

Global panel on pollution, health launched

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A global commission on pollution, health and development has been launched to help push concrete action on toxic pollution that stares at the developing world.

The commission launched at the fourth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM4) in Geneva in Switzerland last week, would help provide world leaders a complete picture of the pollution burden.

The commission brings together former heads of state, leaders, a nobel laureate, economists and scientists to address the global crisis of life-threatening toxic pollution.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, a former Environment and Forest Minister, is also part of the commission.

"The Commission aims to give world leaders a complete picture of the burden that pollution places on individuals and countries to help them justify concrete action.

"The commission report will be published next year in 'The Lancet', one of the world's widely read medical journals," a statement said.

Ramesh while agreeing for need for a global commission said that pollution was an "enormous" burden while its health impacts are large.

"Pollution is such an enormous problem. We really have to come to grips with it. In my country, we are dealing with it in all sectors of society. The health impacts are so large and far-reaching, it just breaks your heart," he said.

The Global Commission on Pollution, Health and Development is an initiative of The Lancet, the Global Alliance on Health and Pollution (GAHP), and the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, with input and coordination from the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank.

The Commission aims not just to inform the public dialogue and increase awareness but to reduce poverty, illness and death caused by toxic pollution and building healthy, prosperous economies.

The Commission's goal is to lay the foundation for solving the global pollution problem by defining pollution's many effects on health, economics and development and then presenting these data to world leaders to raise the priority of pollution control in the international development agenda.

"We need to dispel the myth that pollution is inevitable. In fact, pollution is a problem that can be solved in our lifetime," said Richard Fuller, President, Pure Earth, which serves as Secretariat of the Global Alliance on Health and Pollution.