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## **UN report suggests environmental measures that could save millions of lives**



Implementing cost-effective measures would help reduce black carbon, methane and ozone emissions

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More than two million lives can be saved each year by implementing the cost-effective measures presented in a United Nations report released today, which would help reduce black carbon, methane and ozone emissions.

The [report](#), issued by the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)), provides a package of 16 measures that could not only save some 2.5 million lives each year but also avoid crop losses amounting to 32 million tons annually, and help keep the global temperature rise below the two degree Celsius target over the next 40 years.

The measures target emissions of black carbon, methane and ground-level ozone, also known as short-lived climate forcers (SLCFs), and their implementation would allow countries to save rather than spend resources and money. This is in part because a lot of measures allow for gases to be harvested as a source of clean fuel. report warns that quick and decisive action from governments is needed so that the measures can have an impact before it is too late

Suggested measures include cutting black carbon emissions by replacing inefficient cook stoves and brick ovens, which would cut fuel costs for households and oven operators, and upgrading wastewater treatment works to reduce methane emissions and improve sanitation and water quality.

But the report warns that quick and decisive action from governments is needed so that the measures can have an impact before it is too late.

Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director [said](#) the report provides the analysis on SLCFs that governments require “to achieve some remarkable gains in terms of a transition to a low-emission, resource-efficient green economy over the near term.”

Mr. Steiner stressed that different countries could take advantage of the measures in various ways.

“For some countries the most important benefits result from cost-effective improvements in air pollution and reduced illness and loss of life – black carbon, for example, could be controlled under national and regional air quality agreements,” he said. “Other countries are also recognizing the food security benefits in terms of reduced crop damage in a world of seven billion people.

“For others, it may be the regional and global climate benefits that are uppermost in their minds – whatever the motivation, this report presents the costs and the benefits that can play their part towards a sustainable 21st century as governments head towards Rio+20 [UN conference on sustainable development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro] in June next year.”

The 16 measures identified in the report are divided into four categories, based on their cost. All of them have been tried and tested to varying levels in different countries, allowing for expansion and adaptation in new regions. For example, most European countries have already banned the burning of agricultural wastes, and more efficient cook stoves are being introduced in West Africa, China and India, providing an opportunity to introduce and spread these technologies to other countries.

The report also outlines national, regional and global actions that can accelerate the reduction of SLCFs. At a national level it outlines strategies that range from tax incentives and regulation to public education and subsidies or loans to switch to more efficient technologies.

Recommendations at a regional and global level include controlling pollutants such as black carbon under regional air quality agreements, and supporting international treaties, such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)).

The global conference of parties to the UNFCCC kicks off on Monday in Durban, South Africa.

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