembly in paragraph 4 invited Member States, regional economic integration organizations, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, including industry, foundations and non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders to help mobilize means of implementation in order to address air pollution, particularly in developing countries.

6. In paragraph 5 of the resolution, the Environment Assembly invited regional and subregional cooperation bodies and initiatives, as well as financing institutions, to consider developing and implementing regional solutions to address air pollution issues.

7. The present report provides an update on the progress made in implementing the resolution, highlighting activities carried out since its adoption., in response to paragraph 6 of the resolution.

II. Progress in the implementation of resolution 6/10

A. Accelerating efforts to improve air quality globally

8. Air pollution remains a major global health and environmental challenge, disproportionately impacting vulnerable populations and causing significant health, economic, and ecological harm. Member States have continued to take national action by developing and updating air quality programmes, setting or revising ambient air quality standards, and aligning policies with the latest World Health Organization (WHO) Air Quality Guidelines. These actions reflect a growing recognition of the need for coordinated, multisectoral interventions to address air pollution and advance the Sustainable Development Goals.

9. UNEP has continued to support Member States through technical and legal assistance, capacity building, and knowledge exchange, through deployment of in-house expertise, projects, regional programmes and in partnership with the UNEP-convened Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), and UNEP's intergovernmental Montevideo Environmental Law Programme. Notable examples include strengthening air quality legislation in Argentina, Azerbaijan, Côte d'Ivoire, Guatemala, and Thailand, and piloting targeted emission reduction solutions in Cambodia and Kenya and supported the integration of air quality and health issues into broader UN country support in Bahrain, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Serbia and Uzbekistan.

10. The UNEP-convened Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) mobilized significant resources to reduce short-lived climate pollutants for clean air outcomes and reducing warming in the near-term. Mobilising the partnership of over 200 state and non-state partners, the CCAC Clean Air Flagship has advanced integrated climate and air quality management, science communication, advocacy, and private sector engagement. $22 million in funding from the CCAC Trust Fund has been committed to support 68 Official Development Assistance (ODA)-eligible countries to develop the capacity, policies, and implementation support needed to improve air quality, including for national air quality planning and emissions reductions from agriculture, household energy, fossil fuels, transport, and waste. The UNEP-convened CCAC has led the development of a technical paper on air quality in support of the South African G20 Presidency's priorities under the Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group.

11. The International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies 2024, under the theme 'Invest in #CleanAirNow' and increased media and social media engagement compared to 2023. The 2025 International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies, themed "Racing for Air," will use the global appeal of sport to highlight air quality as a policy and investment priority, shifting the narrative from risks to solutions and emphasizing clean air as a driver of resilience, economic growth, and public well-being.

12. Efforts to mobilize financial and technical resources have increased, particularly for developing countries. The Alliance for Clean Air is working with businesses to drive air quality action, utilising updated guidance developed by CCAC with the support of the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), based on which 15 of its members are developing integrated emissions inventories. Building on this work and with financial support by the Clean Air Fund, UNEP is collaborating with the UN Global Compact to support companies to measure, report, and reduce air pollution, while positioning businesses as global champions for clean air.

13. UNEP has been working closely with partners who have developed tools and resources aimed to facilitate investment in clean air solutions, such as the World Bank Clean Air Flagship report, the UNEP-FI guide for banks[1] and a Clean Air Fund-supported toolkit[2].

B. Forming and facilitating a cooperation network on air quality

[1] https://www.unepfi.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/White-Paper-on-Pollution-UNEP-FI-Nov-2024-D8.pdf
[2] https://www.cleanairfund.org/news-item/air-quality-toolkit-dfis/

14. Pursuant to paragraph 3 of the resolution, UNEP has established the global air quality cooperation network, engaging Member States, specialized agencies, UN entities, and relevant regional and international organizations[3]. The network aims to strengthen collective action, promote knowledge exchange, and support the development and implementation of policies and measures to improve air quality worldwide.

15. The network was officially announced by UNEP on the 2024 International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies, following its design and development through a consultative process and a stakeholder mapping and needs assessment. To maximize synergies, this effort draws on existing activities, including those under the CCAC Clean Air Flagship and CCAC Sector Hubs.

16. In December 2024, UNEP invited UN Member States and members of specialized agencies to submit their interest in joining the network. This invitation was sent to all UNEA and Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) focal points and included a request to nominate up to two national focal points. A total of 70 UN Member States and members of specialized agencies responded to this initial call to nominate focal points[4].

