

Decision 2019/5

Establishment of the forum for international cooperation on air pollution

The Executive Body,

Recognizing the importance of cooperation beyond the ECE region,

Recalling the Long-term strategy for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution for 2020–2030 and beyond (decision 2018/5, annex),

Recalling also that it agreed at its thirty-eighth session (Geneva, 10–14 December 2018) to establish a forum for collaboration on reducing air pollution (ECE/EB.AIR/142, para. 68 (b)),

1. *Welcomes* the establishment of the Forum in line with the proposal attached to the report of the Executive Body on its thirty-ninth session (see ECE/EB.AIR/144, Annex I);
2. *Invites* the Executive Body Bureau to continue to develop the proposal for the forum;
3. *Decides* that the Executive Body Bureau will continue to lead the development of the forum during the initial phase, including the development of terms of reference, the identification of countries willing to lead the forum, the organization of an initial meeting, the continued development of the forum website, and outreach to relevant international organizations;
3. *Invites* Parties, countries and other participants of the forum to make voluntary in-kind or in-cash earmarked contributions to support the work of the forum.

Forum for international cooperation on air pollution: proposal

I. Background

1. The need for coordinated actions has been recognized in many different international forums (for example, through United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme and World Health Assembly resolutions and the 2019 International Law Commission draft guidelines on protection of the atmosphere). The importance of cooperation beyond the ECE region has also been recognized in the updated long-term strategy for the Convention (ECE/EB.AIR/142/Add.2, decision 2018/5, annex, para. 76). Given its 40 years of experience in tackling transboundary air pollution on a regional basis, the Convention is keen to cooperate with other regions to ascertain common challenges and to exchange experiences on air pollution policy.

2. Following a special event on clean air globally, the Executive Body, at its thirty-eighth session (Geneva, 10–14 December 2018), agreed to establish a forum for collaboration on reducing air pollution and requested the Bureau of the Executive Body to further elaborate the proposal (ECE/EB.AIR/142, para. 68 (b)). The proposal has been updated based on discussions during the event on clean air globally, at which it was recommended that the forum should be steered by the Air Convention in close cooperation with other key stakeholders and especially with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), to link the initiative to the platform called for in United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 3/8 on preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally. In these discussions, it was also recommended to reach out to countries and organizations not present at the session. The forum promotes integrated approaches to addressing air pollution aimed at achieving multiple benefits to human health, the economy, ecosystems and climate and efforts across sectors that improve air quality.

II. Purpose

3. The forum for international cooperation on air pollution is a forum for international exchange of information and mutual learning on both the scientific/technical and policy levels. It is intended to be a repository for technical information and a convenor of countries and organizations, with the goal of increasing international cooperation on addressing air pollution.

III. Vision

4. The forum's vision is to promote international collaboration towards enhancing scientific knowledge and awareness related to air pollution and preventing and reducing air pollution, in particular transboundary transport, to improve air quality globally.

5. The forum aims to fulfil its purpose, among other things, by:

(a) Acting as an international platform for information-sharing, mutual learning and collaboration on air pollution;

(b) Fostering emissions reductions of air pollutants through exchange of information on best practices, clean air technological solutions and policy approaches;

(c) Promoting integrated environmental policy in addressing international air pollution;

(d) Facilitating the matching of funding opportunities with country efforts and needs;

- (e) Promoting an evidence-based approach to air quality management;
- (f) Working to raise public awareness of the health and environmental impacts of air pollution;
- (g) Collaborating and communicating with partners and stakeholders.

IV. Proposed structure and operation

6. The forum is open to participation by ECE and non-ECE country representatives, as well as representatives of organizations and conventions with an interest in reducing air pollution.
7. The aim is, that in the initial phase, the forum will be led by one or more countries, including at least one from the ECE region, which are to appoint a chair/chairs. Interested countries are invited to express their interest to the ECE secretariat.
8. The forum's operation and activities will be funded through voluntary financial and in-kind contributions.
9. The forum will mainly be a web-based platform. Efforts should be made to make use of tools that enable virtual meetings. Periodic face-to-face meetings will be held as decided by the forum's lead countries (chairs). Forum members could also attend existing relevant meetings to leverage resources and share information on similar efforts. Meetings or workshops may also be held to implement specific projects decided upon by the forum.

V. Activities of the forum

10. Activities of the forum could include:

Information-sharing on policy

- (a) Providing a platform to exchange information and views on addressing air pollution and raise awareness of its health and environmental impacts;
- (b) Providing an overview of international policy initiatives in the air pollution field and summarizing the state of international efforts to address air pollution;
- (c) Seeking connections with relevant organizations or bodies involved in practical efforts to reduce air pollution;
- (d) Sharing experiences on regional cooperation, including the Air Convention's multilateral regional structure and framework as a model for other regions;
- (e) Promoting tools such as the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air initiative;
- (f) Promoting an integrated approach to the management of air quality and other environmental issues to achieve multiple benefits and coordinating to that end with relevant organizations, as appropriate;
- (g) Promoting regional cooperation on air pollution in existing or future networks.

Information-sharing on science

- (a) Facilitating access to scientific information, for example, online databases for best available control technologies;
- (b) Encouraging sharing of information related to international transport and global emissions of air pollution and their impacts on ecosystems and human health;
- (c) Helping to establish contacts for science cooperation (for example, to share lessons learned with harmonized handbooks, monitoring methods, risk assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness and benefits of air pollution reductions on health and the

environment and targeted “hands-on” training workshops) and possibly adaptation of Air Convention tools for other geographic scopes or activities.

Technical capacity-building and information-sharing on funding opportunities

(a) Reaching out to funding organizations and providing a platform for information-sharing on funding opportunities for country participants and other organizations;

(b) Providing a platform for information-sharing on available capacity-building and training opportunities;

(c) Sharing experience and information that could inform the development of action plans for addressing air pollution, including in urban centres;

(d) Promoting an evidence-based approach to air quality management, including related to the development of emission inventories and the communication of health and ecosystem impacts to the public.

VI. Next steps

(a) Developing terms of reference for the forum, for consultation with forum participants (led by the Executive Body Bureau);

(b) Identifying countries willing to lead the forum;

(c) Organizing the first meeting of the forum;

(d) Continuing to develop a website for the forum, based on an analysis of similar existing websites to avoid overlaps;

(e) Reaching out to organizations such as UNEP, the World Meteorological Organization, the World Health Organization, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, the Global Methane Initiative, the World Resources Institute, the International Union of Air Pollution and Environmental Protection Associations and C40 to explore possible synergies in activities.