

CLEAN-Air Forum 2025: Fostering Africa-led partnerships for clean air solutions

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Air quality is gaining prominence across Africa, and many national, sub-national, and city governments are increasingly taking action, ranging from expanding air quality monitoring, strengthening legislative frameworks, and increasing investments towards clean air. The recent [Cape Town Ministerial Declaration on Air Quality](#), under the leadership of South Africa's G20 Presidency, offers an important marker for Africa's leadership on air quality action and demonstrates the importance of cross-border collaborations towards shared challenges.

The third edition of the CLEAN-Air Forum, held in Nairobi (Kenya) between 15-17 July 2025, under the theme of *Partnerships for Clean Air Solutions*, brought together more than 390 participants from more than 35 countries. The event was convened by the Nairobi County Government in partnership with the World Resources Institute-Africa, AirQo and the Health Effects Institute. The forum is the flagship event of the Africa Clean Air Network (AfriCAN) and serves as a platform to convene policymakers, academia, industry, media and civil society organisations to foster knowledge sharing, collaboration, and cross-border partnerships to address air pollution across Africa.

More than 130 talks and posters were presented at the conference. The meeting had strong representation from across Africa: 77% of the speakers were from Africa, 14% from Europe, 8% from North America, and 1% from Asia. Topics discussed included air quality monitoring tools and strategies, data governance, applications for new tools including AI/ML, and sectoral interventions in waste, transport and residential fuel use. Talks also featured efforts underway to engage citizens and increase public engagement on the topic of air pollution, including work in Ethiopia and Ghana with school students, and youth engagement through physical activity. Delegates highlighted the need for improving storytelling with data, and argued for the inclusion of cultural and social narratives together with technical data. This expansive array of topics showcased the strong interest in advancing locally-relevant solutions and highlighted the role that the Forum can play in promoting knowledge sharing. There was a strong emphasis on the need for considering community needs and perspectives during various stages of air quality management and in the development of interventions. On the sidelines, several workshops and side



Keynote panel on open science and data governance



Forum participants after the Clean Air Run

meetings were also organised, including a meet-up for women in air quality, a run for clean air and several project co-creation workshops.

The opening plenary on *transdisciplinary cross-border partnerships* featured ongoing regional efforts and case studies from the Africa Clean Air Programme, Clean Air Asia, Forum for International Cooperation on Air Pollution (FICAP), and efforts on the continent, including in Lagos, Nigeria. Dr Alice Kaudia, former Environment Secretary, Kenya, and representing the Africa Clean Air Programme (ACAP), called for “mainstreaming air quality management into national policies, providing funding for youth-led initiatives, and fostering strategic partnerships to leverage organisational strengths.” Speakers also encouraged



Participants at the Pan-African Network for Detection of Air quality (PANDA) workshop



High-level panel on partnerships for clean air featuring policymakers from Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, and The Gambia

alignment of air quality actions with the aspirations of Africa's Agenda 2063 and the global sustainable development goals.

Siya Mkhize, the President of the National Association for Clean Air (NACA) in South Africa, provided an overview of the evolution of South Africa's air quality framework and the perspective of NACA in advancing open science and engaging with government and other key stakeholders in air quality. Ongoing programs on improving air quality data governance and uptake, including Afri-SET, GEOHealth Hub East Africa, AirQo, and EPIC Air Quality Fund also shared experiences. Available evidence on the health effects of air pollution in Africa was also discussed, including the opportunity for leveraging available health datasets such as surveillance datasets, Demographic Health Surveys (DHS) and existing longitudinal cohorts.

The concluding high-level panel on the final day featured policymakers from Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and The Gambia, offering a clear call for strategic and timely evidence-based action towards clean air. Dr Akwankwash Barirega, the Executive Director of the National Environment Management Authority of Uganda, called for investment in research and transboundary

cooperation, noting, "Economic development can only happen when you invest in research that is relevant to safeguard the health and well-being of people. Without data, there is no way you can make informed policies and decisions. With that in mind, there is an urgent need to translate the data into information that can easily be absorbed by policymakers, private sectors, and citizens." Another key highlight was the need for collaboration and co-learning, which was emphasized throughout the event, with Dr. Tunde Ajayi, Lagos State Environmental Agency, Nigeria, urging all to "collaborate, don't compete".

In line with the event's theme, the event was supported by a number of partner organisations, including Clean Air Fund, Ricardo and AirGradient. Other event partners included the National Association for Clean Air South Africa, UrbanBetter, Climate and Clean Air Coalition and GEOHealth Hub East Africa. Others, including the program committee of more than 20 experts from more than nine countries, also donated time to develop the program agenda, review abstracts, and moderate sessions and panels. This was the first time that an open call for sessions and abstracts was issued; 36 session proposals and more than 100 abstracts were received. A Clean Air Journal Special Issue is now planned for publication to highlight work presented at the CLEAN-Air Forum.

This year's forum also marked the launch of a renewed vision for AfriCAN. Since its launch in 2023, the network has been promoting transdisciplinary collaborations on clean air, bridging the science-policy pathways, and contextualising learnings on clean air actions.

Overall, the third CLEAN-Air Forum 2025 generated strong momentum for future action and sparked ideas for collaboration and regional engagement. In 2026, we look forward to welcoming delegates to Pretoria, South Africa, for the fourth edition of the forum, and welcome partners to join us in planning the event.