

# Summary of Better Air Quality Africa (BAQ) Conference

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# Better Air Quality Africa (BAQ) Conference

- Purpose: To raise awareness and develop a framework for action to address growing urban air pollution in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).
- Organizers: UNEP, World Bank, APINA, USAID and USEPA
- Held: July 2006 at UNEP- Nairobi

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- Background:
  - SSA is urbanizing at the highest rate of any region of the world
  - Urban air quality deteriorating
  - Affecting people's health, particularly:
    - Children
    - Poor
    - Elderly
    - Those who live and work on the roadside

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- **Format:**
  - Training Session
  - Policy Session
  - Ministerial Session
  
- **Participants:**
  - Over 200 participants from across SSA representing governments, industry, non-governmental organizations and others
  - 27 Ministers of Environment, 1 Deputy Minister and 15 Heads of Delegation attended

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## – Findings on vehicles

- Vehicle use growing
- Imported older vehicles without functioning catalyts
  - In many cases, catalyst poisoned from leaded gasoline
- Studies and anecdotal evidence indicate vehicles are primary sources of air pollution in African cities

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## – Findings on fuels

- Lead has now been phased out of gasoline
- SSA has high levels of sulfur in fuels which prevents the effective functioning of cleaner vehicles technologies
- Costs and benefits for upgrading refineries need to be clarified, although all studies conducted elsewhere show that benefits far outweigh costs

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- Recommendations on vehicles:
  - Promote use of catalytic converters and vehicle maintenance
  - Address importation of older polluting vehicles
  - Encourage vehicle inspection and maintenance
  - Consider innovative approaches such as Bus Rapid Transit

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- Recommendations on fuels:
  - “Systems approach” necessary to get largest health and environmental benefits
  - Need to harmonize fuel specifications in SSA
  - Need to move to lower sulfur fuels
    - Three step process recommended:
      - Agree to achievable levels on sub-regional basis
      - 500 ppm
      - 50 ppm

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- Next Steps:
  - Sub-regional workshops in East, West, Central and Southern Africa to develop concrete action plans to improve urban air quality
    - Fuels and vehicles will be key elements
  - First Sub-regional workshop planned for East Africa, possibly in June/July 2007