A BRIEF REPORT

INDIA AIR QUALITY CONVENING 2020

January 27, 2020 | New Delhi

A Summary Report

In February 2019, the philanthropic community convened approximately 55 air quality experts, health professionals, NGOs staff, and donors in New Delhi to discuss possible solutions to air pollution in India. The goal was to develop a common understanding of the landscape, challenges, past interventions, major gaps and the most critical investment opportunities. The meeting discussed five critical themes: Data and Research, Health impacts, Policy, Communications and Advocacy, and the Funding Landscape. The participants also discussed how they might align and coordinate their respective efforts for maximum effectiveness and agreed to make the convening an annual event.

The second convening took place on January 27, 2020 with the objective of taking stock of progress to date, course correct as needed, chart a path forward, revisit donor coordination and develop new mechanisms, if necessary, to ensure collective impact.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

The January 2020 convening began with opening remarks by Mr. Chinmaya Acharya, interim CEO, Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation to brief participants about the objectives of the convening. Ms. Shloka Nath from the India Climate Collaborative (ICC), in her introductory remarks, described the convening as an important platform articulating the urgency of the air quality crisis in India and urged everyone to join hands and work together to achieve the common goal.

Collective priorities highlighted for 2020:
- Increase resources for cities to take action on mobility, infrastructure, and energy solutions.
- Accelerate solutions to lower industrial and agricultural emissions.
- Enhance the capacity of national institutions to deliver action plans proposed under the NCAP.
- Increase cross-sectional coordination within city governments, urban governing bodies and the national government.
- Better monitoring of policy implementation, particularly of the NCAP.
- Increased participation of citizens to demand cleaner air.

1. Breakout sessions
Key Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

The introductory session was followed by detailed discussions on key thematic areas. All of the participants were divided into four groups to focus on either sectoral strategies and interventions or city-level actions. These four themes were:
- Agriculture residue management in Haryana, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh
- Air quality management in cities where action is starting or is visible like Pune, Patna, Delhi
- Management of industrial emissions from power, iron, steel and other manufacturing industries
- Mitigation of transport sector emissions in cities

On **transport**, the overarching issue discussed was the lack of attention paid to the linkages between transportation and air quality. There is lack of comprehensive legislation on mobility, no design criteria for footpaths or bicycle paths and no dedicated funding for all of the buses India needs. While commercial vehicles account for a significant share of transport emissions, there has been no attention on freight, transportation goods vehicles and phasing out of old vehicles. A big takeaway from the discussion was the need to follow the money in the urban mobility sector, focusing more on the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and the Ministry of Road Transportation and Highways. There is very little monitoring and evaluation happening; there is no baseline at either the national or city level, and a systemic approach is required to go forward. Capacity building is required not only for implementation, but also to measure, monitor, and evaluate. Due to the multiplicity of departments involved, there is lack of responsibility to manage transport emissions. Transport governance needs more attention and steps are required for the integration of transport governance and institutions. The group agreed that there is a need to translate the knowledge that exists into effective communication to bring greater understanding on this issue and to build a strong narrative using data to make the case for better and more sustainable mobility.

The **cities** group felt that while there is increasing public awareness about air quality issues, this has not yet translated into strategies to prompt leaders at the national, state or city levels to implement clean air action plans. Political interest in air quality is very generic. The conversation highlighted several gaps, such as cut-and-paste plans, lack of funding, minimal public engagement and lack of stakeholder buy-in that result in minimal action on the ground beyond monitoring and dust control (sweeping and sprinkling). It was suggested that local actions are required in a way that hold their local officials accountable. The NCAP can make progress if it is tied to other programs that have budgetary resources. Civil society groups have varied understandings and approaches to city air quality action, ranging from building public awareness and demand for clean air to getting the state pollution control boards involved and leveraging funds that rest with key ministries. We need a combination of these strategies. There was general consensus on the need to be more specific in terms of setting priorities and "asks" for government agencies. There is need to be more versatile in

approach, incentivize better and also consider industry's role in building capacity and co-creating strategies.

On **agriculture**, the group agreed that NCAP, with its urban focus, does not address agriculture, which is predominantly a rural issue. The issue of crop residue burning should be viewed as a broader energy biomass burning question. There is a need for significantly more integration across the agricultural ministry, NITI Aayog, state level actors, farmer unions, and research institutions. There was a suggestion for more research and analysis of the entire issue, covering everything from crop selection to finding new markets for agricultural waste and enhancing the capacities of farmers. There is also need to scale up demonstrations and pilot projects for possible alternatives, increase communication and identify solutions that are available in the short and long term that can be politically and financially feasible to make a shift toward more sustainable farming practices. There is need to quantify the health impacts of specific actions that are being planned. Only a couple of NGOs are actively working in this space and there is a concern among the CSOs that attributing air pollution to stubble burning and agriculture distract the public from industrial emitters.

