

## Appeal

Date: April 5, 2025

Over the past week, the air quality in major cities, including the Kathmandu Valley, has deteriorated to extremely unhealthy levels. According to the World Air Quality Index (AQI), which tracks global air pollution, Kathmandu has ranked as the most polluted city in the world. The severe air pollution is driven by growing piles of unmanaged waste, widespread forest fires, emissions from vehicles, dust from neglected and unfinished road construction, and smoke from factories and industrial operations. The situation has worsened due to prolonged droughts linked to climate change, minimal winter rainfall, and the spread of forest fires across the country — including areas surrounding the valley — ahead of the summer season.

Experts warn that air pollution poses serious risks to multiple organs, including the heart, blood vessels, lungs, brain, eyes, nose, and throat. Its growing impact is already causing discomfort among the general public, with symptoms such as eye irritation, headaches, fatigue, dry cough, and difficulty breathing becoming increasingly common. Vulnerable groups — including children, pregnant women, people with disabilities, those with chronic illnesses, the elderly, and individuals with respiratory conditions — face even higher health risks. If the current levels of air pollution persist, the long-term effects on public health, especially for residents of major cities like the Kathmandu Valley, could be severe.

Article 30 of the Constitution of Nepal 2015 guarantees every citizen the right to clean environment. (1) Every citizen shall have the right to live in a clean and healthy environment. (2) The victim shall have the right to obtain compensation, in accordance with law, for any injury caused from environmental pollution or degradation. It is our collective responsibility to uphold and safeguard the Constitution. CLEAN UP NEPAL has been consistently advocating for the effective enforcement of constitutional provisions, act, and regulations related to environmental protection.

In response to the recent spikes in hazardous air quality, major cities within the Kathmandu Valley are beginning to implement urgent health safety measures. Alongside efforts to protect public health, CLEAN UP NEPAL appeal all levels of government—federal, provincial, and local—as well as national and international NGOs, civil society, community organizations, and including public, to take immediate and coordinated action. This includes raising awareness



about pollution sources and taking concrete, preventive steps to reduce pollution, while working collectively toward building cleaner, healthier, and greener cities.

1. Avoid going outdoors unless necessary. If you must go out, always wear a mask.
2. Give special attention to the health and safety of children, pregnant and lactating women, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and individuals with chronic or respiratory illnesses—and ensure they wear masks when outside.
3. Limit the use of private, fuel-powered vehicles. Choose public transportation or electric vehicles whenever possible.
4. Implement the odd-even vehicle rule to help reduce traffic-related smoke and dust pollution.
5. The government should conduct regular inspections of fuel-powered vehicles to regulate and reduce emissions from high-polluting vehicles.
6. Avoid burning waste. If you witness open burning, report it to the local government. Practice proper waste management by segregating waste at the source and disposing of it responsibly.
7. Regularly clean homes, roads, schools, markets, water sources, and public spaces.
8. Handle flammable materials—such as matches, lighters, gas, and petrol—with extreme caution.
9. Strengthen monitoring efforts to prevent forest fires, and ensure those responsible are held accountable under the law.
10. Collaborate on awareness campaigns to help prevent and reduce the spread of forest fires.
11. Promote urban greenery by initiating tree plantation and city greening programs.
12. Protect and conserve water sources.
13. Considering children's health sensitivity, suspend school operations until air quality improves.
14. Reduce the number of in-office working days within the Kathmandu Valley to five days per week until the air quality improves.

Sincerely,

Rabindra Lamichhane  
Executive Director  
CLEAN UP NEPAL