17. The inaugural meeting of the network was convened on 24 March 2025, on the margins of the WHO's Second Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health in Cartagena, Colombia and brought together over 50 in-person participants and sixty online attendees, including representatives from 35 UN Member States, as well as representatives from UN entities, regional bodies, and international organizations. Discussions underscored the critical need for enhanced international collaboration, cross-sectoral engagement, and the sharing of best practices to address air pollution effectively [5] and laid the foundation for promoting effective cooperation to enhance air quality management globally.

C. Supporting the development of an Africa clean air programme

18. In line with paragraph 3 of the resolution and building on Decisions' 17/2 and 18/4 by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) [6] and the subsequent *Integrated Assessment on Air Pollution and Sustainable Development for Africa*, the Africa Clean Air Programme (ACAP) was established through the leadership of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the UNEP/CCAC, in collaboration with the SEI. Following the Integrated Assessment on Air Pollution and Climate Change for Sustainable Development in Africa[7], ACAP aims to support African countries in achieving their development goals while improving air quality, in alignment with *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* and the objectives of the *African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy*.

19. The ACAP inception meeting, held on the margins of the 12th Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA), convened by the AUC in August 2024, articulated ACAP's core pillars and highlighted the need for a roadmap to support implementation by AU Member States. ACAP has since garnered ministerial support at national, regional and global levels, as well as financial support. A draft Air Quality Management (AQM)benchmarking report is being developed alongside the roadmap to align with the priorities of Member States and RECs.

20. Five Champion Countries (Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Morocco, and South Africa) will be supported through the CCAC Trust Fund and will play a pivotal role in advancing ACAP by piloting innovations and fostering peer learning. Building on the previous success of regional framework agreements, the respective RECs will be supported to enable coordination, harmonization, knowledge-sharing, and sustained implementation of clean air policies across Member States. In parallel, regional centres of excellence will be established to provide technical support and advance implementation at national, subregional, and regional levels.

21. The implementation of ACAP will feed into the AMCEN-25 meeting and UNEA-7 — both as platforms for reporting back and as a critical opportunity for elevating ACAP and securing broader political and institutional support.

[3] https://www.unep.org/topics/air/global-air-quality-cooperation-network

[4] By region; 24 from Africa; 10 from Asia and the Pacific; 17 from Europe; 13 from Latin America and the Caribbean; 2 from North America; and 4 from West Asia.

[5] https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/47676/GAQCN_Marcg2025.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

[6] https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/41324/AMCEN_English.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

[7] Summary for Decision Makers - Integrated Assessment of Air Pollution and Climate Change for Sustainable Development in Africa | Climate & Clean Air Coalition

D. Providing an updated global online platform for information sharing and communication

22. In line with paragraph 4 of the resolution, a dedicated online knowledge platform was developed by the UNEP-convened CCAC. Known as the Air Quality Management Exchange Platform (AQMx), it serves as a comprehensive resource for governments, practitioners, and stakeholders seeking to accelerate progress on air quality improvement worldwide. The development was guided by the CCAC Clean Air Task Team and an ad-hoc Technical Advisory Group, and the platform was officially launched on the 2024 International Day for Clean Air and Blue Skies[8].

23. AQMx is conceived as a 'one stop shop' for technical tools and models, data, and knowledge to build capacity among air quality managers worldwide. The platform provides curated guidance across eight core areas of air quality management[9] and hosts a resource exchange library featuring over 900 vetted resources and knowledge products, periodically updated as new resources are published.

24. To maximize accessibility and impact, the CCAC Secretariat has delivered outreach and training workshops on the use of AQMx, both virtually and in conjunction with global, regional and subregional events. These sessions have introduced users to the platform's features through interactive use cases and have gathered participants' feedback and suggestions on the future expansion of the platform, to ensure AQMx content continues to meet its user's needs.

25. Expansions in 2025 include the launch of Stage 2 and 3 guidance at the 2025 International Day for Clean Air and Blue Skies, and the launch of sectoral guidance for key sectors at UNEA-7.

E. Developing and implementing regional solutions to address air pollution issues

26. Regional and subregional cooperation remains a cornerstone of effective air quality management, enabling countries to address shared challenges, harmonize standards, and leverage collective expertise. UNEP including through the UNEP-convened CCAC has continued to support regional bodies, initiatives, and financing institutions in developing tailored air pollution solutions, fostering cross-border collaboration and capacity-building for measurable improvements.

27. In Africa, UNEP, CCAC, and partners hosted a webinar for sixteen Member States from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), exploring policy frameworks such as UNEA 6/10, AMCEN Resolutions, the Lusaka Agreement, and South Africa's air quality policies to identify opportunities for regional harmonization and implementation. The Africa Clean Air Programme described in section C will provide an opportunity for continued cooperation on air quality in the Africa region.

