

## Concept Note

Air pollution is a major problem that affects millions of people worldwide. Nine out of ten people in the world breathe polluted air which is causing about 7 million premature deaths annually globally. Rapid economic growth, population migration towards urban areas, and inadequate controls have led to degradation of ambient air quality, particularly in cities of developing countries like India. More than 75-80% of Indian cities violate the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS); 122 cities are classified as non-attainment cities. In order to address the issue of air pollution, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India has launched the National Clean Air Program (NCAP) in January 2019, with the intent of 20-30% reduction in PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations by 2024 with the base year as 2017. The 2020-21 report of the finance commission recommended the grant of ₹4,400 crore to initiate actions listed in the NCAP. However, despite several initiatives of central, state and city governments, air pollution has remained as a major challenge in India. In view of the enormity of the issue and latest actions taken, a thematic session in the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2023 is being organized with support from Bloomberg Philanthropies to discuss future air quality scenarios for developing countries like India. The session will have speakers of national and international repute discussing the key bottlenecks in effectively managing air quality in cities.

### Guiding Questions

- Can India learn and customize solutions from international experience?
- What are challenges being faced for implementation of NCAP and how can the program is further strengthened?
- What are ways to ensure effective utilization of allocated funds for control of air pollution?
- Plans for phase-2 of NCAP or clean air mission?
- Key success story/ best practices that can be replicated in other Indian cities.
- How are the funds allocated in XV Finance commissions utilized and what are challenges faced?
- Is the state planning for air shed management?
- Key policy wins at the state and central level.
- With growth on one hand, and pollution control plans on the other, where are we heading to in terms of future air quality in developing countries like India?

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