

**UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme under the Multilateral Fund****Cairo Ministerial Meeting Links Climate Change and Ozone Solutions**

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CAIRO/NAIROBI, 24 November 1998 - Ministers and government experts from over 100 countries have gathered in Cairo to strengthen international efforts to reverse the destruction of the Earth's protective ozone layer.

The Tenth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer is taking place just weeks after scientists reported the largest Antarctic ozone "hole" ever recorded - equal to an area of 26 million square kilometers, or more than 25 times the size of Egypt.

For the first time, the Parties are tackling the challenge of how to make policies to protect the ozone layer consistent with ongoing efforts to reduce emissions of the greenhouse gases that cause climate change. Several gases that are being used as ozone-safe replacements for CFCs - notably hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and perfluorocarbons (PFCs) - contribute to global warming and so are targeted for reduction under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol.

Another link is that global warming may slow the ozone layer's healing process because scientists believe that the warming of the atmosphere near the ground will cause the stratosphere to become even colder. Based on a recommendation by its Working Group last July, the Meeting of the Parties agreed on a process for coordinating the work of the scientific and technology and economic assessment panels on ozone with similar panels and committees linked to the Climate Change Convention.

"For the first time we are seeing the emergence of an integrated approach to the global atmosphere", said Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). "We need to ensure that the scientific and policy responses underlying the two most important agreements on the global atmosphere - the Montreal Protocol and the Kyoto Protocol - are mutually supportive and fully coordinated".

Some ten days ago, the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, meeting in Buenos Aires, adopted similar decisions calling for cooperation with the ozone treaty.

Another key outcome from Cairo will be strengthened measures to close down CFC production facilities. In a related meeting here last week, the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund noted the completion of a technical audit of production facilities for ozone-depleting substances in China and India. The Committee will shortly promote new projects to start phasing out such production facilities.

In addition, just before the meeting, ten donors pledged a special contribution of \$19 million to shut down Russian CFC and halon production factories by the year 2000.

The Meeting of the Parties is also reviewing the problem of noncompliance with the Montreal Protocol on the part of eight countries. Members of the former Soviet Union, these countries have been unable to meet their phase-out schedules due to their recent transition to market economies. The Parties will recommend that the Global Environment Facility continue to assist these countries while cautioning them that stricter measures will be imposed if they do not adhere to their new benchmarks for phase-out.

Another challenge facing the Protocol is that a number of new substances (namely Chlorobromomethane, n-propylbromide and Halon-1202) have the potential to be marketed as replacements for stronger ozone-depleting substances controlled under the Protocol even though they themselves have some ozone-depleting potential. The Meeting will ask its Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP), Science Assessment Panel and Legal Drafting Group to explore this issue and report back next year on how to prevent such new substances from being marketed in the future.

Terms of reference are being agreed for a study on the levels of replenishment of the Multilateral Fund for the three-year period 2000-2. The Fund was established in 1990 to pay the agreed incremental costs incurred by developing countries in phasing out ozone-depleting substances. It has thus far approved some \$850 million in support of projects to phase out 117,000 tonnes of CFC consumption, equal to 60% of developing country consumption.

While atmospheric concentrations of CFCs have started to decline as a result of emissions controls, concentrations of halons have continued to increase due to halons' long atmospheric lifetime and releases from fire extinguishers. The Meeting will therefore recommend the adoption of national management strategies for reducing halon emissions.

The Meeting is also recommending new measures to limit the export of new and used products and equipment that require CFCs or other controlled substances (e.g. refrigerators). Acknowledging the widespread nature of this problem, the Parties are recommending that each country identify the items it does not want to be imported. A list of these will be maintained by the Secretariat and communicated to all Parties on a regular basis.

Associated meetings of the Working Group and the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund preceded the 23-24 November Meeting of the Parties. Some 500 government officials, experts and members of non-governmental organizations have participated, including up to 40 ministers.

Under the 1987 Montreal Protocol, governments have agreed to phase out CFCs, halons and other chemicals that destroy ozone in the stratosphere, which is essential for shielding humans, plants and animals from the damaging effects of ultraviolet light.

Scientists predict that the ozone layer will start to recover in the near future and will fully recover some time in the 21st century - but only if the Protocol continues to be vigorously enforced.

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Official documents and other materials are available on the Internet at www.unep.org/ozone/ or www.unep.ch/ozone/.

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