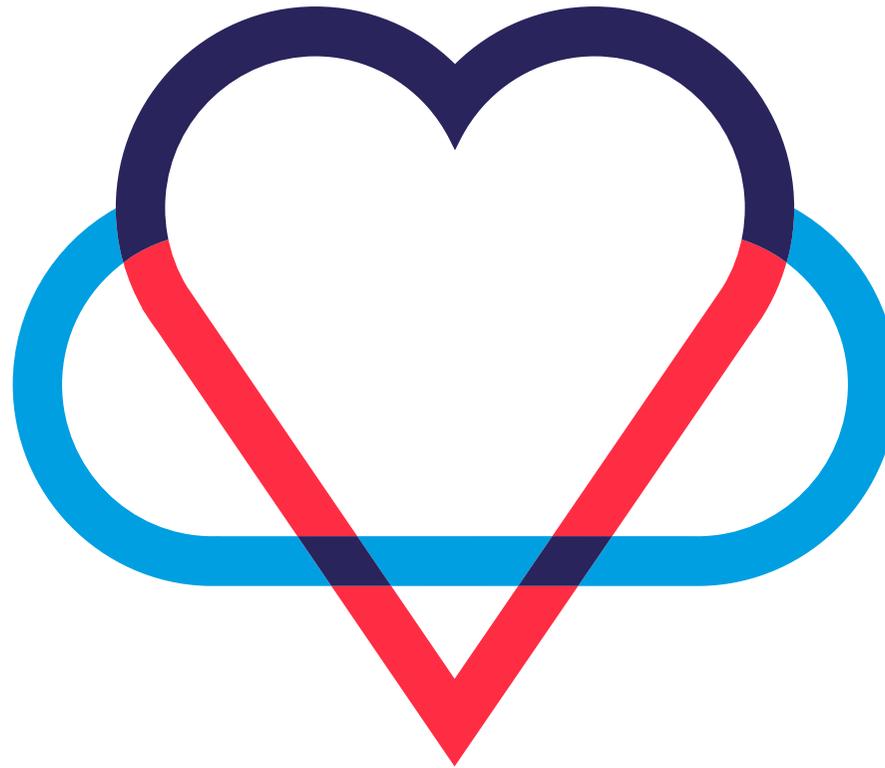


World Environment Day 2019

A practical guide for Individuals, Cities,
Governments, Schools & Universities,
Businesses, Civil society



#BeatAirPollution



Beat Air
Pollution



WORLD
ENVIRONMENT
DAY

CHINA
2019



UN
environment

World Environment Day Guide

On 5 June 2019, World Environment Day will be on the theme of air pollution— a call to action to combat one of the greatest environmental challenges of our time. Hosted by China, World Environment Day invites us all to consider how we can make changes in our daily lives to reduce **air pollution**, which in turn can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and benefit people's health too. China has demonstrated tremendous leadership in tackling air pollution domestically and its commitment to improve air quality can serve as an inspiration to countries around the world.

What is air pollution and why does it matter to me?

Nine out of 10 people worldwide breathe polluted air. Air pollution is identified as the most important health issue of our time, causing 1 in 9 deaths globally and an estimated 7 million premature deaths every year. Apart from causing respiratory diseases, air pollution is a major cause of heart attacks, lung cancer and stroke in people. Air pollution also harms our natural environment, decreasing the oxygen supply in our

oceans, making it harder for plants to grow and contributing to climate change. But the **good news** is that air pollution is preventable. Solutions are known and can be implemented. The world needs to act now.



What are the different sources of air pollution?

The five main sources of air pollution are all man-made and can be averted through good policies and practices.



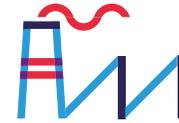
1. Agriculture – Methane, produced by agricultural processes and cows, contributes to ground-level ozone, causing asthma and other respiratory illnesses. It is also a powerful greenhouse gas, contributing to global warming. At the same time, open burning to clear fields and land is a leading contributor of black carbon and particulate pollution.



2. Transport – fine particulate matter, ozone, black carbon and nitrogen dioxide are all linked to emissions from the global transport sector. Vehicle emissions resulted in 400,000 premature deaths a year, and costed approximately \$1 trillion in health damages.



