

Global Alliance on Health and Pollution

Strategic Plan 2018-2022

(Draft for consultation with members)

Executive Summary

The Global Alliance on Health and Pollution (GAHP) is a collaborative body that seeks to create a world where present and future generations, and especially children and pregnant women, are safe from pollution.

GAHP works to bring attention to pollution and its health impacts on behalf of its members, so that more resources are allocated to reducing the burden of disease of pollution globally. Specifically, GAHP assists countries to plan and prioritize pollution within their own development agendas, and also helps prioritize interventions based on health impact. GAHP also advocates within the donor community for funding. It also plans to collect and report on metrics related to pollution and health.

GAHP is not a pollution prevention and mitigation implementing agency. Rather, it works to create demand for pollution interventions so that its members and associates can implement new programs.

GAHP's membership, especially within low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), its corresponding convening power, its efficiency and entrepreneurial spirit, give it a firm basis for assisting countries to reduce the burden of disease from pollution. A strong strategic plan and funding are needed to ensure GAHP can continue to effectively advocate for the millions of people exposed daily to toxic pollution.

This document outlines GAHP's proposed strategic direction and activities.

Introduction

GAHP was established in 2012 by leading multilateral and bilateral donors, UN agencies, several low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and Pure Earth as a collaborative body to help tackle pollution in order to improve human health. Pure Earth, an environmental not-for-profit organization, serves as GAHP's Secretariat.

GAHP currently has more than 50 members, nearly half of which are LMICs (a testament to the demand from countries to tackle pollution problems). The other half of GAHP's membership comprises multilateral and bilateral institutions, NGOs, academic and research institutes. Members include World Bank, UNEP,

UNIDO, UNDP, ADB, the Governments of Mexico, Indonesia, Philippines, and others.

In its five years of existence, GAHP has worked collaboratively to ensure the inclusion of pollution in the third Sustainable Development Goal (Good Health and Well-Being) as Target 3.9, and written and developed to publication the report of *The Lancet* Global Commission on Pollution and Health, which was released on October 19, 2017. GAHP is promoting The Lancet Report through multi-city events, and worldwide media coverage has been unprecedented. As a result, there is much greater attention now to the pollution and health agenda, and the Third UN Environment Assembly (UNEA 3) in December 2017 is focusing exclusively on this theme (“A Pollution-Free Planet”).

An independent review of GAHP’s performance was commissioned in early 2017 by UNIDO (a founding member of GAHP), with funding from the European Commission. The review confirmed the commendable progress achieved by GAHP in advocating for pollution control and remediation, and found that “GAHP is highly relevant to the needs of its LMIC members and international members.” The review counts GAHP’s convening power, efficiency and entrepreneurial spirit amongst its strengths. However, as confirmed through GAHP’s own internal processes and meeting at Bellagio, Italy in May 2017, the review recommended that GAHP (1) formulate a strategic plan for its future operations, and (2) place its activities on a more sustainable footing.

Evolution of the Pollution Agenda

The environmental movement and agenda could be said to have begun with concerns regarding pollution, with the publication of “A Silent Spring” by Rachel Carson in 1962. However, while the concerns she raised about pesticides grew over time to include other chemical and hazardous wastes and heavy metals, the attention of environmentalists has more recently and increasingly shifted, first, to biodiversity conservation, and then, to climate change. As a consequence, toxic pollution (pollution that has a human health impact) has largely taken a back seat in discussions about the environment.

This downplaying of pollution is due partly to the fact that OECD countries have already taken effective action to ensure a cleaner environment and to mitigate pollution. Moreover, until recently, there was a real paucity of information on the true scope, scale and impacts of pollution, and a lack of knowledge about the availability of viable and cost-effective solutions. Attention to pollution was also muted to some extent because it was assumed that LMICs needed to follow the same trajectory as OECD countries, i.e., prioritize economic growth first - however dirty - and clean up later (the so-called environmental Kuznets Curve). Thanks to the efforts of GAHP members and many others, as well as recent publicity around visible pollution - notably smog in New Delhi and Beijing -

pollution is coming back on the development radar. Unfortunately, pollution levels are by and large worsening – meaning a comprehensive and coordinated attack on all aspects of toxic pollution is now urgently required.