28. In Asia and the Pacific, UNEP has collaborated with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) on the delivery of the Regional Action Programme on Air Pollution (RAPAP). Close to 200 stakeholders discussed mechanisms to increase investment for clean air at the 5th Asia-Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP) Joint Forum, hosted by Japan and co-organized by UNEP and ESCAP. At this meeting, ESCAP launched the RAPAP Online Partnership and Coordination Platform[10]. UNEP is also supporting the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET) to develop its Fifth Medium-Term Plan (2026-2030) and working with the World Health Organization (WHO) to support the Asia Pacific Regional Forum on Health and Environment. UNEP, including through the UNEP convened CCAC and other partners are supporting the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) in the revitalization of the Malé Declaration on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution and Its Likely Transboundary Effects for South Asia.

29. In Europe and Central Asia, UNEP co-organized the first High-Level Central Asia Policy Dialogue on Air Pollution together with the World Bank (June 2024, Uzbekistan) and supported the

[8] https://aqmx.org/

[9] The eight areas are: air quality monitoring, source attribution, emissions inventory, health impact assessment, environmental impact assessment, decision support, public engagement & communications, and legal framework, policy design & implementation.

[10] https://www.rapap-platform.org/

third annual conference of the Air Quality Central Asia platform (AQCA) in September 2024 in Kazakhstan. UNEP and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) have organized events for the Central Asia, Western Balkans, and Eastern Europe regions to advance action on climate and clean air, harmonize standards, and promote pollution policy synergies. In the Western Balkans, the UNEP-hosted South-East European Platform to beat Pollution (SEEPP) - established with the support of Italy - supported Member States with recommendations to reduce air pollution from high-impact sectors.

30. In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the Intergovernmental Network on Atmospheric Pollution, convened by UNEP, held its 7th Focal Points Meeting in March 2024 to review progress on the implementation of the LAC Regional Action Plan on Air Quality 2023–2025 and explore opportunities to strengthen regional and inter-regional cooperation. During 2025, the members of the Network met regularly to develop the new Regional Action Plan on Air Quality, submitted for consideration of the XXIV Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment (Lima, Peru, 1-2 October 2025).

31. In West Asia, a regional air quality network meeting was convened in Amman, Jordan (December 2024), with participation from seven countries. The meeting established a roadmap for operationalizing the West Asia Air Quality Network (WAAQN), with support from UNEP as the coordination hub. In 2025, UNEP will continue to support the Network to organize another annual meeting, launch a training programme, establish mechanisms for data-sharing and advisory support, and utilize the AQMx platform for knowledge sharing.

III. Lessons learned

32. Exchange of experience, at the heart of UNEA resolution 6/10, has galvanized cooperation and proven to be a powerful tool to accelerate action. UNEP was able to advance on critical aspects of the resolution based on existing efforts and notably partnership and funding under the UNEP-convened Climate and Clean Air Coalition. However, to deepen a coordinated, regional and multisectoral response, additional funding is needed.

33. The implementation of UNEA resolution 6/10 has underscored the transformative impact of regional cooperation in improving air quality. Regional frameworks—such as the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP), EANET, and RAPAP— have demonstrated success in harmonizing standards, joint monitoring, and fostering sustained institutional dialogue. These experiences offer valuable lessons for new initiatives like ACAP and the WAAQN. Subregional platforms have also proven effective by enabling countries with similar pollution sources and governance contexts to collaborate and share best practices.

34. In Africa, the Regional Economic Commissions (RECs), such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and SADC are emerging as key drivers for air quality governance. ACAP shows that leveraging RECs supports policy harmonization, capacity building, and alignment of national initiatives with regional priorities. Strengthening their institutional capacities is crucial for technical coordination, data sharing, standard enforcement, and fostering political ownership. Embedding air quality objectives within REC frameworks will be vital for long-term impact and integration with broader climate, health, and development goals.

35. Cooperation at the global level is also significant to facilitate inter-regional exchange, scale-up successful interventions, and address shared challenges more effectively. The CCAC's Clean Air Flagship has been a powerful mechanism to facilitate this, and the launch of the global air quality cooperation network has also indicated more demand.

36. The launch of the AQMx platform and related outreach has revealed strong demand for practical guidance on air quality management and sectoral mitigation policies, especially in capacity and data-scarce environments. While robust data is important, a lack of comprehensive monitoring should not prevent action—general knowledge about sources and impacts can justify "no-regret" measures, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where health risks from air pollution are acute.

