

## **GAHP Moves UN Environment Assembly To Approve New Body to Tackle Pollution**

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We are pleased to announce that today the [United Nations Environment Assembly](#), the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment, has agreed that a Science Policy Panel should be established to contribute to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution.

This important news comes at a critical time for the planet, which faces a triumvirate of threats - climate change, biodiversity loss and increased levels of pollution. Pollution is the largest environmental risk factor for premature death on the planet - causing 1 in 6 deaths worldwide and contributing to non-communicable diseases according to [The Lancet Commission on Pollution and Health](#).

*"With 90% of the burden falling on lower- and middle-income countries that lack resources to combat the high costs of chronic disease from pollution, establishing this panel to provide a science-policy interface is absolutely critical,"* explains Rachael Kupka, GAHP's Executive Director.

To support global action on pollution, the [Global Alliance on Health and Pollution](#) (GAHP) launched a campaign with Pure Earth and other partners in late 2021 to drum up support for this resolution and ensure the health perspective was included.

GAHP and its partners' intensive advocacy efforts have paid off, with GAHP's key messages resounding in conversations with low-and middle-income countries (LMICs), and during the UNEA 5.2 negotiation process.

GAHP Senior Advisor, Jill Hanna, worked tirelessly with the co-sponsors and UNEA Member State representatives to ensure GAHP's member interests were well reflected in the text.

"Thanks to the efforts of Switzerland and the rest of the co-sponsors, we are pleased that the proposed panel will have the mandate to focus on the environmental and health impacts of pollution and especially the current pollution problems of most concern to low and middle-income countries" said Jill Hanna.

"This resolution is a major step forward to address the health and environmental impacts of chemicals, wastes and pollution - and a major achievement for GAHP. We look forward to continuing to work with governments to ensure application of the best science to policy decisions to solve pollution problems at their source," said Rachael Kupka, GAHP Executive Director.

The Science Policy Panel on chemicals and waste and pollution will provide similar support in dealing with these problems as the [IPCC and IPBES](#) provide, respectively, to the issues of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Such a Panel will help bring much-needed visibility and focused attention to this critical issue and would ensure:

- application of the best science to policy making and solutions, and
- focused attention of governments, the private sector, academia, and civil society, and
- a focus on health outcomes in pollution prevention

GAHP and Pure Earth encourage all countries, especially those most impacted by pollution to engage and actively participate in the upcoming Open-Ended Working Group to form this Panel.

We look forward to assisting governments and other stakeholders in developing structures and programs that will improve the lives of millions.

#### **About GAHP:**

**GAHP** is a Swiss network of international and national level agencies committed to a collaborative, multi-sectoral approach to address the global pollution crisis and the resulting health and economic impacts.

GAHP's achievements over the past few years include the inclusion of all forms of pollution in Target 3.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**OUR GOAL** is to reduce death and illness caused by all forms of toxic pollution in air, water, soil, and chemical wastes.

#### **About Pure Earth:**

Pure Earth partners with governments, communities, and industry leaders to identify and implement solutions that stop toxic exposures, protect health, and restore environments.

We prioritize actions to protect the developing brains and bodies of children and pregnant women living in toxic hot spots. We work to stop the multigenerational cycle of poisoning that is endemic in many low and middle-income countries.

Pure Earth has addressed toxic pollution in over 120 project locations through assessment, remediation, risk mitigation, awareness raising and more. These projects have impacted approximately 5 million people—20% of those being children under six. Families in many of these communities will live longer, have less intellectual impairment, cancer and other diseases.

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