

WHO links 3 millions deaths worldwide annually to outdoor air pollution

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STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN, May 24, 2016 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Just days after saying 80 percent of people living in urban areas that monitor air pollution are exposed to air quality levels exceeding WHO limits, the UN body has issued a new report linking 3 million global deaths directly to outdoor pollution from the likes of traffic, industrial sources, or waste burning.

“WHO’s latest ‘World Health Statistics’ report is a scary and shocking indictment of how governments everywhere on our planet seem unable to come together to tackle the root problems of air pollution, described by the UN as the largest single environmental health risk,” said Mr. Bengt Rittri, founder and CEO of [Blueair](#), a world leader in indoor air cleaning technologies.

The 2016 UN report said that household air pollution from cooking with unclean fuels or inefficient technologies caused 4.3 million deaths in 2012, while ambient (or outdoor) air pollution (for example, from traffic, industrial sources, waste burning or residential fuel combustion) caused 3.0 million deaths during the same year. Jointly, air pollution caused an estimated 6.5 million deaths, or 11.6% of all global deaths in 2012.

WHO also blamed air pollution as a major risk factor for non-communicable deaths in adults, causing cardiovascular diseases, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer, as well as increasing the risks for acute respiratory infections.

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Among children under 5 years of age, household air pollution is estimated by WHO to cause half of all pneumonia deaths. And women and children are at a particularly high risk of disease caused by exposure to household air contamination – accounting for 60% of all premature deaths attributed to such pollution.

Commenting further on the WHO statistics, Mr. Rittri said it was unacceptable in 2016 that urban air pollution is continuing to rise alarmingly – and increasing the risk of



Blueair CEO and Founder Bengt Rittri believes clean air is a human right.

stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, and chronic and acute respiratory diseases, including asthma, increases for the people who live in urban areas.

“Until national and city governments seriously make urban air quality one of their absolute top health and development priorities, individuals have no choice but to create their own indoor havens free of contaminants by using air purifiers at home or work in the same natural way as they use vacuum cleaners to remove dust,” said Mr. Rittri.

Background

- The latest WHO urban air quality database, which covers 3,000 cities in 103 countries, says 98% of cities in low- and middle income countries with more than 100 000 inhabitants do not meet WHO air quality guidelines. Even in high-income countries the percentage is 56%. As urban air quality declines, the risk of stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, and chronic and acute respiratory diseases, including asthma, increases for the people who live in them, according to WHO.

- WHO's “World Health Statistics 2016” brings together the most recent data on the health-related targets within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015. Among other things, the report highlights that 4.3 million people die due to air pollution caused by cooking fuels; and 3 million people die due to outdoor pollution.

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