



UN Secretary-General António Guterres [calls for](#) taxes on pollution and end to fossil fuel subsidies on the occasion of the World Environment Day.

"It is time to act decisively. My message to governments is clear: tax pollution; end fossil fuel subsidies; and stop building new coal plants. We need a green economy, not a grey economy," says Mr Guterres

The theme for the 2019 World Environment Day, "Beat Air Pollution," is a call to action call to combat this global crisis. Chosen by this year's host, China, this year's topic invites the public to consider how we can change our everyday lives to reduce the amount of air pollution we produce and thwart its contribution to global warming and its effects on our own health.

The World Environment Day campaign invites everyone to take action against air pollution and join [the Mask Challenge](#) .

Here are some other ideas:

- Use public transport or car sharing, cycle or walk.
- Switch to a hybrid or electric vehicle and request electric taxis.
- Turn off the car engine when stationary.
- Reduce your consumption of meat and dairy to help cut methane emissions.
- Compost organic food items and recycle non-organic trash.
- Switch to high-efficiency home heating systems and equipment.
- Save energy: turn off lights and electronics when not in use.
- Never burn trash, as this contributes directly to air pollution.
- Choose non-toxic paints and furnishing

Nine out of ten people breathe polluted air. Polluted air kills some 7 million people each year, causes long term health problems, such as asthma, and reduces children's cognitive development. According to the World Bank, air pollution costs societies more than \$5 trillion every year and contributes as well to global warming.

In his message on World Environment Day Mr Guterres points out black carbon as an example. "Produced by diesel engines, burning trash and dirty cookstoves, it is extremely harmful when inhaled. Reducing emissions of such pollutants will not only improve public health, but it could also alleviate global warming by up to 0.5 degrees Celsius over the next few decades.," the UN Secretary-General says.

"Tackling air pollution, therefore, presents a double opportunity, as there are many successful initiatives that both clear the air and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as phasing out coal-fired power plants and promoting the less polluting industry, transport and domestic fuels."

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development states our resolve "to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources". In particular, Goals 14 and 15 focus on protecting underwater and on land ecosystems, as well as on sustainably using marine and terrestrial resources.

