Statements
Hidden assets: The economic and health case for climate and clean air action

Katie White, UK's Minister for Climate Transition
The climate crisis is already affecting lives here in the UK, from this summer's wildfires to drought across our countryside. We must act with urgency to protect the people and places we love. But climate action is about more than just protecting ourselves. As this report shows, by cutting pollution and cleaning up our air, we can improve people's health, boost quality of life and strengthen our economy.

Dr. Arvind Kumar, Founder Trustee, Lung Care Foundation, Founder, Doctors for Clean Air and Climate Action
I see more young, never-smokers with damaged lungs. Every diagnosis carries a health, emotional and economic burden. I see the human cost of air pollution every day.

Astrid Puentes Riaño, UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment
Breathing clean air is not a privilege; it is part of everyone's human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. It is clear that States have the obligation to protect people from air pollution, specially those more vulnerable, by tackling its drivers, starting with moving away from fossil fuels. Now we also know that doing so could prevent 144 million premature deaths by 2050 and return around US$15 for every dollar invested. There is no justification for delay. Clean air is good economics, good public health and, fundamentally, a human right and a justice matter.

Dr. Sandra Cortes, School of Public Health, UC Chile, Member, Scientific Committee on Climate Change, Chile
Across Latin America and the Caribbean, air pollution threatens children's cognitive development, deepening the impacts of poverty and inadequate living conditions. For our children, climate action and cleaner air cannot wait.

Maya Mailer, Co-Director of Our Kids' Climate
Behind 5.5 million new cases of childhood asthma linked to air pollution in 2025 are children struggling to breathe, missed school days and worried families. We have the solutions for cleaner air. For our children's sake, leaders must act.

Dr. Jemilah Mahmood, Executive Director, Sunway Center for Planetary Health, Malaysia. Commissioner, Our Common Air and Member of World Economic Council Global Future Council on Clean Air
Clean air should not depend on where you are born or what your country can afford. Air pollution is preventable, and the solutions are in our hands. With $15 returned for every $1 invested, clean air is a smart and equitable investment.

Dr. Maria Neira, Former Director of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health, WHO, Senior Fellow, Clean Air Fund
Clean air is one of the smartest investments a society can make, protecting lungs, saving lives and strengthening economies. It's not a choice between health, climate and development: action on air pollution delivers all three.

Bhavreen Kandhari, Founder, Warrior Moms, India
As mothers, clean air is deeply personal, it is our children's right to breathe, play, learn and grow. We must stop normalising pollution and start preventing it at the source. Our children deserve nothing less.

Dr. Caradee Wright Chief Specialist Scientist: Environment and Health Research Unit Lead: Climate Change and Human Health Research Programme, South African Medical Research Council
Clean cooking isn't a side issue, it's central to Africa's health and economic future. With only one in five Africans having access to clean cooking fuels, closing the gap is a powerful investment in lungs, livelihoods and the climate.

Gerphas Opondo, Executive Director, Environmental Compliance Institute
Africa cannot afford to tackle climate change and air pollution in isolation. Integrated action can save lives, cut pollution and strengthen economies, while ensuring the greatest benefits reach communities carrying the greatest burden.

Clare Perry, Climate Programme Lead, Environmental Investigation Agency UK
Implementing all 25 proven solutions would cost less than a third of what governments currently spend on fossil fuel subsidies, while preventing 144 million premature deaths and avoid 0.34°C warming by 2050. Fund the Super Pollutant Country Action Accelerator and put them into action.

Sean Kidney, CEO, Climate Bonds Initiative
Clean air and climate action go hand in hand. Proven solutions can deliver healthier communities, stronger economies and a safer climate. The capital is there, now we must put it to work at speed and scale.

Martina Otto, Head of CCAC Secretariat, UN Environment Programme
Clean air and climate action aren't only a cost, they're an economic opportunity. Every $1 invested can return around $15. It's time to treat these solutions for what they are: smart economics.

Marcelo Mena, CEO, Global Methane Hub
Those who take action will get immediate benefits that are local, as the climate benefits from reduced temperature materialize. It's like getting a signing bonus for a contract that is paid in longer installments.

This first-of-its-kind assessment gives us a much fuller picture of what action is worth by evaluating both the market and non-market benefits of 25 proven solutions that tackle climate change and air pollution together, including the economic value of preventing illness and improving quality of life.

Drew Shindell, Nicholas Distinguished Professor of Earth Science, Duke University, CCAC SAP Chair, Assessment Co-Chair
This report shows that the economic benefits of action are much greater than the costs even in the near term. Instead of asking whether we can afford to tackle climate change and air quality given so many other pressing concerns, policymakers everywhere should be asking themselves a bigger question: how can we afford not to?

