

SOUTH AFRICA
CSD15 THEME: AIR POLLUTION
Intergovernmental Planning Meeting
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Mr. Chairman, South Africa fully supports the statement made by Pakistan on behalf of G77 and China.

It is our view that in order for us to achieve the Sustainable Development goals as outlined in Agenda 21 as well the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, it is imperative that we find effective ways to address air pollution at national, regional and sub-regional levels in an integrated manner as the other three thematic areas have a bearing on air pollution. This requires the involvement and commitment of all stakeholders, including at international level.

For us in developing countries, air pollution is closely inter-linked with poverty. Indoor air pollution has been identified as one of the major causes of respiratory ailments among women and children in developing countries, particularly in rural areas where access to clean and affordable energy is virtually absent. In the promotion the sustainable livelihoods of these vulnerable groups, it is therefore important to ensure supply of technologies and fuels which will enhance the quality of their lives.

In urban areas, unregulated emissions from vehicles using high sulphur fuels as well as lead containing petrol coupled with dangerous industrial emissions contribute to the public health burden of developing countries caused by air pollution. In all these instances it is the poor who find themselves at the receiving end of this problem, as they do not have the necessary resources to choose where they live, nor the resources to meet the medical costs associated with the impacts of air pollution.

While the design of policies and strategies to combat air pollution is an essential step, the impacts of these often come to naught if not backed by the necessary technical and financial resources to ensure their effective implementation. It is in this regard that we call on developed countries in line with the principle of equal but differentiated responsibility, to show real commitment by taking concrete steps to facilitate access by developing countries to environmentally sound technologies, for minimizing air pollution, as well as the transfer of know-how with respect to the use of such technologies. One such example is the promotion of research at national and regional levels aimed at quantifying the contribution to air pollution by various sectors, such as transport and industry, and their impacts on human health.

In addition, financial assistance to developing countries on favourable terms with respect to implementation of policies at national level should be seen as a critical factor in the fight against air pollution and its attendant social and economic impacts.

Assistance in transferring know-how with respect to advanced energy technologies as well as clean fuels and renewable energy technologies for both vehicles and domestic cooking and space heating is of critical importance.

While South Africa has successfully eliminated the use of lead in gasoline, there is a strong need to strengthen the support of the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles in other developing countries in order for it to complete the good work aimed at the global elimination of leaded gasoline, as well as other initiatives aimed at reducing sulphur in fuels.

We recognize that air pollution is a trans-boundary issue and therefore needs to be addressed not only at national level but at regional and international levels. To this end there is an urgent need for assistance in the harmonization of policies and standards on air pollution. Partnerships between scientist and experts in developing countries and their counterparts in the developed countries must be encouraged, especially in the areas of developing ambient and emission standards and guidelines.