



**How the world  
united to  
#BeatAirPollution**  
World Environment Day 2019



Beat Air  
Pollution



WORLD  
ENVIRONMENT  
DAY

CHINA  
2019



UN  
environment  
programme

# Together we can #BeatAirPollution



Over 20,000 people attended the Festival de L'Environnement in Brussels.



A reforestation project was carried out in Pululahua reserve in Quito, Ecuador.



School kids in Matiti School, Tokelau mark World Environment Day by participating in the Mask Challenge and designing posters.



An international team of Antarctica scientists spent 100 days at one of the snowiest places on Earth to collect old air trapped in deep ice, and study the ability of the atmosphere to clean itself.

Want to learn more about air pollution?  
[Check out our interactive story](#), published in English and Chinese.



# Introduction

Each year, World Environment Day celebrates the environment and encourages action to protect our fragile ecosystems. The 2019 theme was **air pollution**, a global emergency that causes around 7 million premature deaths every year. Since 1974, World Environment Day has become a global platform for inspiring action on critical environmental issues. In 2019, this momentum was maintained. With official celebrations hosted in China, the world rallied around a movement to “Beat Air Pollution”. This call to action inspired governments, cities, schools, businesses, individuals, civil society and faith-based organizations to adopt practical steps to combat one of the greatest environmental challenges of our time. By tapping into a growing public realization that air pollution must be tackled, World Environment Day 2019 galvanized people across the world to explore renewable energy and green technologies and make changes to their everyday lives to improve air quality. Thousands of events were organized to raise awareness of the solutions to air pollution. Almost 240,600 people took the Clean Air Pledge on the Indian e-commerce payment platform, Paytm. On the Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba, 933 million green actions were logged across more than 20 apps.



*“Humankind only has one planet. Environmental conservation and sustainable development are the common responsibility of all countries. Ecological civilization is built into China’s national development architecture and strategy. China will work with any and all, to implement the 2030 agenda to protect our only planet.”*

- Xi Jinping, President of the People’s Republic of China



*“We have just concluded an outstanding World Environment Day, where we saw hundreds of thousands of people around the world demonstrate that it is indeed possible to beat air pollution and commit to action for people and planet.”*

- Joyce Msuya, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Deputy Executive Director, who was head of the organization at the time of World Environment Day









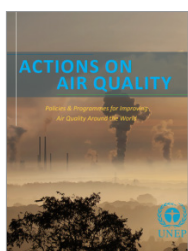
*“On World Environment Day, I ask each of us to act so we can breathe more easily. From pressuring politicians and businesses to changing our own habits, we can reduce pollution and beat climate change.”*

- António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General

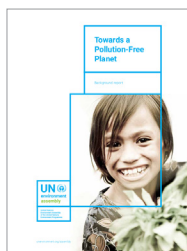
# A global emergency that affects everyone

Seven million people die prematurely from air pollution each year, making it the greatest environmental threat to health. Ninety-five per cent of cities worldwide do not meet World Health Organization guidelines and the World Bank estimates that air pollution accounts for \$5 trillion annually in health and welfare costs. Air pollution is also the largest driver of climate change and reducing some short-lived pollutants, like black carbon, methane and other ozone precursors, could slow down the warming expected by 2050 by about 0.4 to 0.5°C. Besides its detrimental effect on human health, the economy, food security and our climate, air pollution also stymies the quest for equality as it disproportionately affects children, women and the most vulnerable, and takes the heaviest toll in the developing world. The main causes of air pollution are found in agriculture, households, industry, transport and waste. Innovative solutions and clean alternatives are well documented but require further promotion by the public and private sectors. For decades, UNEP has contributed to improving air quality through our work on waste management, transport and air monitoring. UNEP and member states have forged consensus to tackle air pollution through the intergovernmental processes. This year's World Environment Day invigorated this process. Here are some of our recent efforts:

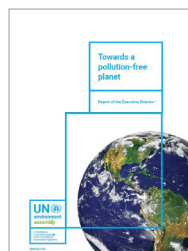
					
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<p>2014 - Adoption of the United Nations Environment Assembly Resolution 1/7 on air quality</p>	<p>2015 - Adoption of the Resolution WHA68.8 at the 68th World Health Assembly on addressing the health impact of air pollution</p>	<p>Launch of BreatheLife jointly with World Health Organization</p>	<p>- Third Session of the UN Environment Assembly with the theme "Towards a Pollution-Free Planet". Adoption of the United Nations Environment Assembly Resolution 3/8 on preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally</p>	<p>First World Health Organization Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health</p>	<p>World Environment Day on the theme of air pollution</p>



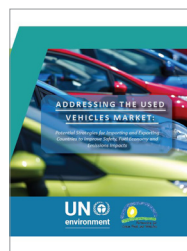
**2016**  
Actions on Air Quality



**2017**  
Towards a Pollution-Free Planet: background report



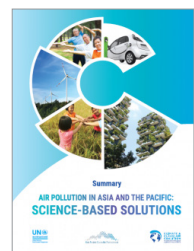
**2017**  
Towards a Pollution-Free Planet: Report of the Executive Director



**2019**  
Addressing the Used Vehicles Market



**2019**  
A review of 20 Years' Air Pollution Control in Beijing



**2019**  
Air Pollution in Asia and the Pacific: Science-Based Solutions

# An environmental movement



Thousands of World Environment Day events took place worldwide. In Peru, President Martín Vizcarra joined cyclists in Lima.

As the biggest annual event for inspiring positive environmental action, World Environment Day on 5 June constitutes a powerful global call to action. The response this year was phenomenal with events in more countries than ever, mobilizing dozens of partners. Hundreds of thousands of pledges were made by individuals, businesses and governments. Host country China anchored the global celebrations with a main event in Hangzhou, in Zhejiang Province. Building on a dynamic global communications campaign, UNEP inspired and coordinated activities in every region, shared stories of citizen action and innovative solutions, and engaged stakeholders and policymakers in this historic effort to beat air pollution.



[Air pollution-related stories on our website](#)



[Live updates from around the world](#)



[Global celebrations from China](#)

## A global leader



An air monitoring centre in Nanjing, Zhejiang Province.

Host country China has worked hard to tackle air pollution domestically and has also emerged as a global leader in green technology. China's efforts to #BeatAirPollution accelerated in 2013 with the introduction of the Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Air Pollution. Six years later, the average concentration of PM10 nationwide had fallen by 27 per cent.

The success of China's campaign to improve air quality drew on political leadership, innovative business solutions, policy incentives, consolidated air pollution data and increased environmental awareness among citizens.

Host city Hangzhou is spearheading China's drive to a more sustainable future. Its bike-sharing system is the world's largest, while 70 per cent of its bus fleet is electric. On World Environment Day, the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development held its annual meeting in Hangzhou, gathering hundreds of sustainability thinkers and decision makers together to reinforce the message that air pollution is a global emergency.

In a letter to the 2019 World Environment Day event, President Xi Jinping stressed China's willingness to share its experience with other countries.

China also launched its Air Quality Improvement Report (2013–2018) to showcase successful policies and reflect on lessons learned.

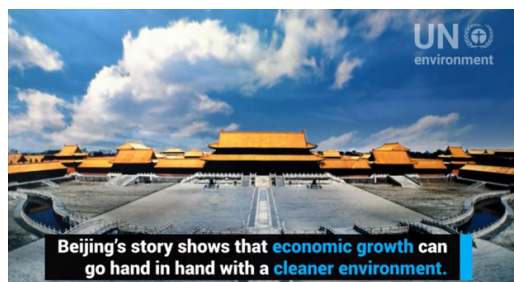
During the World Environment Day celebrations, a UNEP delegation visited [a provincial court](#) taking a stand against illegal logging of land for tea plantations, then toured [an environmental monitoring centre](#) that uses innovative technology to monitor air quality. The delegation also saw how a wetland had been rejuvenated, resulting in major biodiversity gains.

