



**BREATHE CITIES UNVEILS NEW COHORT OF CITIES TO JOIN AMBITIOUS INITIATIVE TO FIGHT TOXIC AIR POLLUTION**

*New Breathe Cities cities will join London and Warsaw and receive support to enhance air quality data, community engagement, capacity building, and more as part of the \$30 million initiative supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies, Clean Air Fund, and C40 Cities*

*Breathe Cities aims to contribute to a reduction of air pollution by 30% by 2030 and prevent 39,000 premature deaths in selected cities*

**Dubai, United Arab Emirates (2 December 2023)** – Today, during the COP28 Local Climate Action Summit, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Clean Air Fund, and C40 Cities announced a new cohort of cities to benefit from funding, technical support, air quality data, community engagement, capacity building, and additional support as part of the [Breathe Cities](#) clean air initiative. This \$30 million initiative, [launched](#) earlier this year by Michael R. Bloomberg, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy on Climate Ambition and Solutions and founder of Bloomberg Philanthropies, and London Mayor and C40 Co-Chair Sadiq Khan, aims to reduce air pollution, slash carbon emissions, and enhance public health.

The new cohort of Breathe Cities is a diverse group of global cities including: Accra, Ghana; Brussels, Belgium; Jakarta, Indonesia; Johannesburg, South Africa; Milan, Italy; Nairobi, Kenya; Paris, France; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and Sofia, Bulgaria. This group joins together with Breathe Cities' pilot programs launched in Warsaw, Poland in 2022 and London, United Kingdom in 2019.

Breathe Cities builds on existing efforts led by Bloomberg Philanthropies, C40 Cities, and the Clean Air Fund in many of these cities to track air pollution and shape public advocacy and policy measures to reduce pollution. Now, convening under one banner and with dedicated support, the cities announced today will join together in a first-of-its-kind partnership to exchange knowledge and scale local impact.

Carefully selected for their commitment to advancing ambitious policies addressing the dual challenges of air pollution and climate emissions, the participating local governments were chosen based on criteria such as geographic diversity, air pollution and emissions intensity, engaged civil society, strong political interest and leadership, scalability potential, and capacity to implement action plans, among other metrics.



Through an evidence-based strategy, combining data, policy, and community engagement, Breathe Cities has the ambitious goal of contributing to reducing air pollution by 30 percent on average across participating cities by 2030 compared to 2019 levels<sup>1</sup>. Such a bold reduction would prevent an estimated 39,000 premature deaths<sup>2</sup> and around 79,000 new cases of asthma in children each decade, saving \$107 billion in avoided hospitalizations and deaths. By 2030, a total of 284 Megatonnes<sup>3</sup> of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions would be avoided among participating cities – a monumental win for both people and the planet.

“One of the most effective ways to tackle climate change and protect public health is through reducing air pollution,” said **Michael R. Bloomberg, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Climate Ambition and Solutions and founder of Bloomberg L.P. and Bloomberg Philanthropies**. “With the right technology, data and policy, cities can lead the way in cleaning the air. Bloomberg Philanthropies is looking forward to working with these cities to help them implement ambitious solutions that will help improve and save lives.”

“Toxic air pollution is a dual threat, impacting both the public health of our cities as well as furthering the climate crisis,” said **Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London and co-chair of C40 Cities**. “As co-chair of C40 Cities, I’ve seen how collaboration can accelerate progress on the challenges we face. By partnering with Bloomberg Philanthropies and Clean Air Fund, we will be able to provide cities with the data and capacity they need to push for stronger and more effective policies that reduce air pollution and deliver cleaner, healthier air to their residents.”

“Empowering cities to tackle air pollution will have a direct impact on public health and wellbeing and unlock a host of wider economic and environmental benefits,” said **Jane Burston, CEO, Clean Air Fund**. “Our partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies and C40 Cities will bring together a robust network of cities to share valuable lessons and success stories while also advancing the adoption of innovative new technologies and research and supporting local efforts to implement effective solutions.”