The Lancet Report brings attention to several key issues that should be focal points for future work on reducing deaths and disease from pollution, and hence for GAHP's efforts. Modern pollution (that of industrialization and urbanization, specifically outdoor air, chemicals, soil and heavy metals, and occupational pollution) is on the rise, and programs need to be designed, funded, and implemented to reduce their impact. Soil, chemical and heavy metals pollution is substantially under-researched, and data related to death and disability is not available. This area of pollution needs research, along with efforts to mitigate health impact in affected countries. These global activities need to be added to the current efforts to reduce the more traditional, poverty-related pollution, such as cleaner cookstoves, and sanitation – all of which require continued and expanded support.

GAHP's Niche in the Fight Against Pollution

A number of entities currently work on different aspects of the pollution problem. Pollution control bureaus of Ministries of Environment in LMICs (and occasionally in other Ministries) typically pursue sound efforts regarding regulations, although enforcement is often weak. Various efforts on interventions have been undertaken at a global level, with WASH a notable success globally. Recent new efforts on air pollution (both indoor and outdoor) have met with success in some cities, but much more is needed.

International agencies such as UN Environment, WHO, UNDP, UNIDO, and World Bank; bilateral aid agencies; numerous academic and research institutes; as well as hundreds of NGOs, have activities in various niches of the pollution agenda. This plethora of actors is explained by the broad spectrum of pollution issues, covering air, water and soil, as well as the multitude of chemicals, heavy metals and hazardous wastes causing the pollution. Some of these entities have banded together into alliances and coalitions to address particular pollution problems, such as the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves (a GAHP member), the Climate and Clean Air Coalition hosted at UNEP, and the Plastic Pollution Coalition. It is worthwhile to note that the area of contaminated land/soil is particularly underserved, with no equivalent coalition or alliance formed specifically to take on contaminated land/soil issues and assist with implementation of solutions. Existing bodies, such as the International Committee on Contaminated Land, are more technical in nature, do not focus on health, and do not implement programs.

GAHP's core focus, since its establishment in 2012, is the health impact of pollution. The justification for the alliance was two-fold: (i) to advocate for action against all forms of pollution (air, water and soil); and (ii) to anchor the attack on

pollution on its severe health impacts, especially on the poor, women, children, and ethnic minorities. This comprehensive scope of its vision and the exclusive focus on pollution's health implications sets GAHP apart from other networks that work to reduce toxic pollution globally. Needless to say, all such networks share a common goal, and as such, GAHP aims to work cooperatively with them, and in a complementary manner.

Identifying Priorities for GAHP

Following discussions with the membership, and in light of the UNIDO independent review, GAHP's key mission needs to be that of **creating awareness of the severity of pollution's health impact, and by doing so, drive demand for programs to prevent and mitigate pollution.**

Such demand needs to be developed both **within affected country governments, and the international community** that supports them.

An additional service identified at the Bellagio conference is to provide some **collaboration between implementers of pollution interventions** so that scarce resources are used effectively.

GAHP does **not** intend to be a pollution prevention and mitigation implementing agency. Rather, GAHP's niche is to advocate and build demand for interventions, so that implementing agencies have an expanded set of projects. Governments – of both LMICs and OECD countries - should become members of GAHP (many already are), and should be joined – as affiliates, associates or otherwise – by globally established implementing agencies (the largest are already), so as to take advantage of GAHP's advocacy. GAHP aims to complement the work of existing actors, and fill gaps, especially in assisting LMICs to tackle pollution. Further, the activities undertaken by GAHP should draw on the findings and recommendations outlined in The Lancet Commission on Pollution and Health,

GAHP's Proposed Activities

Driving demand for action on pollution that reduces death and disability requires efforts in affected countries, and within the development community broadly.

Affected countries. Key activities needed, and much in demand (as evidenced by 1:1 consultations with GAHP LMIC members), are to **prioritize pollution problems and solutions within the country development agendas, based on health metrics.** To achieve this result, a planning process has been developed by GAHP and is being piloted in several countries in 2017. It is called the **Health and Pollution Action Plan (HPAP).**

HPAPs bring multiple agencies within a country together, often for the first time, to review pollution-related health statistics, and determine which interventions

need to be expanded or initiated so that health impact is reduced. All forms of pollution are explored, including water (WASH), air (indoor and outdoor), soil (metals and chemicals), and occupational pollution. Actors working on these issues in country are key stakeholders in the process. An HPAP working group is established and coordinated by the government concerned, and works closely with GAHP members. More information is available at the GAHP website. <http://www.gahp.net/hpap-process/>

Again, the HPAP process ultimately will result in demand for pollution programs/projects and thus generation of more business for GAHP members/associates and other implementing agencies that will provide technical and financial resources for implementation.