*"China's commitment to beat air pollution and the willingness to share its journey with other countries is the type of mutually beneficial multilateral cooperation we need to protect the planet."*

Joyce Msuya, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP

# Sharing success stories

Each year, through multimedia storytelling, UNEP celebrates the environmental successes and strategies of the World Environment Day host country. In 2019, we showcased China's efforts.



Clean Capital of Beijing showcased the city's success in tackling air pollution with robust policy tools, political will, wide and real-time air quality monitoring, and public awareness campaigns.



The 2019 host city Hangzhou has been chosen as one of 13 pilot cities to develop new energy vehicles. It currently has the highest level of new energy vehicle subsidies for private individuals with one of largest charging infrastructure networks in China.



A deep dive into China's Ecological Civilization philosophy, rethinking growth, is China's vision towards environmental protection and economic growth.



China's biggest social media platform and technology giant, Weibo is leading the drive to encourage behavioural changes to clean the air.



The Xiong'an New Area is a new mega city that aims to run entirely on renewable energy.



Alibaba's mini-programme and tree-planting initiative, Ant Forest App, rewards users for adopting Earth-friendly habits with points that allow them to plant virtual and real trees.

# The global campaign

## Stakeholder Posts

**11.9m**... with Weibo recording **8.8m** posts

## Trending Hashtags

**9.8m**... hashtag usages worldwide  
**Top trending** ... hashtags in both English and Chinese languages (Twitter/6hrs, Weibo/12hrs)

## UNEP Website Visitors

**496,823** ... unique visitors to our website, coming from **193** ... countries around the world during the campaign period from 19 April – 30 June

## Influencers

**49** ... top celebrity influencers sending posts on social media, generating **6,145,938** ... likes and comments on their posts about World Environment Day

## Partner Actions

**945,926,041** ... actions through UNEP partners, including Alibaba and Weibo, including **13,000,000** ... Mobike users carpooling & biking in commutes in China, Brazil & Chile

## Quizzes

**553,403** ... completed air pollution quizzes across six languages on UNEP's website (**13,403**) and the Weibo Panda Programme (**540,000**), actively engaging in 5–7 questions each

This year's campaign highlighted the rising threat of air pollution while also promoting solutions. On 24 May, UNEP launched a global social media campaign called the Mask Challenge, designed to show leaders that the public want to breathe clean air. The Challenge invited people to take a photo or video while wearing a mask, make a clean air pledge and tag others. The Challenge galvanized engagement with governments, cities, schools, businesses, civil society and faith-based organizations. In China, with our host and social media partner Weibo, we launched the Blue Sky Challenge, which urged people to post a photo or video of a blue sky on Weibo and share what actions they had taken to reduce air pollution.

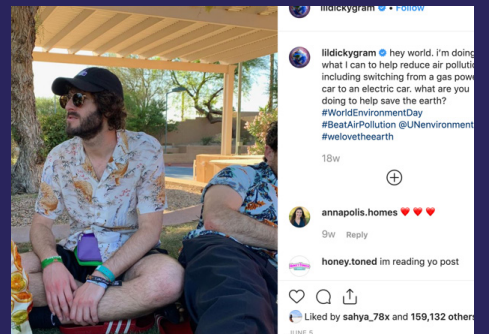


In China, celebrities and influencers posted commitments on the social media platform Weibo. Two of the most popular Chinese celebrities, Dilireba and Wang Junkai reached over 3 million people alone through their posts about using reusable shopping bags and taking practical steps to support cleaner air respectively.

With a press reach of almost 30 million Ellie Goulding engaged more than 90,000 online, highlighting the importance of clean air for human health.



With a press reach of almost 60 million, Gisele Bündchen engaged more than 400,000 people on social media. People were inspired to plant more trees.



United States rapper Lil Dicky engaged almost 160,000 people online through his Instagram post pledging to switch to electric cars and encouraging others to commit to protecting the environment.



With a press reach of almost 1.2 million, Aidan Gallagher engaged more than 400,000 online, encouraging the public to cycle, carpool or use public transport.