Simon Dietz, Professor of Environmental Policy, London School of Economics and Political Science, Assessment Co-Chair
This report provides the most rigorous evidence yet that treating climate change and air pollution as separate problems causes us to underestimate the benefits of tackling either. When we modelled them together, the returns were larger than each could show alone, because the same sources, sectors and policies so often drive both.

Eric Zusman, Research Director, Center for Sustainability Governance, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)
Identifying solutions on paper will only get us part of the way to achieving the potential benefits of climate and clear air solutions. We present systematic, data-driven evidence showing that realizing the full economic potential of those solutions requires investing in a broader set of cross-cutting institutions and more targeted enabling reforms.

Elliott Harris, Independent, Assessment Co-Chair
A benefit-cost ratio of 15 to 1 would attract capital instantly in almost any other sector. The only reason it hasn't on integrated climate and clean air action yet is that the returns are split across health systems, productivity and avoided climate damage rather than landing on a single balance sheet. Every year of delay costs the world more than USD1.5 trillion in benefits we will not get back. Finance ministries and investors who keep climate and air quality in separate budget lines are leaving trillions on the table.

Adalberto Maluf, National Secretary of Urban Environment, Water Resources and, Environmental Quality, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Brazil
Climate change and air pollution share many of the same sources, yet too often we still address them through separate policies, institutions and budgets. This assessment shows what countries can gain by breaking down those silos. As a Co-Chair of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, Brazil is committed to advancing integrated approaches that turn national climate and clean air ambitions into policies that improve lives and deliver lasting development benefits.

Tatsuya Hanaoka, National Institute for Environmental Studies, Japan
Considering climate and air pollution measures in isolation is not enough. The greatest opportunities emerge when these solutions are pursued as an integrated package. Through proven solutions across multiple sectors, we demonstrate a pathway that delivers deeper emission reductions, greater health benefits, and stronger economic returns than addressing either challenge alone.

Kevin Hicks, Professor, Stockholm Environment Institute at the University of York, UK
This assessment strengthens the case for scaling up existing action, by showing explicitly what you gain when you tackle air quality, health, climate and economic performance in an integrated framing.

Shuxiao Wang - Professor at School of Environment, Tsinghua University and the Director of the State Environmental Protection, Co-chair of the Report
Implementing the integrated package of 25 measures is key to achieving both climate goals and cleaner air. Integrated action not only delivers substantial health benefits, but also drives a more sustainable and resilient economic transition. While the health and economic returns vary substantially across regions, every region benefits, and no solution is wasted.

James Rising, Associate Professor, School of Marine Science and Policy University of Delaware
Climate change and pollution are closely connected, and in many cases, the solutions are the same. This report offers one of the first attempts to quantify the large benefits of tackling these together.

Pallavi Pant, Director of Global Initiatives, Health Effects Institute
The report's message is clear: an investment in clean air is an investment in people's health, well-being, and prosperity — both now and in the future. It is time to consider air quality actions not only as environmental decisions, but also as economic ones, and embed them in budgets and national policy priorities.

Dr. Babatunde Ajayi, General Manager, Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA)
Clean air is not simply an environmental objective; it is an investment in public health, economic productivity and sustainable development. The evidence that integrated clean air and climate action can deliver significant economic returns is particularly important for Africa, where rapidly growing cities have an opportunity to pursue development without locking in the pollution pathways of the past.

In Lagos, we are already mainstreaming air quality into the way we approach urban development — strengthening our monitoring and emissions data systems, improving industrial compliance, addressing transport emissions, advancing cleaner mobility and cooking solutions, and integrating climate and air-quality considerations into waste and emissions management.

For African cities, the message is clear: investing in clean air is not a cost of development; it is one of the foundations for healthier, more productive and more competitive economies.

Paulson Kasereka Isevulambire, WASARU, Democratic Republic of the Congo
The Democratic Republic of Congo experiences some of the largest health burdens due to air pollution in Africa. Anecdotal evidence also tells us that families in urban Kinshasa spend a significant amount of money on inhalers, and emergency consultations; adult breadwinners lose many working days due to sickness or caregiving responsibilities, and students miss school and other activities. This new report makes a strong case for investment in clean air action and can be transformative to make a case for targeted local action towards clean air.

