

**FIFTH ASIA PACIFIC CLEAN AIR PARTNERSHIP (APCAP)  
JOINT FORUM  
20-21 March 2025 | Yokohama, Japan**

**SESSION CONCEPT NOTE**

**Session 2. Plenary Discussion: Invest in Clean Air Now**

**Part 2: On the horizon – APCAP five years from now**

20 March 2025 | 11.15 – 12.30

Venue: Pacifico Yokohama (Meeting Room: 315)

**BACKGROUND**

The **Asia Pacific region continues to face significant air pollution challenges**, with high levels of PM<sub>2.5</sub> and other pollutants affecting human health, ecosystems, and economic productivity.<sup>1</sup> Pollution, including air pollution, is part of the triple planetary crises that are driving further damage to the environment and to people's health.

**Cost-effective solutions to address air pollution exist and have been identified to address the major sources of air pollution.** While the contribution of each source may vary depending on location, fossil fuel emissions from coal burning for power and heat, transport, industrial furnaces, brick kilns, agriculture, domestic solid fuel heating, and the unregulated burning of waste are considered the main sources of air pollution. In Asia Pacific, the report *Air Pollution in Asia Pacific: Science Based Solutions* by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)'s Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP) and Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) have identified 25 policy and technological solutions to address the five key sectors contributing to air pollution in Asia Pacific.<sup>2</sup> These solutions have been identified to provide multiple benefits for public health, agriculture, and the climate.

**There has been progress made by countries in taking key actions** to significantly improve air quality, including these 25 solutions.<sup>3</sup> According to the State of Global Air 2024, regions including South Asia, Southeast and East Asia and Oceania, have seen reductions in PM<sub>2.5</sub> exposures in the last two decades.<sup>4</sup> Similar results were described in the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)'s 2024 Sustainable Development Goals Report which mentioned that air quality improvements are possible through international cooperation and multisectoral actions.<sup>5</sup>

**Much headway has been achieved in Asia Pacific** with the adoption of the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Programme on Air Pollution (RAPAP) in 2022 during the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)'s Committee on Environment and Development. The Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP) provides technical assistance to facilitate the implementation of the 25 clean air measures. Adoption of a new Roadmap on the ASEAN Cooperation towards Transboundary Haze Pollution Control with Means of Implementation 2023-2030.<sup>6</sup> The EANET, an intergovernmental network working on acid deposition and air pollution issues for over 20 years, has expanded its scope and partnership engagement in 2023.

**Despite some progress, challenges remain**, including policy enforcement gaps, resource constraints, and the need for stronger science-policy and multisectoral integration. Low- and middle-income countries

---

<sup>1</sup> State of Global Air 2024.

<sup>2</sup> <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/26861>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unep.org/topics/air/multi-level-air-quality-management/actions-air-quality-report-update>

<sup>4</sup> State of Global Air 2024.

<sup>5</sup> [https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2024/extended-report/Extended-Report\\_Goal-11.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2024/extended-report/Extended-Report_Goal-11.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [https://hazeportal.asean.org/media\\_release/media-release-of-17th-asean-ministerial-meeting-on-the-environment-and-18th-meeting-of-the-conference-of-the-parties-to-the-asean-agreement-on-transboundary-haze-pollution/](https://hazeportal.asean.org/media_release/media-release-of-17th-asean-ministerial-meeting-on-the-environment-and-18th-meeting-of-the-conference-of-the-parties-to-the-asean-agreement-on-transboundary-haze-pollution/)

account for 93% of premature mortality caused by air pollution, mainly in Asia and Africa.<sup>7</sup> Air pollution work remains woefully underfunded.<sup>8</sup> In addition to health impacts, air pollution is also linked with climate change and impacts food insecurity, among others. Short-lived climate pollutants, such as black carbon and methane, pose a dual threat by harming human health and contributes to near term warming, emphasizing the urgency of comprehensive and integrated solutions. There is also evidence that air pollution is affecting crop production in many of the world’s key agricultural areas, including those in Central Africa, Pakistan, India, China and South-East Asia.<sup>9</sup>

