

Reference: UNE-2020-01329

5 June 2020

Excellency,

I would like to inform you of the upcoming observance of the first International Day of Clean Air for blue skies on 7 September 2020, as set out in the UN General Assembly resolution 74/212, adopted in October 2019. The main purpose of this Day is to raise awareness and mobilize global action to address air pollution.

Air pollution is one of the biggest environmental threats to health today, being responsible for 7 million premature deaths each year globally. Air pollutants also contribute directly to the climate crisis, hence endangering the health and livelihoods of current and future generations.

Our atmosphere provides numerous ecosystem services that keep our climate stable, protect ecosystems and crops, and provides the very air we breathe. We all have a responsibility to protect it.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed, like never before, the fragility of our societies and economies to shocks, highlighting the urgency of improving our relationship with nature. Early studies are projecting that air pollution increases the likelihood of succumbing to COVID-19, giving us yet another reason to urgently improve global air quality. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other UN agencies will follow this and future research closely.

The General Assembly resolution invites UNEP to facilitate the observance of the Day, and we look forward to supporting global efforts to raise awareness of the sources and impacts of air pollution and the solutions to improve air quality.

To support this work, we have established an internal team in UNEP, led by the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) Secretariat in coordination with our Communications Division, Air Quality Programme team, New York office and our regional offices. We welcome member states who would like to join the coordination efforts or to contribute to the observance of the Day to contact Ms. Helena Molin Valdes (Helena.Molinvaldes@un.org), Head of the CCAC Secretariat.

I take this opportunity to seek your support in coordinating with your Ministries and Departments to join the efforts and make plans at the national and sub-national levels for the observance of the International Day for Clean Air and blue skies.

Celebrating the International Day of Clean Air for blue skies will increase the awareness of what the solutions are, and how we can work towards multiple benefits for clean air, climate change and sustainable development.

I welcome your support to make this undertaking a success, together.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Inger Andersen
Executive Director

To:
Permanent Representatives to the United Nations