



Pacific Island Countries Launch Actions to Save the Ozone Layer

Nasinu, Fiji/Nairobi, March 2001 - Fiji has become the first country in the Pacific Islands to launch serious actions to protect the stratospheric Ozone Layer. At a training session at Nasinu for its 30 refrigeration technicians, the government launched an island-wide training programme to reduce the emission of life threatening ozone-depleting substances. Furthermore, Fiji has committed itself to phase-out such chemicals well ahead of the phase-out schedule of 2010 set by the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, probably by the end of 2002. With financial support from the Multilateral Fund it is well on target.

Held from 5–9 March, the "Train the Trainers" session was organized by the OzonAction Programme of UNEP DTIE in co-operation with the Government of Republic of Fiji. The Australian Institute of Refrigeration, Air-conditioning and Heat (AIRAH) conducted the training at the Fiji National Training Council in Nasinu. The training provided participants with the necessary skills to use good practices during servicing of ODS containing equipment thereby reducing emissions of ODS.

During the opening address, Fiji's Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Environment, Mr. Rishi Ram, stressed "the importance of close cooperation between the countries in the region in areas such as training of technicians and sharing experiences on project implementation activities". He also acknowledged the importance of achieving synergies with other environmental conventions for monitoring the movement of non-environmental products.

The Department of Environment of Fiji together with these Trainers will be holding more workshops to continue the training programme in future.

The Pacific Island Countries (PICs) region has become a global focus for actions on the environment because of the threat to their very existence due to global warming. Though the Montreal Protocol does not aim at reducing greenhouse gases, PICs are demonstrating their commitment through proactive input and setting examples for the climate change convention. Fiji's contribution to the total assessment consumption of Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) is only 13 tonnes (1999) as compared to about 150,000 tonnes consumed annually all over the world today. However, it is used for critical applications such as food preservation.

The Nasinu training session will be followed by the Regional Compliance Action Workshop on the Montreal Protocol on in Western Samoa from 24-26 April 2001, where 14 Pacific Island countries will participate. The regional workshop will be co- organized by South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP DTIE).

The Montreal Protocol is an international environmental agreement that obligates the Party countries to phase out within a stipulated time schedule their use of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) that are harmful to human and animal life.

For further information on this workshop please contact:

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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 world-wide, 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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