# Media coverage

Between 19 April and 30 June 2019, 55,458 articles mentioning World Environment Day were published in 45 different languages in 156 countries with the greatest number appearing in China, India and the United States, as reported by the external evaluation firm, M&C Saatchi. The launch of a key report on air quality—**Air Pollution and Human Health: The Case of the Western Balkans**—was covered by at least seven international media outlets, including the Associated Press and the New York Post. In host country China, Joyce Msuya, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, had interviews on major media stations such as CGTN, China Daily and Hangzhou TV to brief the public on air pollution and China's efforts to address the issue.

## Top media moments



习近平向2019年世界环境日全球主场活动致贺信

2019-06-05 11:00:34 来源: 新华网

新华社北京6月5日电 2019年世界环境日全球主场活动5日在浙江省杭州市举行。国家主席习近平致贺信。



June 5 is World Environment Day

By CNN Philippines  
Published Jun 5, 2019 7:58:33 AM

As we celebrate World Environment Day governments, businesses and



Stunning images submitted for Environmental Photographer of the Year showcase the world's pollution on World Environment Day:

By Daily Mail Reporter  
19:29 BST 31 May 2019, Updated 19:20 BST 03 Jun 2019

0 comments



Cambio climático, contaminación, plásticos... la Tierra y sus cinco retos medioambientales más urgentes

ARACELI QUEDE / Video EP 05.06.2019 - 06:43h

- La lucha contra la contaminación del aire centra este año el Día Mundial del Medio Ambiente.
- El planeta se enfrenta no obstante a otros problemas igual de acuciantes.

Este miércoles, como cada 5 de junio desde el año 1972, el mundo celebra el Día del Medio Ambiente, una



Balkans face alarming levels of air pollution from coal plants: UN

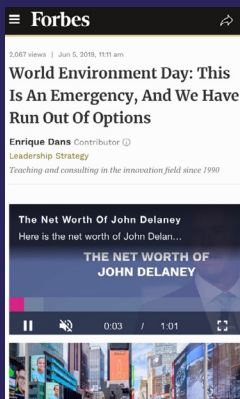
By Associated Press  
June 3, 2019 | 3:36pm



Air pollution hits the poor hardest - but nobody is safe

Joyce Msuya, the Acting Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme, on the urgent need to improve air quality

Saturday 8 June 2019 19:44 |



World Environment Day: This Is An Emergency, And We Have Run Out Of Options

Enrique Dans Contributor @ Leadership Strategy  
Teaching and consulting in the innovation field since 1990

The Net Worth Of John Delaney  
Here is the net worth of John Delan...

THE NET WORTH OF JOHN DELANEY



Marathon champion Eliud Kipchoge on why he's campaigning for cleaner air

Kenya's Eliud Kipchoge is the marathon world record holder, Olympic champion, a multiple winner in London and Berlin and the man who came within 25 seconds of hitting the two hour mark for the distance. He's a big name and he's using this to help the United Nations campaign to tackle air pollution on World Environment Day. The UN says more than 90% of people breath in polluted air and that this claims around 7 million lives a year. Mr Kipchoge



24 Air : un site pour calculer son exposition à la pollution

Par La rédaction d'Allodocteurs.fr - France Télévisions  
Mis à jour le 07/06/2019 | 15:55 - publié le 05/06/2019 | 17:11

L'association Airparif vient de mettre en ligne une plateforme sur laquelle les Français peuvent renseigner leurs lieux de vie et leurs trajets quotidiens. Un diagramme récapitule alors le niveau de pollution auquel ils sont exposés.

Evaluer notre exposition à la pollution invisible : un



On World Environment Day, President, PM stress on living in harmony with nature'

NEW DELHI: On the occasion of World Environment Day, President Ram Nath Kovind on Wednesday reaffirmed the

# Political engagements

On World Environment Day, [four countries](#), [five cities](#), and [seven states](#) joined the BreatheLife network—a campaign led by the World Health Organization, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, and UNEP. They are Mexico, Honduras, Moldova and Monaco; the cities of Bogor, Bogotá, Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Montevideo; and states in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil and Mexico, bringing the number of cities, regions and countries in the BreatheLife network to 70, representing 288 million citizens around the world. [India](#) joined the Climate and Clean Air Coalition.

