



## **Press Release**

### **Clearing the Air: Improving Air Quality in Mumbai**

**Mumbai, 31st January 2023:** Mumbai First hosted a closed-door expert consultation on the issue of degrading Air Quality Index (AQI) in Mumbai themed “Clearing the Air: Improving Air Quality in Mumbai”, where the focus was laid on the actionable solutions for better assessment and improvement of Mumbai's current air quality.

The consultation aimed to bring together a diverse group of experts from various fields such as air pollution, health, urban planning, and sustainability, to collaborate on finding practical and effective solutions to improve air quality in Mumbai.

Some of the key recommendations included:

1. Mumbai has a Graded Response Action Plan in place which has to be implemented by the BMC at the ward level.
2. When Air Quality hits the mark of poor/severe, the BMC must address citizens on a weekly basis and announce the action it is taking under the Graded Response Action Plan.
3. Create a task force with top officials from all governing authorities in Mumbai - including environment and health departments, for seamless and rapid action.
4. Authorities like BMC, MMRDA and MPCB need to work together to regulate construction sites, ensure sprinklers are in place and impose penalties on offenders.
5. Micro-level solutions - each locality has its own hotspots like waste burning sites, traffic junctions etc. that have high AQI. Action needs to be taken at the ward level to curb these activities.

The session was moderated by Mr Sanjay Ubale, Treasurer and Executive Board Member of Mumbai First.

**The Transport Commissioner of Maharashtra, Mr. Vivek Bhimanwar** stated that Maharashtra currently leads in the usage of Electric Vehicles (EVs) in the country. Various incentives such as exemption from taxes till year 2025, providing adequate infrastructure for charging stations etc. to motivate consumers to shift to using EVs have been introduced. The GoI, on 18th January, released the Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facility (RVSF) under which the government vehicles which have been in use for more than 15 years would be scrapped to reduce the overall emissions in the environment and since then over 6000 old cars have been discarded in Maharashtra.

**Meteorologist and Founder-Director of SAFAR, Dr. Gufran Beig** highlighted that Mumbai has lost its natural advantages of wind patterns, resulting in dust particles remaining into the air. More comprehensive winds prediction to be undertaken in order to mitigate/regulate/divert potential environmental risks. Additionally, implementation of strict norms should be undertaken sincerely at construction sites and sources of debris at such sites should be regulated.

**Dr. V. M. Motghare, Joint Director Air Pollution Control, MPCB** stated that the Graded Response Action Plan for Mumbai has been introduced and approved for implementation in Mumbai city. The plan shall help the officials in identifying and controlling air pollution post a certain level of degradation of air quality. Additionally, hotspot identification for the micro-level understanding of sources of pollution has been undertaken by the MPCB for better monitoring.

**Dr Ajay Deshpande, Professor at the Ashank Desai Center for Policy Studies, IIT Mumbai** pointed out that there is an urgent need for capacity building at the local level - at the ward level, where the ward officer will have to be trained to understand what should be done immediately in order to understand the complexity of the issues and act on the ground level. Policy interventions shall be helpful only if the officials at the very basic levels are trained adequately.

**Dr. Amita Athawale, Professor & Head, MD (TB and Chest) at KEM Hospital** stated that the inflow of patients with respiratory/pulmonary diseases as a result of degraded AQI in Mumbai shall be categorised under **Public Health Emergency** only if the trend of lower AQI persists for longer time and statistically adds into more health hazards. Having said this, it is equally important to bring in citizen participation to identify, analyse and validate the solutions with respect to SWM, waste burning and other activities.

### **About Mumbai First-**

[Mumbai First](#) is an initiative of the corporate world. With its unique model of public-private participation, it was set up by India's industry leaders 25 years ago. The Tata's, Mahindra's, Reliance, Godrej, ICICI, Asian Paints, and HDFC are a few of the patrons of this organisation which has worked with the Union and State Governments, MCGM, MMRDA, etc. as a nonpartisan body able to engage civil society, professionals, and captains of industry. Mumbai First is to transform the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) into an integrated world-class urban conurbation centred around the city of Mumbai, with a vibrant economy and a globally comparable quality of life for its citizens.

### **External experts present:**

Dr. Gufran Beig, Founder Director, SAFAR

Mr. Vivek Bhimanwar, IAS, Transport Commissioner

Dr. V. M. Motghare, Joint Director Air Pollution Control, MPCB

Dr. Ajay Deshpande, Ashank Desai Centre for Policy Studies, IIT Mumbai

Dr. Amita Athawale, Professor & Head, MD (TB and Chest), KEM Hospital.

Mr. Debi Goenka, Executive Trustee, Conservation Action Trust

Ms. Richa Pinto, Special Correspondent, TOI

Mr. A.K.Jain, Chairman ERAF  
Dr. Krishna Lalla, Director ERAF  
Ms. Aditi Mukund, Kubernein Initiative  
Dr. Subhas Lalla, Rtd IAS  
Ms. Zahida Banatwalla, Agni  
Ms. Jennifer, Agni  
Ms. Rasika Nachankar, Waatavaran Org.  
Ms. Shruti Panchal, Waatavaran Org.

**Mumbai First Team:**

Mr. Narinder Nayar Chairman, Mumbai First  
Mr. Ashank Desai, Vice Chairman, Mumbai First  
Mr Roger Pereira, Vice Chairman, Mumbai First  
Mr Sanjay Ubale, Treasurer, Mumbai First  
Ms Radhika Nath, Executive Board Member, Mumbai First  
Ms Nandini Dias, Governing Board Member, Mumbai First  
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