For **industry**, it was emphasized that regulatory system needs to be strengthened to avoid lax penalties and, in particular, power sector emission standards need to be enforced without further dilution. It was noted that the Continuous Emissions Monitoring Systems are voluntary and that public awareness and action are low, given the technical nature of the issues. The potential increase in cost of electricity due to additional investment by business in newer technology is often cited as a reason for delayed compliance and enforcement. There is not enough data available on the level of impact that industrial emissions have on air quality. The group also talked about disaggregating the sector into micro enterprises, small and medium enterprises, large industries, and others, and providing support to industries willing to adopt cleaner technologies, such as brick kilns. The group agreed that there is a need for continuous emissions monitoring and effective communication of health, economic, and business risks associated with industrial emissions and pollution. There is a need to find champions that will move forward and drive transformative change in industrial pollution.

2. Funding landscapes and donor's perspective

In the session on the funding landscape, donors shared their individual perspectives, areas that need sustained funding, and new strategic funding opportunities.

Ms. Amy Hooper provided a landscape analysis of philanthropic funding, both globally and in India during 2015-18. The analysis showed that foundation funding has been increasing substantially over these years and on an average, there has been about 53% increase over this period. However, the funding needs to increase dramatically in order to meet the scale of the problem. More than three-quarters of global foundation funding on air quality is spent in just three countries – China, India, and the USA. In terms of the activities being funded, communications and policy activities received more than two-thirds of the funding over the past four years, while implementation received less than 1% of funding.

In India, foundation funding on air quality increased from USD 0.4 million to 5.8 million and the number of organizations receiving air quality grants increased five-fold over the four-year period, from eight to 40. Geographically, the air quality grants focussed on the north, east and southwest regions of India, with Gujarat receiving greatest amount of funding at USD 2.59 million. Half of the funding went to national programs. In terms of activities, the biggest share went to policy advocacy, followed by communications, while none went toward implementation.

During the session, various donors and foundations shared their programmatic priorities, success stories, and the kinds of projects they can support in the future. Some argued that health groups and children's organizations should also be a part of the discussion on air quality. Participants agree that there is a need to link health spending with air quality much more strongly and effectively, to leverage public financing in a different way. Despite significant funding going to public mobilization and communications, there is still a gap in terms of how we communicate the analytics emerging from the data, to support policy implementation.

On the issue of finance, three areas that can be leveraged are (i) state funding, (ii) multilateral development banks and other financial institutions, including the capital markets, and (iii) engagement with the private sector.

3. Building collective understanding for 2020

The afternoon session was a series of moderated open floor discussions on three topics:
(i) achievements to date, with the focus on NCAP, (ii) converting awareness into action, and (iii) next steps on data.

The session on the NCAP highlighted successes and challenges over the last year. Key issues that were flagged included whether NCAP targets are monitorable and verifiable, how cities are going to report, and how to shift to airshed-based management. Issues that need more attention this year include insufficient budgets for implementation, enforcement of norms in the industrial and power sectors, insufficient improvement in the capacities of pollution control boards, and lack of forecasting. Participants also emphasized the need to bring in more stakeholders who otherwise have been left out. CSOs and donorsneed to come together to create one unified National Emission Inventory, as the level of emissions produced by the industrial sector is not currently known.

The session on data focused on issues of data generation, certification, reliability, accessibility, and proxy indicators, as well as identifying and addressing the gaps in data management infrastructure. The importance of modelling and the need to have data that reflects both monitoring and modelling was also emphasized. There was also discussion on upcoming developments, such as an explosion in modelling capacity that will create new data issues and the expansion of business activities outside municipal boundaries. As huge amounts of data will become available in the public domain in the coming years, to avoid data confusion, there should be systems to process, manage, and organize that data.

On the issue of converting awareness into action, the discussion focused on the nature of campaigns, appropriate messaging, messenger and medium to be used, and whether clean air can more forthrightly be put as a need for *Bijli, sadak, paani,* and *hawa,* thereby creating a democratic demand for clean air. It also came out during the discussion that there is a need to identify which new communities should be informed and how narratives should evolve as well as ways to combat disinformation. There is a need to explore ways to make sure that we are advancing the air quality conversation and efforts need to be made to strengthen citizen science. To make campaigns more inclusive and participatory, there is a need to empower citizens and make sure that they are part of the action.

4. Pathways forward

The concluding session gave an overview of the important thematic and sectoral discussions through the day and focused on ways to strengthen collaboration and identifying priorities for 2020. The session was facilitated by Dr. Navroz Dubash.

Key priorities that emerged for 2020 include:
- Improving air quality monitoring infrastructure
- Strengthening data collection and disclosure (air quality data, source apportionment, impacts of poor air quality, successful interventions)
- Alignment on strategic focus areas
- Effectively engaging and communicating with external stakeholders
- Increasing capacity within government and regulatory agencies
- Mapping the stakeholders involved as well as capacity gaps in the civil society ecosystem

There was discussion highlighting the need for a conscious strategy that factors in the political economy, finds ways to align with election cycles, and engages media on a continuous basis. Identifying the government's priority areas and aligning our programs accordingly could be a way to pick some low hanging fruits. Donors need to be committed in the long term, as scaling up pilot projects requires considerable of time and long-term investments. India has no legal framework for implementing regional plans or actions, and there is a need to create one. Also, significant action is happening outside cities, without municipal oversight. So there is a need to integrate those actions with our regulatory systems.