3. Households – pollutants, such as particulate matter, carbon monoxide, lead and mercury are the main types of household air pollution. These are emitted from polluting fuels, open burning or unvented and low-performing heating and cooking stoves. Indoor air pollution causes 4.3 million premature deaths.



4. Industry – large amounts of carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, particulate matter, and chemicals are released into the air by industries.



5. Waste – carbon dioxide, methane, particulate matter, and other toxins are all released in waste burning. Open burning of waste is especially associated with the emission of persistent organic pollutants, which enter the food chain.

See [here](#) for more info about the sources and effects of air pollution.

Why is air pollution an urgent issue now?

– Health

Evidence of the effect of air pollution on human health is stark and mounting. Air pollution, traditionally linked to cardiovascular and respiratory disease, has in recent years also been linked to diabetes, increased risk of dementia, impaired cognitive development and lower intelligence levels. About 7 million people worldwide die prematurely from air pollution each year.

– Human Rights

In at least 155 countries, a healthy environment is recognized as a constitutional right. Obligations related to clean air are implicit in a number of international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

– Clean Air and the Sustainable Development Goals

Fulfilling the right to breathe clean air goes hand in hand with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including healthy lives for all, sustainable cities, universal access to clean energy, and effective action to address climate change.

– Climate

Air pollution and climate change are intrinsically linked as they share common sources. Air pollution control measures can therefore reduce emissions of climate pollutants and improve local air quality. If we were to reduce pollutants like methane, black carbon, and tropospheric ozone, we could reduce global warming by up to 0.5°C over the next few decades,

simultaneously avoiding 2.4 million premature deaths and more than 50 million tonnes of crop losses per year.

– Environment

Air pollutants can have powerful impacts on the environment. They can change or deplete nutrients in soil and waterways, endanger vital freshwater sources, harm forests and minimize crop yields, introduce toxins and heavy metals to the food chain, and damage cultural icons such as monuments and statues.

– Economic

The most obvious economic impact of air pollution is the costs to public health. Air pollution costs the global economy more than US\$5 trillion every year in welfare costs. The effects are worse in the developing world, where in some places, welfare losses cost nearly 7.5 per cent of GDP.

Together we can #BeatAirPollution

Everyone is invited to take part! Explore [this site](#) to learn about the different types of air pollution and why they matter to you using the infographics, quizzes and stories from around the world.

Governments, cities, schools, businesses, organizations:

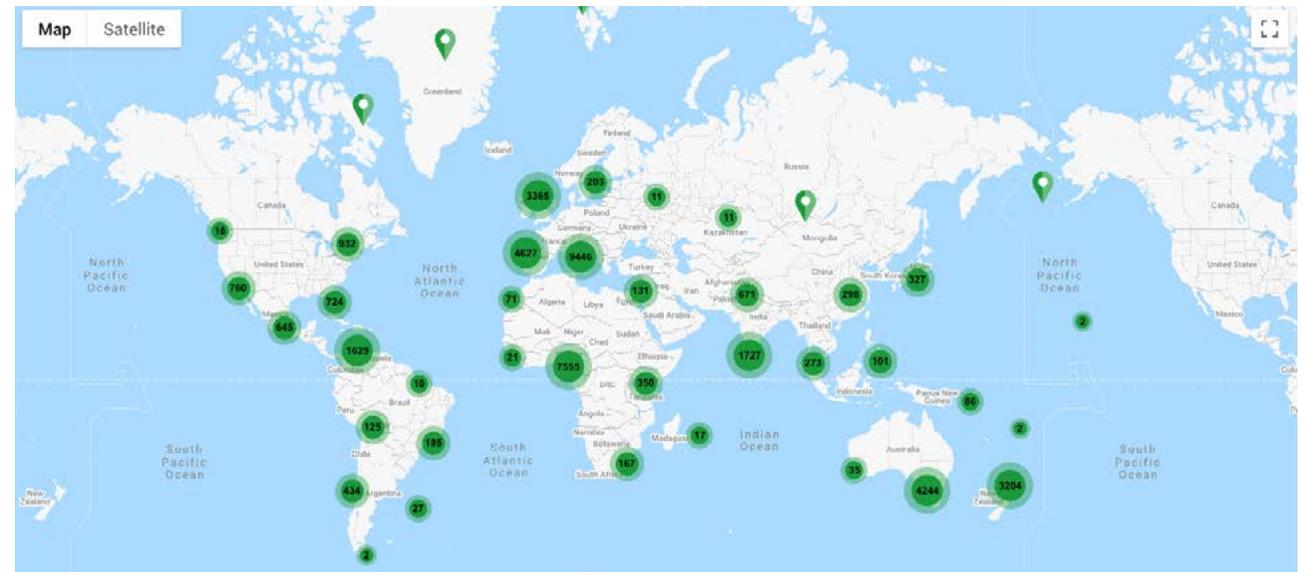
- Use the World Environment Day site and this practical guide to get inspired on the types of activities you can host on 5 June and register your events on [the site](#). These could be as small as friends getting together with friends to bike to work, a school planting trees on its campus or a city introducing a car free day.