Deo Okure, Co-Facilitator, Africa Clean Air Network, Head of Research and Global Partnerships, AirQo
The health and economic dividends presented in this assessment show that clean air is a credible incentive for catalysing investments to tackle the polluting sectors. We have seen that several countries in Africa are already undertaking action on air pollution - we hope the new data will provide a further impetus for bold action.

Adedolapo Fasawe, Mandate Secretary, Health Services & Environment Secretariat, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria
Clean cooking is not only an environmental and public health intervention — it is an economic investment. Through our Project Breathe Clean Air Abuja initiative, we have seen evidence that supports mainstreaming clean cooking into our national health, energy, climate, and economic development strategies. This report with its strong emphasis on targeted actions and the quantification of economic benefits, gives us inspiration to continue down this path.

Dr. Jeni Miller, Executive Director, Global Climate and Health Alliance
“Air pollution is a preventable public health crisis, and fossil fuels are a major driver. Solutions already within reach could prevent 144 million premature deaths by 2050, while mitigating climate change. Moving away from fossil fuels and investing in clean air is one of the most powerful public health actions governments can take.”

Romina Picolotti, President CEDHA, Ex-Secretary of Environment and Sustainable Development of Argentina
Imagine preventing 144 million premature deaths from air pollution. Hidden Assets offers 25 proven solutions to help us breathe today, reduce climate risks tomorrow, and return $15 for every $1 invested.

Dr Rachel Huxley, Head of Mitigation at Wellcome Trust
"These numbers tell a story of climate change: a child struggling to breathe on a bad air day, a grandmother whose heart gave out in a heatwave that didn't used to happen. This report shows that by cutting both CO2 and super pollutants together – we can save more lives, prevent more suffering, and deliver a stronger economic return than either approach alone.

“Every year we delay, millions more suffer. Governments have an unique opportunity here: a policy choice that is good for the climate, good for the economy, and for the people’s health. We need to act now to seize this triple win.”

Durwood Zaelke, President, Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development and professor at University of California, Santa Barbara
The CCAC is the only institution with a plan that—if implemented aggressively—can cut warming in the next two decades enough to avoid the chaos of passing climate tipping points, which otherwise will destroy the Amazon, kill the remaining coral reefs, and shut down the vital Atlantic current. We should listen, and marshal the will to act, fast.

Dr Alex Ndyabakira, Air Quality Management Focal Person, Kampala Capital City Authority
We welcome the new UNEP-CCAC Global Economic Assessment on clean air and climate action. Such data on economic benefits of clean air action is vital for decision-making. We look forward to using this information, together with the suggested sectoral actions to deliver clean air for Kampala city.

Professor Johan Kuylenstierna, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), York centre, University of York

This new economic assessment clearly shows that there is a massive economic benefit to taking early action - further evidence that any delay in addressing the 8 million people needlessly suffering from air pollution and limiting the obvious impacts of climate change makes no sense at all.

Andreea Calcan, Officer in Charge, UNEP's International Methane Emissions Observatory
Clean air and climate action go hand in hand — and the potential gains are enormous. Rapid methane cuts are essential to unlocking these benefits and minimizing climate overshoot. We have the tools and tech to find emissions, fix them and track progress. Now it's time for speed and scale.

Richard 'Tad' Ferris, IGSD Senior Attorney and General Counsel, CCAC Board NGO, Representative
Through the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), governments and civil society are demonstrating the power of an integrated approach to curb super pollutants. As shown in the CCAC's Hidden Assets report through case studies across China, India, Mexico, and Nigeria, aligning air quality with climate policy delivers immediate economic returns and public health gains while cutting near-term warming. Within the CCAC, the NGO community plays a critical role—holding national ambition to account, anchoring policy in frontline community realities, and turning commitments into measurable on-the-ground action.

Angela Churie-Kallhauge Executive Vice President, Impact at Environmental Defense Fund
This report is powerful evidence that climate and clean air action are one and the same. Cutting methane and other super pollutants delivers cleaner air, a safer climate, and stronger economies all at once. With the data showing us $15 in benefits for every $1 invested, policymakers and financers have every reason to invest boldly and turn these hidden opportunities into shared prosperity.

Shirley Rodrigues, Former Deputy Mayor, Environment and Energy, Greater London Authority
It's clear cities are key venues for acting on air pollution. Many cities are already taking action like implementing clean air zones to improve people's lives especially children's health. But they need more support from their national governments to accelerate the implementation.

Ilissa Ocko, Ph.D., Senior Climate Scientist, Spark Climate Solutions
We can't maximize the benefits of pollution solutions by looking at pollutants one at a time, and this report gives us the most comprehensive picture yet of what's possible when we consider them together.