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<http://complexproblems.solutions/urban-air-pollution/>

<https://www.britannica.com/science/air-pollution>

<https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/sustainable-urban-energy-future>

I. Background Information

Over the last 20 years, urban areas have experienced dramatic growth. Currently, over 3.5 billion people inhabit urban areas. Therefore, as populations move to more developed areas the immediate outcome is urbanization. Apparently, this contributes to the development of land for use in commercial properties; social and economic support institutions, transportation, and residential buildings. Eventually, these activities raise several urbanization issues. Although the extent of urbanization in developing countries differs in magnitude and pace, their common challenge is to stabilize environmental degradation by finding a solution for clean air and sustainable energy.

Poor air quality is the root cause of many health problems, traffic, poverty, global warming, loss of biodiversity, loss of productivity, loss of trees, acid rains, water pollution and also extra fuel consumption. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in the year 2012, ambient air pollution was responsible for 3.7 million deaths, representing 6.7% of the total deaths. The main reasons for such a situation are:

- The burning of fossil fuels
- Transportation
- Domestic fuel burning
- Industrial activities

Aspects to consider to improve sustainability in cities:

- Public awareness - education about the importance of the environment will raise sustainability
- Government support - higher government involvement in environmental protection
- Local authorities involvement - local government is closer to communities and often more innovative than national government

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/07/clean-air-initiative-calls-climate-action/>
<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-7-affordable-and-clean-energy/targets.html>

II. UN Involvement

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is the United Nations programme, which was established in 1978 and works in over 90 countries to promote transformative change in cities and towns in order to improve urban sustainability.

In July 2019 the United Nations, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) and Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) announced the “Clean Air Initiative”, which calls on national and subnational governments to commit to achieving air quality that is safe for citizens, and to align climate change and air pollution policies by 2030.

Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG 7) is one of 17 SDG established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015. SDG 7 aims to provide access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services and increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030.

III. Questions To Consider

1. What is your countries' policy regarding sustainable energy? Does it have any sustainable energy laws?
2. Does your country largely contribute to decreasing the quality of air/is your country a significant pollutant? If yes, how can it decrease its polluting?
3. How can countries work together internationally to prevent or improve the root causes of poor air quality?
4. How does your country stabilize air pollution?

Useful Sources:

<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-7-affordable-and-clean-energy/targets.html>

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/milestones/unced>

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/07/clean-air-initiative-calls-climate-action/>

<https://www.un.org/en/conferences/energy2021>