**Looking ahead, continued strong and transformative action** is needed as the World Economic Forum (WEF)’s Global Risks Report 2025 cautions that environmental risks, including pollution, are expected to dominate the risk landscape in the next decade.<sup>10</sup> Some of the recommended actions include strengthening regulatory frameworks and unlocking ambitious financing, especially for technological solutions. It would also benefit to focus resources on synergistic actions that bring multiple benefits as many Sustainable Development Goals and climate targets are off-track and under-funded. Improving air quality has been identified as one of these ‘synergy solutions’, as it can deliver benefits for health, climate, and socio-economic development.<sup>11</sup>

**Regional cooperation will be vital to help address these challenges.** The important role of regional cooperation has been emphasized by member states at the Sixth Session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) adopted a resolution on *Promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally*.<sup>12</sup>

<b>A brief overview of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP)</b>	
2014	The Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP) was set up in 2014 following the recognition of member states that air pollution is a top priority that requires immediate action by the international community and governments during the First Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA).
Phase 1 2014- 2018	<p>In its first phase, APCAP focused on bringing together the multiple regional initiatives to provide clear policy options based on the best science to support action on air pollution across the region. Phase 1 of APCAP had three key outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Output 1: Support the coordination and knowledge sharing among various clean air initiatives at the regional level</li> <li>• Output 2: Inform existing air pollution networks and policy makers on the science policy linkages on air pollution</li> <li>• Output 3: Enhance national capacity for identifying emission sources, developing regulatory measures, and raising awareness.</li> </ul> <p>A few highlights during APCAP Phase 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top 25 clean air measures recommended for the region identified with the regional assessment “Air Pollution in the Asia Pacific: Science-based Solutions” launched (developed with CCAC)</li> <li>• Close to 500 stakeholders brought together to discuss clean air solutions during the APCAP Joint Forum and Asia Pacific Clean Air Week</li> </ul>

<sup>7</sup> [https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2024/extended-report/Extended-Report\\_Goal-3.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2024/extended-report/Extended-Report_Goal-3.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cleanairfund.org/resource/air-quality-funding-2024/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://library.wmo.int/records/item/68653-the-impacts-of-particulate-matter-on-crop-yield-mechanisms-quantification-and-options-for-mitigation>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2025/>

<sup>11</sup> United Nations (2023c). *Synergy Solutions for a World in Crisis: Tackling Climate and SDG Action Together*.

<sup>12</sup> UNEP/EA.6/Res.10 - Promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally <https://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/unea6/outcomes> (Accessed: July 2024).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical assistance to three countries on air quality and health assessments</li> <li>• Strengthened capacity of over 100 national air quality managers to beat air pollution</li> </ul>
Phase 2 2019- 2024	<p>In its second phase, APCAP worked to facilitate implementation of the 25 clean air measures for Asia Pacific through strengthened partnerships, science-based policies, and sectoral interventions. This is also in line with the UNEA-3 on Resolution 3/8 'Preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally'. Phase 2 of APCAP had three key outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Output 1: Deliver technical support to at least five countries to develop an action plan to implement one of the priority measures in 25 clean air measures of the Solutions Report</li> <li>• Output 2: Provide regional platform for knowledge sharing and science-policy interface on clean air, with links to relevant global and regional intergovernmental mechanisms</li> <li>• Output 3: Inform and update Asia Pacific policymakers on the latest science on air pollution control for development of evidence-based policies</li> </ul> <p>A few highlights during APCAP Phase 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed the Clean Air Solutions Tracker to inform status of 25 clean air solutions in 41 countries in Asia Pacific. This was recognized a key resource for global UNEP air quality assessments and UNEP's reporting for UNEA air quality resolution – helping inform the status of air quality actions and legislation in the region</li> <li>• Supported the development of Cambodia's first national clean air plan and its follow-up implementation, and preparatory support for Lao PDR</li> <li>• Facilitating support for clean air interventions through climate finance in Cambodia, India, and Sri Lanka</li> <li>• Contributed to the process of strengthening regional cooperation on clean air in Asia Pacific with support to the Regional Action Programme on Air Pollution</li> <li>• Close to 1,000 stakeholders brought together during the APCAP Joint Forums and Asia Pacific Clean Air Week</li> <li>• Three clean air policy briefs focused on (1) PM2.5 and ozone co-benefits of co-control; (2) Reducing exposure to particulate matter in indoor environments; and (3) Policy showcase: Clean energy transition in China</li> </ul>

