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### UNEP Encourages Public-Private Partnership to Tackle Illegal Trade in Ozone-Depleting Substances



Bangkok, March 1, 2004 - A new alliance has been forged to tackle the environmental crime of illegal trade in ozone-depleting substances (ODS), following a meeting last week of governments, international agencies, chemical producers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The illegal trade in ODS, principally chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), has emerged as a significant global problem during the past few years, especially in Asia. While much equipment still exists in the region that is reliant on CFCs, countries have committed to reduce consumption and production of CFCs in line with the phase-out schedule dictated by the Montreal Protocol. This has led to growing smuggling of these chemicals to satisfy demand from users, which has hampered the take-up of alternative chemicals.

"Unified international efforts will be the key to the prevention of the environmental crime related to the trade in ODS", said Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in a message to participants.

The Workshop on Preventing Illegal Trade: Public Private Partnership, which concluded on Friday in Hua Hin, Thailand, was organised by UNEP's Compliance Assistance Programme of OzonAction in the Regional Office of Asia and Pacific and for the first time brought together industry and government representatives from China, India, the European Union and Russia (which now no longer produces CFCs) as well as World Bank, and the NGOs Environmental Investigation Agency and Stockholm Environment Institute.

The two day meeting considered the problems being caused in Asia by a burgeoning illegal trade in ODS. The participants - representing 85 percent of total global CFC production - committed themselves to greater cooperation and transparency in sharing information and intelligence to combat this problem.

Mr. N. Dayal, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India facilitated a session on case studies of illegal trade: "We are encouraged by the cooperation from producing and consuming countries in this final phase of the implementation of the Montreal Protocol. But we are also looking for participation from brokers dealing in these chemicals and from those countries which have a significant transit trade in CFCs in the region," he said.

The meeting - part of UNEP's activities to implement the Montreal Protocol under the Multilateral Fund - recommended a system of informal information exchange between countries, specific actions on tackling illegal trade, and follow-up bilateral and regional initiatives. For more information please contact:

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