



## UNEP and Grassroots Organizations Launch Innovative Initiative to Protect the Ozone Layer



Paris/Nairobi, February, 2001 – The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and representatives of 10 environmental and agricultural non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from across the globe convened in Paris on 26 and 27 February 2001 to launch a joint initiative that will raise awareness in 10 developing countries about the hazardous ozone-depleting pesticide methyl bromide.

"I strongly believe that this meeting has given us a great deal of hope in identifying environmentally and economically sound alternatives for Zambian farmers," said Lovemore Simwanda, Director of the Environmental Conservation Association of Zambia. "This is a unique partnership between UNEP and local organizations that allows us to reach and educate local farmers and take action on this toxic pesticide."

UNEP's Methyl Bromide Communication Programme is the first project under the Montreal Protocol where funds have been provided to utilize the expertise of NGOs in phasing out ozone-depleting chemicals. At the meeting, NGOs developed strategies for reaching farmers and other pesticide users, including organizing workshops with farmers, meeting with government officials and developing press strategies. These organizations will now carry out the communication programmes in their countries based on the strategies and recommendations agreed to at this meeting.

"UNEP is pleased to be working in close partnership with NGOs to promote the phase out of methyl bromide and the adoption of alternatives," said Jacqueline Aloisi de Larderel, Director of UNEP's Division of Technology, Economics and Industry. "By leveraging NGOs' expertise in grassroots organizing, these awareness-raising activities will play an important role in helping countries achieve the 2002 freeze and phase-out requirements for methyl bromide."

The NGOs participating in the meeting reiterated their strong commitment to environmental protection, especially to protecting the ozone layer by focusing their work on the phase out of methyl bromide. The meeting allowed the groups to share their expertise and develop strategies for implementing their national communication programme. Participants included representatives from 10 methyl bromide-consuming countries: Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Philippines, Thailand, Zambia and Zimbabwe. A representative from UNIDO participated in the meeting to present information on projects demonstrating alternatives to methyl bromide.

The meeting was jointly organized by the United Nations Environment Programme Division of Technology, Industry and the Environment (UNEP DTIE) Energy and OzonAction Unit and Pesticide Action Network North America (PANNA).

For more information, please visit UNEP's Web Site at:  
[www.uneptie.org/ozat/mbrpartnership/home.htm](http://www.uneptie.org/ozat/mbrpartnership/home.htm)

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### Background

Methyl bromide is a highly toxic, ozone-depleting fumigant used in agriculture to grow such crops as tomatoes, cut flowers and strawberries, for pest control in structures and stored commodities and for quarantine and pre-shipment treatments. UNEP's Methyl Bromide Technical Options Committee has identified alternatives for the vast majority of current uses and many of these are already used successfully around the world. Recognizing its threat to the ozone layer, the Parties to the Montreal Protocol agreed in 1997 to a global phase-out schedule for methyl bromide. This schedule requires that developed countries phase out by 2005 and developing countries freeze methyl bromide consumption by 2002 with a 20% reduction in 2005 and a phase out by 2015. About the UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme This activity is part of the information exchange services provided by UNEP to developing countries to help them meet their methyl bromide phase-out obligations under the Montreal Protocol. The OzonAction

Programme is implementing a range of technical and policy assistance activities to support the methyl bromide phase out and the transition to alternatives. UNEP provides other clearinghouse services (Training & Networking of ODS Officers) as well as assistance with the development of national ODS phase-out strategies (Country Programmes) and Institutional Strengthening support.

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For further details on the work done by the OzonAction Programme, visit the OzonAction Programme web site at: [www.unepdtie.org/ozonaction.html](http://www.unepdtie.org/ozonaction.html).

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**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 co-operation, partnerships and transfer, improving understanding of environmental impacts of trade issues, promoting integration of environmental considerations into economic policies and catalyzing global chemical safety.

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