

**RELEASE: Govt. officials, industries, civil society members convene;  
discuss effective steps to improve Surat's air quality**

*Following WRI India, GPCB, SMC-led workshop, city to implement NCAP for clean air soon*

**Surat, Gujarat, 25 July 2019:** A two-day stakeholder workshop to discuss and design the implementation of the Surat Clean Air Action Plan (SCAP) – part of a national mission to improve the air quality in Indian cities – commenced in Surat, Gujarat on Thursday. The workshop is being led by the World Resources Institute (WRI) India, in collaboration with Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB) and Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC), and supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies and Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation (SSEF).

Representatives from various government departments, industries, national and international non-profit organizations, academics and civil society members, joined the workshop to identify ongoing projects which had the potential to mitigate air pollution; and key institutions which would ensure effective implementation of SCAP in Surat. The **Honourable Mayor of Surat Dr Jagdish Patel** delivered the keynote address.

Air pollution is one of the biggest environmental challenges facing India today, being viewed as a prime contributor to several deaths according to [global reports](#). To tackle this problem, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), launched the [National Clean Air Programme](#) (NCAP) in January 2019. This five-year, national-level strategy aims to reduce air pollution (concentration of PM 10 and PM 2.5, or Particulate Matter with the diameter of 10 microns and 2.5 microns) by 20-30 percent by 2024. This strategy involves implementing a comprehensive, city-specific mitigation action plan in 102 highly polluted 'non-attainment' cities.

By convening the workshop, Surat is among the first cities in India to have taken a step towards adopting NCAP. Pointing out that Surat is greatly invested in managing its pollution levels, “even though the city does not facing any major air pollution-related problems yet”, **Dr. Patel** said, “Aiming to make our city better and safer for its citizen, the Surat Municipal Corporation is taking several proactive steps to control air pollution. As a part the Smart Cities program, we have taken up projects to monitor the quality of our air; we are investing in mass-transit services like city buses and BRTS, to reduce use of individual vehicles, we are working on having electric buses soon; and have started massive plantation activities in this city. Further, to understanding various sources of air pollution, we have initiated a systematic source apportionment study with WRI India and TERI.” **M Thennarasan**, commissioner, SMC, added that Surat is as focused and interested as cities around the world today, in building green and clean policies for a cleaner future.

The participants studied best practices from across the globe, and mulled over solutions that could be adapted by the city. **Beatriz Cárdenas**, senior Air Quality member, WRI, former general director of Air Quality Management in Mexico City and an atmospheric scientist, drew parallels between Surat and Mexico City, and shared experiences and lessons learned in cleaning their air. “Cleaning the air is not a one-time action since cities are continuously

changing, with a constant ebb-and-flow of people, pressures of development and economic flux. Climate change adds further stress to the urban environment, contributing to the air pollution,” Cárdenas said. Describing how focused actions helped Mexico City clean its air, she added, “Cities can share best practices and learn from each other regularly on how to constantly improve, monitor and maintain their air quality levels, thereby forming a holistic learning and adapting loop, globally.”

Participants also discussed the outcomes of ‘summer season air quality monitoring’ conducted in May-June 2019 – the first part of a comprehensive, on-going study by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), to analyse sources contributing to air pollution and how it affects various locations, over two seasons.

Talking about the study, **Dr Sumit Sharma**, Director (Earth Sciences and Climate Change Division), TERI, said, “Considering the enormity of the problem of air pollution, it becomes important to understand the contribution of emission sources, chemistry and movement of the pollutants. Based on these analysis, and using state-of-the-art modelling-based techniques, we can devise ideal, long-term, air quality management solutions for Surat.” The second part of this assessment will be conducted in the winters.

**Mr D R Rathore**, deputy environmental engineer, GPCB, presented the draft SCAP and discussed how Surat plans to follow new strategies such as the Environmental Trading Scheme (ETS) to combat air pollution. A few priority projects, and medium- and long-term activities, across sectors like energy, transport, waste management, urban development were identified and institutions to lead these projects were discussed. A list of control measure to mitigate air pollution was also identified and projected risks, key activities and personnel requirement to roll out these measures were discussed .

**Ailun Yang**, head of global air pollution programs, Bloomberg Philanthropies, said, “Reducing air pollution and improving public health is a core focus of Bloomberg Philanthropies’ work across the globe, and we’re excited to support the Surat Clean Air Action Plan and further these efforts in India. By working together with citizens, businesses, experts, and civil society partners to clean its air, Surat has the opportunity to demonstrate leadership and improve quality of life for its residents.”

**Ajay Singh Nagpure**, lead, Air Pollution Program, WRI India Ross Center for Sustainable Cities, added, “Surat’s emissions inventory identifies vehicular pollution, road dust, bio-mass burning, industrial emissions and construction activities as some of the major contributors to air pollution. A range of stakeholders and policymakers need to join the action plan, considering that we have to tackle pollutants from varied sources. This workshop is the first step at building a large and aware stakeholder community that actively works towards cleaning India’s air by implementing NCAP. Other cities will soon follow Surat’s example.”

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