37. Increasing requests for legal assistance reflect growing awareness of the need for robust regulatory frameworks, particularly to address transboundary air pollution. UNEP's *Global*

Assessment of Air Pollution Legislation[11] and *Guide on Ambient Air Quality Legislation*[12] have shown that clear air quality standards in national legislation are critical for effective management. They need to be complemented by sector specific policies and regulation to actually drive down emissions.

38. Evidence continues to show that clean air and climate action are mutually reinforcing. Where tackled in an integrated approach they deliver double dividends, including health, food security resilience and economic benefits. Whole-of-society approaches - engaging sectors like health - have channelled some investment towards, and accelerated results in, clean air solutions. Yet, current investment levels remain insufficient to increase the resilience of economies, people's and planetary health.

39. Recent World Bank analysis estimates the economic cost of ambient air pollution at nearly 5% of global GDP, with the greatest burden on developing countries.[13] Work by the Our Common Air initiative[14] and the ongoing "Making the Economic Case for Action" study, have reinforced that the costs of inaction far outweigh prevention investments[15] calling for investing in clean air as an asset.

40. UNEP's rapid response to resolution 6/10 has been enabled by its established flagship initiatives like the CCAC Clean Air Flagship and the Montevideo Programme for Environmental Law, as well as strong cooperation with partners, including those convened in the CCAC. However, sustaining and expanding these efforts—including the global air quality cooperation network, AQMx, and ACAP—will require additional dedicated resources.

IV. Recommendations and suggested actions.

41. UNEP will continue to:

a) promote regional cooperation, working with Member States and stakeholders at all levels to maximize the benefits of collective action and encourage the development and implementation of regional air quality action plans and assessments.

b) provide targeted policy and legislative support to Member States to tackle their air pollution challenges, including through CCAC and the Montevideo Programme for Environmental Law.

c) provide technical guidance, including through AQMx and CCAC sector Hubs.

d) make the economic case for action. Notably, the CCAC is preparing an Integrated Economic Assessment of Climate and Clean Air, to be released in 2026, which will provide policymakers with insights into the costs and benefits of key policies and actions and highlight the cost of inaction.

42. To further deepen and scale up support subject to funding availability, UNEP intends to:

a) Continue to support regional cooperation agreements in continuation of the efforts highlighted above,

b) Amplify successful initiatives through the global air quality cooperation network, AQMx and CCAC Sector Hubs, with particular focus on regional knowledge hubs, mitigation guidance for key emitting sectors and integration of new knowledge products to support policy design and implementation.

c) Provide support to countries, based on country demand as well as through programmatic efforts such as the CCAC implementation in Champion countries,

d) Enhance inter-agency collaboration around joint advocacy, capacity building and knowledge dissemination, including working through the CCAC Clean Air Flagship Task Team and with the

[11] https://www.unep.org/resources/report/regulating-air-quality-first-global-assessment-air-pollution-legislation
[12] https://www.unep.org/resources/publication/guide-ambient-air-quality-legislation-air-pollution-series
[13] https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099032625132535486/pdf/P502230-d16d0858-2e18-41df-a7a6-f1188121ac83.pdf
[14] https://ourcommonair.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2024/04/OCA-Clean-Air-as-an-Asset-FINAL-11Apr24-WEB.pdf
[15] https://aqmx.org/sites/default/files/resources/OCA-Clean-Air-as-an-Asset-FINAL-11Apr24-WEB.pdf

WHO to revitalize the BreatheLife Campaign and support the updated global health roadmap on air pollution[16].

e) Update its Global Assessment of Air Pollution Legislation to reflect the status of air quality governance globally and share new lessons learned and will develop tools to support countries to establish strong national legislation especially regarding transboundary air pollution. A global policy tracker is also being developed to support evidence-based policymaking and transparency.

f) Strengthen engagement with the private and finance sectors through partners such as the UN Global Compact and UNEP-Finance Initiative (UNEP-FI). Efforts will focus on mobilizing implementation resources, supporting emissions inventories, and facilitating investment in clean air solutions.

43. Keep working to address the need of increased recognition of the links between climate and clean air, multiple wins from integrated action as well.

44. The Environment Assembly may wish to:

a) invite Member States to provide additional funding to deepen a coordinated, regional and multisectoral response.

b) consider reiterating the invitation to regional economic integration organizations, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, including industry, foundations and non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders, in a position to do so, to help mobilise financial and other resources to contribute to support regional cooperation on air quality, including through the newly established global air quality cooperation network and other provisions as outlined in resolution 6/10."

[16] https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB156/B156_24-en.pdf