



**WSDS 2021 | Thematic (Bloomberg Philanthropies)
'Cleaning air in Indian cities'**

Tentative Schedule Date: February 11, 2021 | Time: 6.30 – 8.15 PM (IST)

Concept Note

Air pollution is a key concern in a developing economy like India. Despite several efforts by the Government of India, more than 75-80% of Indian cities violate the prescribed standards of air quality. Among many like oxides of nitrogen, carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and sulphur di-oxide, particulate matter is the air pollutant of most concern in India, not only because of its high concentrations in most cities but also because of severity of its impacts over human health. While many of these are directly related to respiratory disorders, some of them have shown evidence of linkages with cardio-vascular diseases and cancer. Research studies have also indicated significant impacts over agricultural productivity due to high ground level ozone concentrations in India.

There are preliminary city level action plans which have been formulated by the government to control air pollution in Indian cities. These plans are being strengthened by scientific studies which quantify the contribution of sources in the prevailing pollution levels. Also, some of the actions listed in the plans are being implemented by the city and state agencies. Despite these, the air quality scenario has not improved considerably over the years, at most places in India and the levels are still way above the prescribed standards. This is due to variety of reasons. There are limited comprehensive scientific studies based on which air quality plans can be strengthened and effective air pollution control can be carried out. There are many cities, which are developing preliminary air quality management plans based on basic information on air quality and sources, but not on the basis of detailed scientific assessments pin-pointing the source contributions. Moreover, contribution of regional scale pollution and secondary particulates are generally not accounted in the city level air quality management plans, which emerge out as significant contributors. It has been observed that other than emission sources within the city, regional pollution sources also contribute significantly towards the deteriorating air quality of cities. For example, as per recent study on source apportionment of Delhi- NCR region (TERI&ARAI, 2018), average

contribution of Delhi's own emissions in Delhi PM2.5 concentrations was found to be at 36% in winter and 26% in summer, and rest is contributed by sources outside the city. Other than this, there are constraints related to the technical capacity of regulatory agencies and local stakeholders, which is essential for formulation and implementation of air quality management plans.

Thematic Event

In context of above mentioned issues related to city level air quality management, a thematic event on 'Cleaning air in Indian cities' is being organised on 11th Feb from 6.30 pm to 08.15 pm during the World Sustainable Development Summit (10th – 12th Feb 2021) with the following objectives:

Objective 1: What is the progress made by different non-attainment cities in India to control air pollution since launch of NCAP?

Objectives 2 : What are the major challenges faced by the regulatory agencies ?

Objective 3: What are learnings which can be used to effectively manage the air quality in similar Indian cities?

Objective 4: What are the learnings from the experiences of other countries and cities in tackling the problem of air quality?

The event is supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies. First session will focus on sharing the international experiences on managing air quality. Discussion will focus on customising solutions for Indian context and how to expedite the controls. In the second session, representatives from CPCB and SPCBs will discuss the city level control of air pollution under the NCAP and challenges faced since the launch of programs in Jan 2019. Experiences on city level actions and learnings will be shared from the key cities and states of Karnataka, Gujarat, Bihar and Delhi.

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