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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY
FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE OZONE LAYER**
16 September 2002

Life started to develop significantly on our planet only after the ozone layer was in place in the stratosphere to filter out harmful levels of sunlight. The battle to repair this life-sustaining system is far from over.

The scientific assessment carried out this year concluded that although some ozone-depleting agents in the atmosphere are declining slowly from the peak that occurred in 1992-1994, others are still on the increase. Scientists predict that the ozone layer will remain particularly vulnerable during the next decade or so, even if all countries comply with the measures put in place by the Montreal Protocol to control and phase out ozone-depleting substances. Failure to comply with the Protocol would delay and could even prevent the ozone layer's future recovery.

The success achieved so far in reducing the production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances in industrial countries should give us hope that we will complete this task in developed and developing countries alike. I urge all countries to meet their commitments under the Protocol, and in particular the industrialized countries to continue providing the financial and other assistance that will help the developing countries to do so.

This year's observance of the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer falls immediately after the World Summit on Sustainable Development. As the world now turns to implementing the agreements reached in Johannesburg, let us not lose sight of the need to remain vigilant in protecting the ozone layer.

Kofi A. Annan

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