

Panel: Pakistan and India: Tackling Air Pollution Together

Lahore and Delhi rank high in the list of cities most affected by air pollution today. ‘Each November in the past two years, the level of particle pollution considered most harmful to human health has spiked to more than 30 times the limit prescribed by the World Health Organisation’ (Slater 2017). ‘The air in [both cities] remains hazy and dirty throughout the winter months’ (Ibid.). The Indian government has a new action plan in place, while Pakistan is trying to catch up with a Smog Commission that has recently announced its findings. ‘The smog that blankets northern India, and neighbouring Pakistani cities like Lahore, each winter is a toxic mix of car exhaust, construction dust and industrial emissions that settles over the region as wind speeds and temperatures drop’ (Ibid.). In addition, there is smoke from crop burning. ‘According to a government-sponsored study, stubble burning contributed as much’ as 50 per cent to the smog on certain days during the ‘burning season’ (Ibid.).

This panel will try to tackle the smog issue with experts from Lahore (Pakistan) and New Delhi (India) and discuss what experts from both countries can jointly do going ahead. The idea is for the experts to learn from each other so that their learning curve is much steeper as Delhi has been actively dealing with smog issues much longer than Lahore.

Note: The Heinrich Boll Foundation and SDPI will help organise the event with the active participation of the Lahore Conservation Society.

Reference

Slater, J. 2017, ‘India is Trying to Prevent Apocalyptic Air Pollution. Step 1: Stop Farmers from Burning their Fields’, *The Washington Post*, 15 October, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/india-is-trying-to-prevent-apocalyptic-air-pollution-step-1-stop-farmers-from-burning-their-fields/2018/10/15/79d3fd52-cb20-11e8-ad0a-0e01efba3cc1_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.e948d86fbb3f> [Accessed 18 October 2018].

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