Breathe Cities was launched in June 2023 as a partnership between Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Clean Air Fund, and C40 Cities to save lives, improve health, and reduce air pollution that is

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<sup>1</sup> Potential impact of Breathe Cities on air pollution was estimated by C40 Cities using global datasets that combine ground-based monitoring with satellite observations.

<sup>2</sup> Mortality estimates were derived using methodologies established by the Global Burden of Disease, employing a comprehensive synthesis of air quality data, country-level mortality data, and risk estimates that describe the association between premature mortality risk and air pollution exposures.

<sup>3</sup> Greenhouse (GHG) emissions reduction is based on a 30 percent reduction from a 2019 baseline, reported by cities as part of GHG emissions reporting.



both harmful to public health and the climate. The initiative builds on Mayor Khan’s visionary work to tackle air pollution in London. The pilot Breathe London project was designed to support policies like the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ). Today the ULEZ is one of the world’s most ambitious efforts to combat urban air pollution. Measuring 1,500km<sup>2</sup> and covering the whole capital, it is the largest clean air zone of its kind on earth. The highly targeted scheme is designed to take the most polluting vehicles off London’s roads, helping nine million people to breathe cleaner air.


Air pollution is one of the most urgent global issues. Almost no urban area has air quality that meets the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines. Forty-one percent of cities have air pollution over [seven times higher](#) than WHO’s recommendation, meaning their residents are breathing dangerously polluted air that can cause a suite of health issues such as asthma and respiratory illnesses. Air pollution is also associated with 7 million premature deaths each year. And worldwide, air pollution costs the global economy [\\$8.1 trillion](#), the equivalent of 6.1 percent of global GDP. Residents who live in cities where density, geography, and pollution from transportation and industry pose unique daily hazards live face to face with this reality.

[Breathe Cities](#) will arm cities with resources and support by focusing on four key pillars:

1. **Data and Research:** Expand the availability of local air quality data through the use of innovative new technologies and research into causes of air pollution to provide local governments with evidence for implementing and enforcing new policies.
2. **Stakeholder and Community Engagement:** Engage local campaigns and grassroots organizers to build awareness and support for air quality action, especially for communities most affected by air pollution.
3. **Technical Policy Assistance:** Support local governments and city halls to develop and deliver clean air policies by providing technical assistance and capacity building to support policymakers in identifying and implementing solutions.
4. **Lesson Sharing:** Share learnings across cities to help other cities to act.

“As a coastal city, Accra and its people are experiencing the harsh impacts of climate change and environmental stressors,” said **George Bray, Dean, Greater Accra Metropolitan and Municipal Chief Executives**. “It is critical for us to address toxic air pollution to protect not only the health of our residents, but also the health of our coastal ecosystems and assure food security. With the research tools, increased capacity, and shared learning from the Breathe Cities initiative, we’re thrilled to breathe life into the City of Accra.”

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“As the Governor of Jakarta, I recognize the urgent need to address the air quality issues affecting our capital city,” said **Heru Budi Hartono, Governor of Jakarta**. “Our partnership with Breathe Cities will allow us to harness the power of advanced monitoring technology and data analysis to better locate sources of pollution, curb the worst health impacts from vehicle and industrial pollution, and turn Jakarta into a healthier, more livable city for all.”

“Air quality is a key environmental objective for the City of Milan, and support from the Breathe Cities initiative will be instrumental in meeting our climate goals,” said **Giuseppe Sala, Mayor of Milan and C40 Vice Chair Europe**. “As a city facing geographical challenges in terms of air stagnation and pollution concentration, the data-driven solutions and technical support will be a catalyst for improving air quality and informing policy.”

“Air pollution is responsible for at least 48,000 premature deaths in France every year,” said **Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris**. “Through our partnership with the Breathe Cities initiative, we can begin to implement policy that is supported by the shared learnings from other cities facing the same emergency coupled with accurate, local air monitoring data - leading to cleaner, breathable air for all Parisians.”

