



26 March 2014- Climate change has wrought visible effects upon our environment, but the invisible changes it brings are proving deadlier.

Air pollution, according to [new figures](#) released by the UN World Health Organization, is the world's single largest environmental health risk. Outdoor and indoor air pollution has been shown to be responsible for 1 in 8 deaths worldwide. "Few risks have a greater impact on global health today than air pollution; the evidence signals the need for concerted action to clean up the air we all breathe," said Dr. Maria Neira, Director of WHO's Department for Public Health, Environmental and Social Determinants of Health.

World leaders are well aware of the risks and damages linked to environmental deterioration and climate change. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has labeled climate change "the defining issue of our time" and is pursuing multilateral negotiations with leaders from around the world to achieve sustainable, long term change. In September of 2014 world leaders from political, financial, business and civil society fields will meet in New York to mobilize action and ambition on [climate change](#) . Many fields will be discussed, including how to achieve the goals for 2030 of universal energy access, doubling energy efficiency rate, and doubling renewable energy shares.

The question of renewable and sustainable energy with lower green house gas emissions seems to have gained even more importance today as WHO officials have stated that,

“Excessive air pollution is often a by-product of unsustainable policies in sectors such as transport, energy, waste management and industry.” Furthermore, CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations have increased by 40% since pre-industrial times, primarily from fossil fuel emissions and secondarily from net land use change emissions.

Cleaner air will prevent the spread of non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, strokes as well as cancer. Therefore all sectors generating air pollution, from automotive to industry, will have to focus on developing lower emissions and sustainable energy consumption. Leading by example, Ban Ki-moon is “[greening the blue](#)” making the UN Secretariat building more efficient and sustainable and designed to reduce energy consumption by 50 per cent and cut by 45 per cent the UN’s carbon footprint.

In 2011 the Secretary General launched the Sustainable Energy for All campaign recognizing that; “We need clean efficient energy to combat climate change. We can no longer burn and consume our way to prosperity.” Today’s findings confirm his vision, and that changes need to happen sooner rather than later.