

The logo for the New York City Bar, featuring the text "NEW YORK CITY BAR" in a serif font, centered between two horizontal blue bars.

NEW YORK
CITY BAR

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Mr. Nikhil Seth
Director, Division for Sustainable Development
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations Secretariat Building
405 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017, USA
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Dear Mr. Seth:

The Association of the Bar of the City of New York believes it is critical that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) incorporate ambitious targets and substantial support for the reduction of toxic pollution. If the global community takes strong action to reduce this insidious and widespread problem, the health, environmental and economic benefits are sure to be great.

In poor countries the problem truly is an emergency. The Global Alliance on Health and Pollution (GAHP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and other prominent bodies have assessed the voluminous scientific data on pollution. The consensus based on these data is that toxic pollution is a highly serious public health problem. Indeed, GAHP calculates, based on WHO data, that toxic pollution is the most serious cause of death in the developing world.

Much of this pollution is traceable to global economic activities, yet roughly 94% of the burden of contaminated air, water, soil, food and products falls on poor countries. These countries are not equipped to deal with the problem of toxic pollution and its human and environmental impacts. If this crisis continues unaddressed, it will only grow and continue to have severe consequences for public health and sustainable economic growth. However, a serious effort to address the problem will incentivize innovations and efficiencies that will generate positive health effects and quality-of-life improvements throughout the world.

The United Nations Resolution of July 27, 2012 endorsed the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The Future We Want" (the "Outcome Document"), which underlined the pollution problem. The section of the Outcome Document relating to Water and Sanitation (paragraph 124) stresses the importance of new measures to reduce water pollution significantly; the section relating to Health and Population (paragraph 141) recognized that reducing air, water and chemical pollution will lead to improvements in health; the section relating to the Oceans and Seas (paragraph 163) noted that the health of

relating to Water and Sanitation (paragraph 124) stresses the importance of new measures to reduce water pollution significantly; the section relating to Health and Population (paragraph 141) recognized that reducing air, water and chemical pollution will lead to improvements in health; the section relating to the Oceans and Seas (paragraph 163) noted that the health of oceans and marine biodiversity are negatively affected by marine pollution. The Outcome Document reaffirms the commitment to address the persistent challenges related to sustainable development and underscores that sustainable development requires concrete and urgent action to reduce pollution.

The Association agrees wholeheartedly with the GAHP that removing this obstacle to sustainable development and global public health management must be included in the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically, the Sustainable Development Goals should mandate reduction in all types of pollution in air, water, soil, food and household products. The Health SDGs should have a sub-goal to address pollution and other environmental determinants of health. Targets should be established to reduce exposures significantly for all types of pollution and, in this regard, GAHP's proposed target of 50% or more is a widely regarded benchmark that should be given strong consideration. Other SDGs also should reference pollution, as pollution affects many aspects of sustainable development.

We urge you to take strong action to make this a priority.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debra L. Raskin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Debra" being the most prominent part.

Debra L. Raskin