“In the highly populated city of Rio de Janeiro, keeping our air clean and healthy is of the utmost importance,” said **Eduardo Paes, Mayor of Rio de Janeiro**. “To be able to learn from other large cities from across the globe on how they monitor and address toxic air pollution makes for an incredible opportunity to make long lasting improvements on the home front – only through this unique collaboration, is this possible.”

“Together, as stewards of our environment, we will combat air pollution, strive for safer air to breathe and ensure a better tomorrow for our cities,” said **Rafal Trzaskowski, Mayor of Warsaw**. “With the help of the Breathe Cities initiative, we’re able to use data and new technologies to better understand the ominous problem that is air pollution. In Warsaw, our city's heartbeat echoes with the resilience to protect and preserve the quality of our climate and environment, and we will work tirelessly to build technical capacity to make our clean air future a reality.”

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#### **About Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Global Clean Air Program:**

Bloomberg Philanthropies leads the world’s most ambitious clean air effort that aims to improve air quality through support for city pilot projects and partnerships with national governments and organizations. In 2018, Bloomberg Philanthropies announced support for the Denver Love

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My Air program, which deployed air quality sensors to track hyper-local air quality data at Denver Public Schools and made data broadly available to help residents and city leaders respond to local air quality. Since 2019, Bloomberg Philanthropies has worked with the cities of London and Paris – providing vital insights on low-cost air quality sensors and launching awareness campaigns to mobilize public action. Breathe Cities, backed by a \$30 million commitment from Mike Bloomberg, builds on the success of this work and Bloomberg Philanthropies' other clean air partnerships with Brussels, Jakarta, Milan, Warsaw, and other governments around the world.

**About Bloomberg Philanthropies:**

Bloomberg Philanthropies invests in 700 cities and 150 countries around the world to ensure better, longer lives for the greatest number of people. The organization focuses on five key areas for creating lasting change: the Arts, Education, Environment, Government Innovation, and Public Health. Bloomberg Philanthropies encompasses all of Michael R. Bloomberg's giving, including his foundation, corporate, and personal philanthropy as well as Bloomberg Associates, a pro bono consultancy that works in cities around the world. In 2022, Bloomberg Philanthropies distributed US\$ 1.7 billion. For more information, please visit [bloomberg.org](https://bloomberg.org), sign up for our [newsletter](#), or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

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**About Breathe London:**

After a successful two-year pilot, in 2020 the Mayor of London launched the [Breathe London network](#) at priority locations like schools and hospitals, which now has almost 400 active sensors. Managed by Imperial College London, the network offers affordable, easy-to-install and maintain air quality sensors to anyone.

The Mayor has also launched the Community Programme, also funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, giving community groups the chance to apply for a free sensor. 40 community groups have now received sensors, with applications currently open for 20 more sensors. Organisations can also now purchase sensors via the new online shop.

A hybrid network of reference-grade analysers alongside citizen and community-led monitoring has been a paradigm shift in air quality monitoring and one which we hope will serve as a blueprint for cities around the world.

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**About C40 Cities:**

C40 is a network of nearly 100 mayors of the world's leading cities working to deliver the urgent action needed right now to confront the climate crisis and create a future where everyone, everywhere, can thrive. Mayors of C40 cities are committed to using a **science-based and people-focused approach** to help the world limit global heating to 1.5°C and build healthy, equitable and resilient communities. We work alongside a broad coalition of representatives from labour, business, the youth climate movement and civil society to support mayors to halve emissions by 2030 and help phase out fossil use while increasing urban climate resilience and equity.

The current co-chairs of C40 are Mayor Sadiq Khan of London, United Kingdom, and Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr of Freetown, Sierra Leone; three-term Mayor of New York City Michael R. Bloomberg serves as President of the Board. C40's work is made possible by our three strategic funders: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Children's Investment Fund Foundation and Realdania.

To learn more about the work of C40 and our cities, please visit [our website](#) or follow us on [X](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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**About the Clean Air Fund:**

The Clean Air Fund is a global philanthropic organisation that works with governments, funders, businesses and campaigners to create a future where everyone breathes clean air. [Cleanairfund.org](http://Cleanairfund.org)

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