- All registered events will be given global visibility on [the site](#) via a real-time map and will also be awarded World Environment Day participation certificates by UN Environment.

To stay on top of events happening in the lead up to 5 June, subscribe to the World Environment Day [newsletter](#).

On 5 June, check back on [this site](#) to follow a live blog with 24-hour coverage on related events and social conversation from around the world.

In the weeks after World Environment Day, [the site](#) will share stories on commitments made by cities, governments and the private sector and track how we have collectively moved the needle on air pollution!



[Register your event on our world map](#)

How can governments get involved?

Consider using World Environment Day to make commitments to improve air quality. Here are some ideas:



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- Announce new requirements on industry to reduce harmful air pollutants.
 - Make a pledge to phase out petrol and diesel-based cars.
 - Use 5 June to pledge more investments in renewable energy sources.
 - Use World Environment Day to make a commitment to put in place national air quality action plans.
 - Make a commitment to monitor air quality, assess pollution sources and tackle them to protect citizens from harmful toxins. Only 1 in 10 cities have air quality measures that meet World Health Organization standards.
- Announce on World Environment Day that you will join the [Breathe Life campaign](#) run by UN Environment, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, the World Health Organization and the World Bank.
- Register your event [here](#).

**BREATHE
LIFE**

How can cities celebrate?

Consider using World Environment Day to make commitments on improving air quality by curbing transport and energy emissions and creating more green spaces. Here are some ideas:



- Offer free transport in urban areas to encourage drivers to leave their cars at home.
- Do a tree-planting day on 5 June.
- Consider hosting an electric vehicle expo on World Environment Day to educate citizens on the benefits.
- Commit to making more pedestrian and cycle-friendly zones with separated lanes for walking and riding.
- Pledge to phase out diesel buses and trucks, as cities such as Madrid, Paris, Athens and Mexico City have done.
- Look at landfill gas recovery as an energy option that harnesses landfill emissions rather than allowing them to enter the atmosphere or our lungs.

Register your event [here](#).

How can businesses get involved?

Why not use World Environment Day to make pledges on reducing emissions and investing in research and development to imagine new and less damaging ways of doing business.



- Make a pledge to use recyclable materials for your products.
- Host a company tree planting day.
- Use World Environment Day to ensure your power supply is renewable.
- Think about using fresh air ventilation for cooling or install ultra-efficient, hydrofluorocarbon-free cooling.
- Make a pledge to buy low-emission or electric vehicles for the company fleet.
- Consider how you can reduce emissions of air pollutants from facilities and supply chains.

Register your event [here](#).

How can civil society take part?

On World Environment Day, we should all think about making pledges to be more sustainable in our consumption and reduce air pollution in our daily lives. Here are some practical tips to get started:



- Commit to using more public transportation, cycle or walk, and share car rides where possible.
- Make a commitment not to burn trash.
- Organize a tree planting activity with your community on World Environment Day, which is a cost-effective way to tackle urban air pollution.
- Organize a trash clean-up event with community and colleagues.
- Use World Environment Day as an opportunity to ask your local authorities to provide timely, regular air quality data and petition for legislation to control the worst polluters.
- If celebrating Eid Al-Fiter, which coincides with World Environment Day this year, consider buying only what you need so as to minimize air pollution and climate change.

Register your event [here](#).

How can schools and universities celebrate?