The campaign provides a platform for cities to share best practices and demonstrate progress in their journey to meet World Health Organization air quality targets by 2030. To reach this target, UNEP, through its various programmes of work, inspires and encourages governments to make concrete pledges to improve air quality.



Announcements came from [Canada](#), [Chile](#), [Kenya](#), [Myanmar](#), [Spain](#) and [The Republic of Korea](#).



*"Building on this, today we are announcing another ban on single-use plastics in all our protected areas, including: national parks, beaches, forests and conservation areas, effective 5 June 2020."*

President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya made the [announcement](#) when he addressed the plenary session of the Women Deliver 2019 Global Conference in Canada



*"We are the last generation that can stop climate change. It is an emergency, but also an opportunity. We will place Spain at the forefront of a fair ecological transition. A task for all, in which we cannot fail."*

Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez of Spain made this remark in a [tweet](#) on World Environment Day



*"At home, we have introduced important measures to tackle air pollution from vehicles, power plants, and industries across the country. We have put a price on carbon pollution—the single most powerful way to cut greenhouse gas emissions while driving economic growth—and accelerated our plan to phase out coal by 2030."*

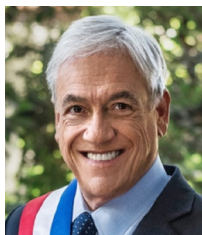
Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada said in a [statement](#) released for World Environment Day



In support of World Environment Day, Myanmar's President U Win Myint launched the **National Environmental Policy and the Myanmar Climate Change Policy**. These new policies allow the government to integrate environmental considerations into all development planning, with particular emphasis on the recently adopted Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan 2018–2030.



Commemorating World Environment Day, South Korea's President Moon Jae-in **announced** that his government will reduce the level of fine dust emissions by more than 30 per cent by 2022 and will phase out 1 million old diesel cars by 2021. Additionally, the government expects to provide 430,000 electric vehicles and 67,000 hydrogen cars by 2022.



Chilean President Sebastián Piñera **pledged** to close eight of the country's 28 coal-fired plants by 2024, halving coal's share within the electricity grid in five years.

Some other policy announcements include:

- Maestromobile, Brussels Mobility and business group BECI launched the [Mobility Passport](#), which encourages participants to learn about different modes of transport through a fun challenge, involving tutorials and quizzes.
- At an official event with UNEP to celebrate World Environment Day, Brazil's Environment Minister Ricardo Salles [announced](#) a new federal network to monitor air quality in Brazil.
- Abdyvahap Nurbaev, a member of parliament in Kyrgyzstan, [announced](#) on World Environment Day that Kyrgyzstan would join the #BeatAirPollution campaign.
- [Pakistan's government](#) is set to introduce around 100,000 electric cars, vans, small trucks and other vehicles into the market from 2020. The target is to convert 90 per cent of vehicles to electric power by 2040.
- Alexei Texler, head of Russia's Chelyabinsk region, and Igor Shuvalov, chairman of the state-owned development corporation VEB.RF, [signed an ambitious agreement](#) to modernize urban [public transport](#) systems in the South Urals.

## Private sector engagements



World Environment Day seeks to bring together stakeholders from various sectors to work towards a common goal. This year saw commitments from top leaders in technology, the automobile industry, multinational e-commerce businesses, among others. Some key initiatives are highlighted below:

Google announced plans to [distribute 50 air quality sensor-equipped Street View cars](#) around the globe to expand air quality mapping to more countries. Google's Street View cars are equipped with air pollution sensors that map air pollution data in cities. The data is shared with people, policymakers, businesses, and organizations to help them make better decisions around air quality.



China's tech giant Alibaba Group shared that altogether around [933 million green actions](#) were recorded across some 20 lifestyle Apps owned by Alibaba. To celebrate World Environment Day, Apps including Tmall, Alipay, Hungry, Rookie Wrap and Box Horse introduced more than 80 types of low-carbon initiatives encouraging users to reduce their carbon footprints by opting for reusable material during online shopping or choosing bicycles over taxis for short distance travel.