GAHP should also continue to provide assistance to affected LMICs to **generate improved understanding and data about the impacts of pollution from contaminated land**, a highly understudied and under-recognized part of pollution. The Toxic Sites Identification Program (TSIP) implemented by Pure Earth and UNIDO is a global endeavor to identify and assess highly contaminated sites where human health is at risk. It is the only global database of its kind, with well-established protocols. The TSIP has been instrumental in providing core data on contaminated sites to national governments, donor agencies and other interested stakeholders, and used to prioritize areas for intervention based on impact to public health (including the HPAP process). It has also been used by scientists and researchers around the world to better understand the burden of disease from exposures to hazardous waste, the benefits of clean up, and the cost of inaction. Its data has been published in dozens of research articles.

International advocacy. Meetings, presentations and reports on pollution, its impact, and effective solutions need to be a steady part of all large international gatherings on development. Elevating awareness raising to the political level within donor agencies is now needed to ensure that this issue becomes integrated into the development agenda. To this end, GAHP should **continue its international advocacy efforts, especially outreach with members of the G7 and G20** to ensure focus on the pollution agenda at the highest levels.

GAHP's advocacy should also promote more **research into the links between pollution and health**. These are seriously under-estimated at present because not enough is known about (i) emerging but still un-quantified effects of known pollutants (such as lead) and (ii) health effects of emerging pollutants (such as endocrine disruptors).

Convene, Connect and Coordinate. As a network, GAHP can swiftly share information and connect LMIC members requesting assistance to implementing agencies with the required technical expertise. GAHP can also help coordinate pollution prevention and mitigation activities, amongst its membership, where this

makes sense and is not duplicative (e.g., in soil pollution, an area that is underserved), or with regard to activities in LMIC member countries, or at the request of an LMIC member. GAHP can also host regional, national or international technical workshops or other platforms (including virtual) to share successes and experiences from one country or region with others. These will be most effective if multiple country agencies (not only environmental) are brought to the table.

Data collection and reporting. Following the guidance of The Lancet Report, metrics are being developed that review exposures, health impact, investments, and interventions related to pollution and health globally. These metrics will rely on existing datasets as much as possible, especially those emanating from the SDG processes, as well as the TSIP, the Air Quality Index (AQI) and Global Environment Monitoring System for freshwater (GEMS/Water).

Pure Earth has developed a website (www.pollution.org) that maps exposures to pollution of all types. The map, which is interactive, provides credible, regularly updated data on air, water and soil pollution globally, sourced from government-approved datasets. Individuals everywhere are invited to submit data on specific pollution problems and sites. These will be integrated into the map, after validation. While much of the effort of dealing with pollution will necessarily have to be top-down, the website should help build bottom-up pressure for action on pollution.

A revision to The Lancet Report is also envisaged for 2019. A global Pollution Conference could be organized in 2019 or 2020.

Next Steps

GAHP's priorities, proposed activities and principles set out in preceding sections together constitute its **strategic vision**.

Concerning the **decision to incorporate** or not, the recommendation of the independent review was unequivocal. However, availability of adequate funding is a condition precedent for GAHP's incorporation. As long as this remains elusive, GAHP should continue to function as hitherto, namely as an informal collaborative entity serviced by Pure Earth as its Secretariat. While doing so, GAHP should persevere in its efforts to generate the political support and funding necessary for proceeding towards incorporation.

If GAHP is to have any noticeable impact on its goal to reduce pollution deaths and disability by 2030, it must scale up its activities dramatically. It will therefore need to secure and mobilize between \$2 million to \$5 million per year over the proposed four-year period (\$8 million - \$20 million).

Below is a rough budget for the proposed GAHP activities over the next four years.

