



UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme under the Multilateral Fund



HIGH-LEVEL MEETING BRINGS COMPLIANCE WITH MONTREAL PROTOCOL WITHIN SIGHT FOR CENTRAL ASIAN AND CAUCASUS REGION

UNEP News Release. For information only. Not an official record.

PARIS/NAIROBI, 3 May 2000 - Environment Ministers and High Level Officials from eight countries in the Central Asian and Caucasian region met on 28 and 29 April 2000 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, to discuss immediate measures to enable compliance with the provisions of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

The meeting was organized by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and hosted by the Government of Kazakhstan. Present were the Environment Ministers of Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan and Turkmenistan, along with High-level officials from Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and Uzbekistan. The meeting was also attended by representatives of UNEP DTIE and Ozone Secretariat of UNEP, UNDP, GEF and Multilateral Fund Secretariats. On the top of the agenda were regional cooperation and specific national activities.

The Central Asian and Caucasian region, though suffering from political and economic upheavals following independence from the former USSR, has become a global focus due to its vast natural resources and potential for further development.

The Environment Ministers from these countries are taking a lead in planning for sustainable development. Ozone Layer depletion has already been identified as a priority for the region. These countries are among 27 'Countries with Economies in Transition' (CEIT) in the former Soviet Bloc and Eastern Europe, which have unique conditions affecting their compliance under the Montreal Protocol.

The meeting considered the status of compliance with the Montreal Protocol in each of the countries and drew up a blueprint of actions to end the situation of noncompliance at the latest by the year 2002 - 8 years ahead of the schedule for developing countries.

The participants noted the remarkable progress already made by CEIT countries in phasing out ODS, with a 90% decrease in consumption and production since 1986. Successful national activities, such as institutional strengthening, public awareness, training activities, the establishment of licensing systems and projects to phase-out CFCs in refrigeration in Azerbaijan and Georgia were cited as excellent examples to other countries in the region who are beginning the implementation of their country programmes.

Krygystan, the last nonparty in the whole of the CEIT region, indicated that they had completed the internal ratification process of the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol and would soon submit the instrument of ratification to United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The Ministers attending the meeting stressed the importance of close cooperation between the countries in areas such as prevention of illegal trade in ozone depleting substances (ODS) and sharing experiences of project implementation activities, in order to ensure swift compliance with the Montreal Protocol. They also acknowledged the importance of achieving synergies with other environmental conventions, in particular the convention on climate change.

"The protection of the ozone layer depends crucially on compliance by all countries with all the control measures of the Montreal Protocol. I welcome the dedication of Central Asian and Caucasian Countries in this regard and the assistance given by the Global Environment Facility and the Multilateral Fund to these countries" commented Klaus Töpfer, UNEP's Executive Director.

For further information on this meeting, please contact:

Mr. Rajendra Shende, Chief UNEP DTIE Energy and OzonAction Unit, Tour Mirabeau, 39-43 quai Andre Citroen, Paris 75739 Cedex 15, France or Tel: (33.1)44.37.14.50, Fax: (33.1) 44.37.14.74, email: ozonaction@unep.fr.

Or: Mr. Nelson Sabogal, Senior Scientific Affairs Officer, Ozone Secretariat, P.O. Box 30552,

Nairobi, Kenya ; Tel: 254 2 623 856 ; Fax: 254 2 623 913

Note to journalists

About the Montreal Protocol: The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer is the international environmental agreement that has galvanized global cooperation to protect the stratospheric ozone layer. The Protocol, signed by 24 countries in 1987, has been ratified by 173 Governments as of March 2000.

A number of ozone-depleting substances (chlorofluorocarbons, carbon tetrachloride, methyl chloroform and halons) have already been phased out in developed countries, except for about 10,000 tonnes for essential uses.

Over 85% of the consumption of CFCs has been phased out so far and almost total phase out will be achieved by the year 2010.

Recent years have seen record thinning of the ozone layer, including an ever-large ozone "hole" over Antarctica and the large depletion in the Arctic. Scientists predict that the ozone layer will start to recover in the near future and will fully recover in the middle of the 21st century, if the Montreal Protocol is fully implemented.

The next meetings of the Montreal Protocol will take place in Geneva, the 20th Open-ended Working Group from 11-13 July 2000 and the 12th Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol will be held in Ouagadougou, Burkino Faso, from 11-15 December 2000.

For more information please visit the Home Pages of the Ozone Secretariat and UNEP DTIE at the following addresses: <http://www.unep.org/ozone> and <http://www.uneptie.org/ozone/home.html>

UNEP News Release 00/52

[Back to the Press Releases page](#)

About the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics

The mission of the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics is to help decision-makers in government, local authorities and industry develop and adopt policies and practices that:

- are cleaner and safer;
- make efficient use of natural resources;
- ensure adequate management of chemicals;
- incorporate environmental costs;
- reduce pollution and risks for humans and the environment.

The UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (UNEP DTIE), with its head office in Paris, is composed of one centre and four units:

- **The International Environmental Technology Centre (Osaka)**, which promotes the adoption and use of environmentally sound technologies with a focus on the environmental management of cities and freshwater basins, in developing countries and countries in transition.
- **Production and Consumption (Paris)**, which fosters the development of cleaner and safer production and consumption patterns that lead to increased efficiency in the use of natural resources and reductions in pollution.
- **Chemicals (Geneva)**, which promotes sustainable development by catalyzing global actions and building national capacities for the sound management of chemicals and the improvement of chemical safety worldwide, with a priority on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and Prior Informed Consent (PIC, jointly with FAO).
- **Energy and OzonAction (Paris)**, which supports the phase-out of ozone depleting

substances in developing countries and countries with economies in transition and promotes good management practices and use of energy, with a focus on atmospheric impacts. The UNEP/RISØ Collaborating Centre on Energy and Environment supports the work of the Unit.

- **Economics and Trade (Geneva)**, which promotes the use and application of assessment and incentive tools for environmental policy and helps improve the understanding of linkages between trade and environment and the role of financial institutions in promoting sustainable development.

UNEP DTIE activities focus on raising awareness, improving the transfer of information, building capacity, fostering technology cooperation, partnerships and transfer, improving understanding of environmental impacts of trade issues, promoting integration of environmental considerations into economic policies and catalyzing global chemical safety.

[Back to the Press Releases page](#)

