

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CLEAN AIR FOR BLUE SKIES 2023

7 September 2023

Air pollution is a global emergency. Ninety-nine per cent of humanity breathes air laced with soot, sulphur and other toxic chemicals, with low- and middle-income countries suffering the highest exposures. Every year, seven million people die prematurely as a result, and air pollution is intimately linked to global heating.

Air pollution knows no borders, travelling thousands of kilometres, spreading contaminants with the wind. And the climate crisis is having devastating and growing impacts on every continent on Earth.

Global problems require global solutions. We must act together for clean air – the theme of this year’s International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies.

Together, we must accelerate a just and equitable transition away from fossil fuels, particularly coal, towards clean renewable energy, while ensuring that no one is left behind.

To help achieve this, I have proposed a Climate Solidarity Pact in which all big emitters make extra efforts to cut emissions, and wealthier countries mobilize financial and technical resources to support emerging economies to do so. And I have proposed an Acceleration Agenda to supercharge these efforts. I urge all countries to put both into effect.

We must also support the transition to clean cooking and electric vehicles. We must encourage walking and cycling in cities, and put in place systems to make responsible waste management second nature. And we must act on the pledge to reduce methane emissions.

Our air is a common good and a common responsibility. Let’s work together to clean it up, protect our health, and leave a healthy planet for generations to come.