Chinese taxi platform Didi Chuxing launched [carpooling programmes](#) in Brazil, Chile and China, with around 11,570 people committing to carpooling and biking on World Environment Day.

## Wiley Online Library



Global research and education company Wiley made its most critical [environmental research](#) free for readers between 5 June and 31 August 2019.

Almost 240,600 people took the [Paytm Clean Air Pledge](#). Pledges made included commitments to green mobility, tree planting and energy-saving practices, as well as pledges to avoid burning waste. Some 90 million users were reached through homepage banners posted on an in-app campaign from digital payments leader Paytm, and another 40 million through push notifications.



Around 9,800 people used Chinese dockless bike-sharing service Mobike on World Environment Day, reducing carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 5,000 tonnes compared to driving a car.



[Bluebird](#), one of Asia's largest taxi companies, pledged to transition its 25,000-strong fleet of vehicles to electric models.



Rotary International created a [handbook](#) to educate and inspire the 1.2 million Rotarians around the world to take action for the environment, and to bring attention to the important role the environment plays in Rotary's six areas of focus. The handbook included a selection of 11 green themes for activities that Rotary clubs could do for World Environment Day or commit to doing in the future.

## Information for action

A key aim of this year's World Environment Day was to spread awareness of what the public can do to reduce air pollution. The World Environment Day practical guide—a compilation of hands-on activities—was viewed 44,482 times. Worldwide, 2,879 events on all continents were registered on the World Environment Day website. Rwanda dedicated the week of 5 June to environmental protection and air pollution, including a car-free day in the capital city, Kigali. National celebrations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, included an 'Awareness Creation Dialogue' on air pollution at the University of Addis Ababa. In Thailand's capital Bangkok, more than 2,500 people participated in activities, including the official World Environment Day celebration, an exhibition and a concert. Other events included a mass bike ride in Buenos Aires, Argentina, which attracted around 600 participants, including Minister of the Environment Sergio Bergman, as well as flash mobs organized around the theme of air pollution in Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

### Event registration pages

**185,114**

... unique users visited the World Environment Day's event registration section of the UNEP website

### Practical guide views

**69,069**

...page views for practical guides across six languages, 44,482 of which were from unique users

### Active engagement

**47,128**

... page views for "What causes air pollution", the highest ranking information page on the UNEP website, revealing rising curiosity and engagement

# Events around the world



A #BeatAirPollution video was screened in Times Square, New York City and Piccadilly Circus, London.



In Nairobi, trees were planted as part of World Environment Day events.



One hundred scouts created a human hashtag for World Environment Day in a park in Quito, the capital city of Ecuador.



The Brussels Transport Company reached an estimated Intercommunal 900,000 people with World Environment Day messaging.



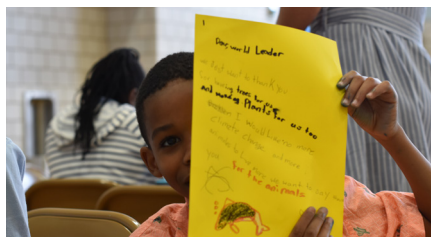
Celebrations at the United Nations Office in Nairobi included a bike ride.



Forty participants joined the Mask Challenge to raise awareness on air pollution in Mogadishu, Somalia.



In North America, the Dave Matthews Band was designated UNEP Goodwill Ambassador.



Eighty-eight third grade students in Brooklyn wrote a "love letter to the air" to be read by world leaders.



Captains at the World Rugby U20 Championship in Argentina planted a Ceibo tree, the country's national tree, to mark World Environment Day.



Volunteers at the China celebrations with Joyce Msuya, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP.



An artist in India produced this image to illustrate the effects of air pollution.



La fête du vélo this year highlighted cycling as a sustainable transport mode that helps beat air pollution.



The Permanent Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, Wijarn Simachaya presided over World Environment Day celebrations in Thailand.



World Environment Day Report 2019

[www.unep.org](http://www.unep.org)

[#WorldEnvironmentDay](https://twitter.com/WorldEnvironmentDay)

[#BeatAirPollution](https://twitter.com/BeatAirPollution)

[worldenvironmentday.global](http://worldenvironmentday.global)

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