Press Release

Urgent need to address air pollution through Private Public Partnership: IMA

*International Meet on Combating Air Pollution commences to take place on March 10-11th in New Delhi*

*Globally, an estimated 24% of the burden of disease and 23% of all deaths can be attributed to environmental factors.*

**New Delhi, March 10, 2017:** The International Meet on combating air pollution will be held in Delhi on March 10 & 11 2017 to address the global burden of air pollution.

The environment is the most important social determinant of health, causing morbidity and mortality in a given population. Further, globally, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) deaths, attributable to air pollution, are amounting to 8.2 million of the total 12.6 million deaths.

The Global Burden of Disease (2010) data showed that household air pollution was ranked at the 3rd position and ambient air pollution at the 9th position among the leading risk factors that contribute to morbidity and disability adjusted life years (DALYs). Air pollution has witnessed a dramatic upsurge since the last two years, in 2015 the Annual PM 2.5 level of Delhi was 220 μg/m³ while the safe levels for PM according to the WHO’s air quality guidelines are 20 μg/m³ (annual mean) for PM₁₀ and 10 μg/m³ (annual mean) for PM₂.₅.

**Shri Anil Madhav Dave,** Hon’ble Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of India applauded the initiative and said, “The strategy for pollution control should involve reinforced measures at three main levels- tackling of the pollutants, controlling the pollution at source and identifying polluted areas. A holistic strategy will be an optimal combination of these three steps”.

**“Dr Ketan Desai, President, World Medical Association,** added, “There is a urgent need for body like Indian Medical Association and other CMAAO countries to address the problem of air pollution in India with the objectives of creating awareness on the burden of health effects of air pollution, discussing main sources of air pollution in India (source apportioning), facilitating the mitigation of the health impacts of air pollution through private public partnership and finally examining.
preparedness and capacities of respective ministry to address the problem of air pollution emanating from development driven activities”.

Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA, stated that, “NCDs, such as cardiovascular diseases including stroke, cancers and chronic respiratory disease, now claim nearly two-thirds of the total deaths caused by unhealthy environments. Air pollution needs to be addressed in right earnest. Air Pollution is the leading cause of mortality and disability in Indian settings and there is a need to reduce sources of emissions, improve access to clean fuel and raise public awareness on health effects of air pollution. Inefficient cooking methods using solid fuels like wood, charcoal, coal, dung, crop wastes lead to indoor air pollution especially in houses that are poorly ventilated. Indoor air pollution leads to not only health effects but also has adverse social and environmental effects.”

Clearly, it is a major public health issue; the following data may help emphasize:

- Each 10 mcg/m³ increase in PM 2.5 levels can increase the chances of death from heart disease by 1.76 times and each decrease in PM 2.5 levels by 10 mcg/m³ life can increase life expectancy by 0.77 year.
- For every increase of 10 μg/m³ in PM₁₀, the lung cancer rate rises by 22% and for PM 2.5 by 36%.
- Asthma is linked to high NO₂ levels and bronchitis is linked to high levels of SO₂. A PM <2.5 reduction of 6.8 mcg/m³ can decrease asthma prevalence by 15.4% and a median reduction in NO₂ of 4.9 parts per billion can decrease asthma prevalence by 10 percent.
- By reducing particulate matter (PM₁₀) pollution from 70 to 20 micrograms per cubic metre (μg/m³), air pollution-related deaths could be reduced by roughly 15%.

There is emerging evidence which suggests that household air pollution in developing countries may also increase the risk conditions such as: low birth-weight and perinatal mortality (still births and deaths in the first week of life), asthma, otitis media (middle ear infection) and other acute upper respiratory infections, tuberculosis, nasopharyngeal cancer, laryngeal cancer and cervical cancer.

Dr Yoshitake Yokokura, President of JMA and President-elect of WMA and Dr Mari Michinaga, Executive Board Member of JMA and Secretary General of CMAAO, in a joint statement said, “Exposure to poor quality air is now an inescapable part of urban life throughout the globe. Air pollution is no longer just a public nuisance but a grave health problem and a threat to many environmentally sensitive areas on the worldwide. Clearly, everyone stands to benefit from an international collaboration in this regard”.

Shri Ajay Narayan Jha, Secretary, IAS, Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate change, Govt. of India further said, “We have come a long way in our fight for cleaner air, despite major setbacks. However, there is still a long way ahead and the goal can only be achieved through continuous
dedicated efforts of the pollution control agencies, commitment of the polluters and due participation of public.”

**Shri Chandrakar Bharti, IAS Secretary, Environment, GNCTD** added, “India is the first country, to have provided a provision for environmental protection in its constitution. The constitution casts a duty on the State for taking steps for protection and improvement of the environment and also makes obligatory on every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment. It is time for us to revisit these moral duties.”

Several distinguished dignitaries will be present including Dr. A B Akolkar Member Secretary, CPCB, GoI, Dr. Ravi Wankhedkar, National President (Elect), IMA; Dr A Marthanda Pillai, Past National President, IMA and Dr P K Sharma, MOH, NDMC.

**The following measures might go a long way in the fight against air pollution:**

- **Understand the concept of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle:**
  Do not throw away items that are of no use to you. In-fact reuse them for some other purpose. For e.g. you can use old jars to store cereals or pulses.

- **Emphasis on clean energy resources:**
  Clean energy technologies like solar, wind and geothermal are on high these days. Governments of various countries have been providing grants to consumers who are interested in installing solar panels for their home. This will go a long way to curb air pollution.

- **Use energy efficient devices:**
  CFL lights consume less electricity as against their counterparts. They live longer, consume less electricity, lower electricity bills and also help you to reduce pollution by consuming less energy.

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**About IMA:** Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

**For further information please contact:**
Sanjeev Khanna - 9871079105
Md Adib Ahmad – 9873716235
Mediaimah2@gmail.com
IMA Public & Media Advocacy Cell