## OBJECTIVES

The session aims to:

- Recognize emerging developments and trends that may affect the work to improve air quality.
- Discuss key interventions that need to be scaled up in the next five years.
- Provide insights into the future work of the Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership.
- Launch the UNEP and CCAC ASEAN Clean Air Solutions Report.

## SESSION STRUCTURE

**Session moderator:** Mr. Mushtaq Memon, Regional Coordinator for Chemicals and Pollution Action, UNEP Asia Pacific Office

Time	Items
11.15 - 11.20 (5 minutes)	<b><u>Introduction of the Session and Panelists</u></b> by the moderator
11.20 – 11.45 (25 minutes)	<b><u>Setting the scene:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Proposed key elements of APCAP Phase 3</b>   Presentation by <b>Ms. Kaye Patdu</b>, Associate Programme Officer – APCAP, UNEP Asia Pacific Office (<i>15 minutes</i>)</li><li>• <b>Launch of the ASEAN Clean Air Solutions Report</b>   Presentation by <b>Ms. Kaoru Akahoshi</b>, Research Manager and <b>Mr. Eric Zusman</b>, Research Director, Institute Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) (<i>10 minutes</i>)</li></ul>
11.45 – 12.30 (45 minutes)	<b><u>Part 2: On the horizon – APCAP five years from now</u></b>  <b><u>Interventions from Invited Speakers</u></b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Mr. Yu Kamei</b>, Director for International Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Environment, Japan</li><li>2. <b>Ms. Hanna Yang</b>, Director of Air Quality Policy Division, Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea, (<a href="#">online</a>)</li><li>3. <b>Ms. Jungmin Park</b>, Chair of the Thematic Working Group on Air Quality, National Institute of Environment Research (NIER)</li><li>4. <b>Dr. Zbigniew Klimont</b>, Research Group Leader and Principal Research Scholar, <b>IIASA</b></li><li>5. <b>Dr. Toshimasa Ohara</b>, Director General, Asia Center for Air Pollution Research (ACAP)</li><li>6. <b>Mr. Josselyn Mothe</b>, Technical Officer, Air Quality and Health, WHO Asia-Pacific Centre for Environment and Health in the Western Pacific Region (<a href="#">online</a>)</li></ol>

7 minutes per speaker

### Guide questions:

1. What emerging developments or trends\* do you observe that may impact action to reduce air pollution (either positively or negatively) and must be considered in developing future work on clean air? What are the key intervention/s\*\* that should be scaled up further in the next five years to achieve significant progress towards clean air in the region?
2. Please share your recommendation or suggestion for 1-2 potential areas that the Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP) could consider focusing on in its next phase. Are there opportunities for leveraging partnerships with your organization/ initiative to achieve the shared goals of clean air?

Note:

---

\*Example: technology, digitalization, demographic profile, economic development, food security, green jobs, political shifts, new scientific evidence, etc.)

\*\*Example: monitoring and assessment; unlocking financing for sector-specific interventions through public and private sectors; strengthening regulatory frameworks; international/regional commitments; increased leadership from other sectors, such as health; etc.)

---

12.30

**Summary**

---