

## **Activity 3: Air Quality Event Briefing for the Environmental Minister**

Being able to communicate air quality information to government officials is an important skill. In this activity, you will have the opportunity to practice giving a briefing to the Environmental Minister on an air quality situation that is occurring in your country.

Working in groups of 5-6 participants, prepare a 5-minute briefing on the hypothetical air quality scenario described below. Be sure to keep your briefing short and to the point. Each participant should play a different role in the briefing. Examples of possible roles to play are listed below. When everyone is ready, participants will give their briefings to the entire group so we can all learn from each other.

### **Air Quality Scenario:**

There are approximately 4,000 buses operating in the capital city, the majority of which are 10 to 20 years old. These old buses are responsible for approximately 75% of the total  $PM_{10}$  emissions from mobile sources in the capital city, and they contribute significantly to ambient  $PM_{2.5}$  concentrations as well. The annual health costs in the capital city associated with emissions from buses is estimated to be on the order of US\$50 million to US\$100 million, according to a study being conducted by the Environmental Ministry. Monitor measurements in the capital city indicate that average  $PM_{2.5}$  concentrations were in the Code Orange range on the AQI scale for several months in the past year, which is considered “unsatisfactory” or “hazardous for sensitive groups” air quality.  $PM_{2.5}$  concentrations typically peak in April and May, when bus emissions combine with smoke from agricultural burning and there is little rain to “wash out” pollutants from the air. The Environmental Ministry has received many complaints from citizens recently about the thick black smoke from the buses. People who live near roads are suffering from respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, such as asthma, and they are blaming it on the bus emissions. The dry season is coming up, when  $PM_{2.5}$  concentrations are expected to be at their peak. What can the Environmental Ministry do to reduce  $PM_{2.5}$  concentrations in the capital city?

### **Things to Consider for your Briefing:**

- What are the impacts of  $PM_{2.5}$  on public health? What groups are most vulnerable?
- What are your recommendations to the Minister regarding:
  - Actions the government can take to help lower particle pollution levels from the buses
  - The best ways to communicate information about the air quality situation to residents (i.e., television, radio, newspaper, internet)?

### **Possible Roles to Play:**

- Environmental Minister
- Air quality staff from Environmental Ministry
- Transportation Ministry staff
- Health Ministry staff
- Journalists
- Bus owners