There was agreement that the NGO community needs to get its act together and collaborate. It was suggested to deepen civil society's engagement with the private sector. Along those lines, there was a request for more frequent meetings at the regional and sectoral level, with wider stakeholder engagement. It was also decided that a survey to identify key civil society actions within the priorities for 2020 will be circulated to all the participants.

List of Participants

Name	Organization
Aarti Khosla	Global Strategic Communications Council (GSCC)
Abhilasha Purwar	Blue Sky Analytics
Abhishek Kumar	Lung Care Foundation
Aishwarya Sudhir	Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)
Ajay Nagpure	World Resources Institute (WRI)
Akshay G	Haiyya
Akshima Ghate	Rocky Mountain Institute
Amit Chandra	United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
Anand Shukla	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Anil Ramaprasad	Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives (APPI)
Anindya Upadhyay	The Asia Foundation
Anjali Jaiswal	Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
Anshuman Bapna	Terra.do
Anumita Roy Chowdhury	Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)
Anup Bandivadekar	International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT)
Anurit Kanti	ReNew Power
Arshpreet Kalsi	The Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago (EPIC-UChicago)
Arunabha Ghosh	Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW)
Atul Goyal	United Residents Joint Action of Delhi (URJA)
Avjit Michael	Jhatkaa
Bhavay Sharma	World Resources Institute (WRI)
Bob O' Keefe	Health Effects Institute
Brikesh Singh	ASAR Social Impact
Chandra Bhushan	iForest
Debi Goenka	Conservation Action Trust
Divya Narayanan	Jhatkaa
Diya Prakash	C40
Fanta Kamakate	Pisces Foundation
Greeshma Hegde	Dasra
Ishwar	India Climate Collaborative
Jane Burston	Clean Air Fund

Jarnail Singh	MacArthur Foundation
Jatin Singh	Skymet Weather
Jeni Miller	The Global Climate & Health Alliance (GCHA)
John Koshy	Air Quality Asia
Julia Pyper	Stitching SED Fund
Kabir Sharma	DESTA Research LLP
Kachina Chawla	United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
Karthik Ganesan	Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW)
Kartikeya Singh	Stitching SED Fund
Kumud Rai	ECHO India
Kunal Sharma	The Nature Conservancy India (TNC India)
Kuringi L. S.	Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW)
Liz McKeon	IKEA Foundation
Meena Sehgal	The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)
Mihir Mathur	DESTA Research LLP
Mohit Beotra	Central Square Foundation
Mohit Sharma	Confederation of Indian Industry - Centre Of Excellence For Sustainable Development (CII-CESD)
Mridula Pandey	The Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF)
Natasha Chaudhary	Haiyya
Navdha Malhotra	Purpose India
Navroz Dubash	Centre for Policy Research (CPR)
Paartha Bosu	Environmental Defense Fund (EDF)
Pallavi Pant	Health Effects Institute
Polash Mukherjee	Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
Poornima Prabhakaran	Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI)
Poulami Choudhury	British High Commission
Pradeep Nair	Ford Foundation
Prarthana Bora	Clean Air Asia
Pratima Singh	Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP)
Praveen	Central Square Foundation
Prima Madan	Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
Priya Shankar	Bloomberg Philanthropies
Priyavarat Bhati	Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP)

Prof. (Dr.) Paramesh	Divecha Center for Climate Change Indian Institute of Science
Puja Tewary	Bloomberg Philanthropies
Rajesh Suthar	Ambuja Cement
Ramapati Kumar	Center for Environment and Energy Development (CEED)
Reena Mithal	Sankhya Ventures
Ritwajit Das	Global Call For Climate Action (GCCA)
Ronak Sutaria	Respirer Living Sciences
Sagnik Dey	Indian Institute of Technology Delhi
Sahba Chauhan	Oak Foundation
Sandeep Dahiya	Purpose
Sanjay More	SkyMet Weather
Sanjay Mithal	Sankhya Ventures
Sanjay Sridhar	C40
Santosh Harish	Centre for Policy Research (CPR)
Sapna Karim	Janaagraha
Sarath Guttikunda	Urban Emissions
Shibani Ghosh	Centre for Policy Research (CPR)
Shirish Sinha	The Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF)
Shreya Gadepalli	Institute for Transportation & Development Policy (ITDP)
Shruti Patil	The Asia Foundation
Shweta Narayan	Healthy Energy Initiative
Siddharth Singh	International Energy Agency
Smita Rakesh	Energy Programme, Social Alpha
Srikanth Viswanathan	Janaagraha
Srinivas Krishnaswamy	Vasudha
Steffi Itola	Tata Trusts
Stephen Campbell	UMI Fund
Sujal Shroff	JSW Reality
Sumi Mehta	Vital Strategies
Sumit Sharma	The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)
Tabinda Bashir	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Tanushree Ganguly	Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW)
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Valentin Foltescu	United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
Jatin Singh	Skymet Weather