- HPAPs: \$5,000,000 (20 countries)
- Advocacy and metrics: \$4,800,000 (including www.pollution.org)
- TSIP: \$5,600,000 (20 countries)
- Research: \$4,000,000

Total: \$19,400,000 or roughly \$20 million over four years.

It is proposed that an external review be conducted in 2022 of the progress of GAHP's efforts. This review would determine the efficacy of the activities undertaken and define priorities moving forward.

Longer Term Vision

Between now and 2022, GAHP's energies must be focused on (i) promoting the health and pollution agenda, (ii) rolling out the HPAP process, and (iii) placing itself on a solid foundation for future endeavors.

However, there is no doubt that, over the longer term, improvements in public health through pollution reduction will only come from actual projects for remediation and/or prevention.

If sufficient funding is not forthcoming for pollution mitigation projects through standard channels, GAHP could consider a goal of establishing a Global Health & Pollution Fund that is large enough to make a sizable dent in the problem. Such a Fund would serve to correct the current grotesque imbalance in the funding available for combating pollution and the resources (rightly) allocated to other global issues. The biggest killer in the world deserves no less. The viability of political will, and potential effectiveness of such a fund should be decided by 2020.

Timeframe

The following timeframe is expected for the Strategic Planning process:

May – August 2017: Preliminary discussions started in May 2017 in Bellagio, Italy continuing through the summer with Bellagio participants and the Executive Committee. Disseminate key Bellagio outcomes in GAHP newsletter.

August – November 2017: Discussion of the draft Strategic Plan with the GAHP Executive Committee.

Early November 2017: Submit a revised draft Strategic Plan to the GAHP membership for review and comment. Comments to be received before end of November.

3 December 2017: Review and discuss draft Strategic Plan at GAHP general annual meeting in Nairobi, prior to UNEA 3.

December 2017: Incorporate comments from annual general meeting and submit to Executive Committee for approval at January 2018 Executive Committee meeting.

January 2018: Executive Committee to approve Strategic Plan for 2018-2022.

Annex 1. Summary of Independent UNIDO Report

In view of its impact in the five years of its existence - far greater, perhaps, than may have been possible for any individual GAHP member on its own - the organization has proven the synergy and effectiveness that a collective entity can offer. This success is borne out by the independent review of GAHP that was commissioned by UNIDO in 2017. Among the principal findings of this review were the following:

- GAHP is highly relevant to the needs of its LMIC members and international members, as it seeks to provide a global lens on the health impacts of pollution, and helps bridge the health and environment agendas and related stakeholder communities.
- For GAHP's international members, it helps brings together the key actors in the different health and pollution areas.
- GAHP has demonstrated an entrepreneurial and can-do attitude that would have been lost if it had been housed in a more bureaucratic organization.
- GAHP's current situation as a loose network that has not been incorporated as a legal entity imposes significant constraints on its scope for action, for example in terms of contracting with donors for specific projects or building a strong organizational basis.
- GAHP's prospects for being sustainable as a network are probably at best mixed, **in the absence of increased formalization and institutionalization of the network during the coming years** (bolded emphasis in the original).
- Another significant constraint on GAHP's prospects for continued development and organizational longevity is the **lack of a clear strategic vision, and a plan on how to implement such a vision, including where and how it would partner with other stakeholders in pollution and health** (emphasis in original).
- There is a continued need for an actor that can act as a global convener of health and pollution actors across the spectrum of pollution, if GAHP can address some of the above-mentioned constraints and weaknesses.

In line with these findings, the independent review recommended:

- GAHP should launch a participatory strategic reflection and strategy development exercise, with a specific time frame and working with a group of key GAHP stakeholders.

- GAHP should proceed to incorporate itself with legal personality, and define a full organizational and governance structure, once a provisional strategy is in place.

As the independent review has noted, the fact that GAHP is not an incorporated entity is a major constraint. Also, GAHP's activities are carried out by its Secretariat, Pure Earth, which has seconded several staff to the GAHP Secretariat. This is not an optimal arrangement (though it may be unavoidable, until and unless funding for incorporation is forthcoming).

The review was timely, considering GAHP's own internal decision to embark on a strategic planning process. In short, GAHP needs to (i) develop and adopt a clear strategic vision, and (ii) decide whether or not to incorporate as a separate legal entity, independent of Pure Earth. This draft Strategic Plan aims to facilitate consideration of these two outcomes.