World Environment Day can be a platform for students and education officials to lead the fight for cleaner air and ask their governments and schools to transition to cleaner energy. Here are some examples of actions that could be taken by schools:



- Host a tree-planting event on World Environment Day and ask students to bring in seedlings for their own plants.
- Ask teachers and professors to teach a whole day on sustainability and air quality for World Environment Day.
- Support students in the creation of environmental clubs on campus, which can empower youth to be innovative and come up with ideas to tackle air pollution.
- Use World Environment Day as an opportunity to commit to using renewable energy on your campuses.
- On World Environment consider installing air quality monitors to check air quality on your campus and area so that the community is aware of the air they are breathing.
- On World Environment Day consider committing to provide electric buses and making your school campus is bicycle friendly
- Consider creating no-car idling zones near your school.

Register your event [here](#).

How can individuals get involved?

Nine out of ten people breathe polluted air. From 24 May, through to #WorldEnvironmentDay on June 5, we are calling on everyone to [join the Mask Challenge](#). Face masks are a great symbol to show leaders we want to breathe clean air. Alongside celebrities, influencers and creators, the World Environment Day campaign invites everyone to:



Phase 1

May 24th – June 4th

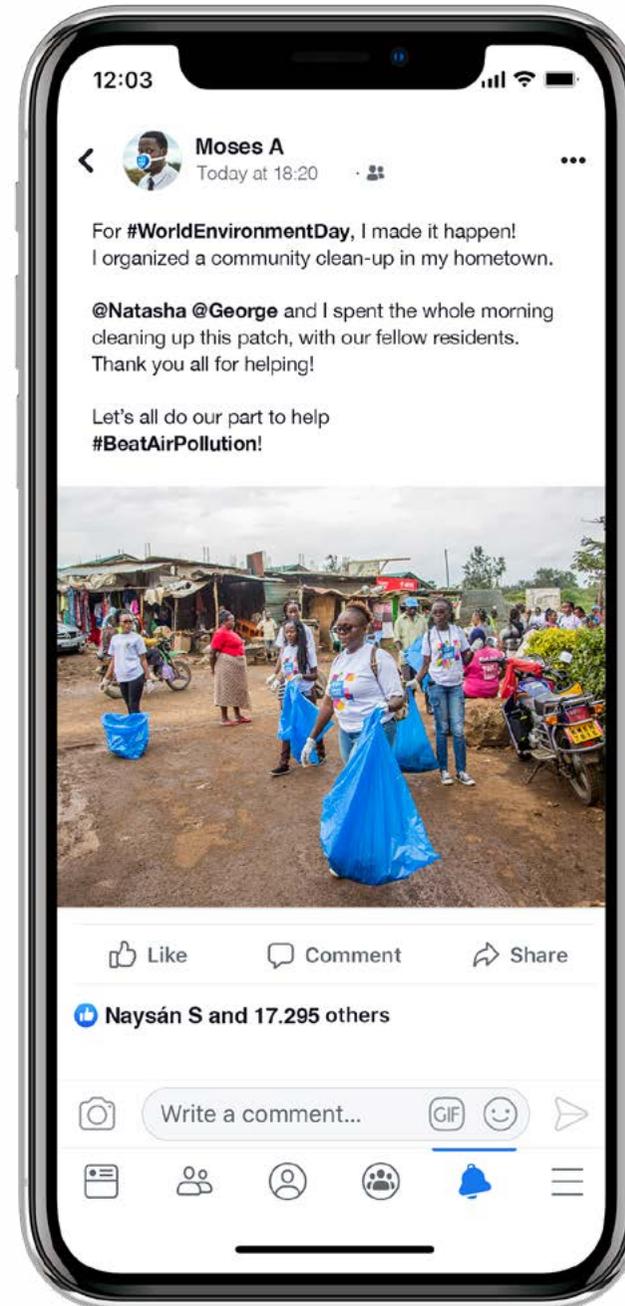
1. Take a photo or video of yourself wearing a mask to post on social media. Don't have a mask? Get creative and make your own!
2. In your post share the action you'll take to reduce air pollution [click here to learn how](#)
3. Tag 3 people/organizations/companies to challenge them to do the same.
4. Use #WorldEnvironmentDay and #BeatAirPollution in your social media posts and don't forget to tag @UNEnvironment.

Phase 2 –

World Environment Day June 5th

1. Take another photo or video of yourself fulfilling your commitment and post it on social media.
2. Use #WorldEnvironmentDay and #BeatAirPollution in your social media posts and don't forget to tag @UNEnvironment.

Phase 1
May 24th – June 4th



Phase 2
June 5th

#BeatAirPollution

We can #BeatAirPollution

Contact:
worldenvironmentday@un.org



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