

The Beijing Amendment to the Montreal Protocol Enters into Force

Nairobi, 14 December 2001 - It follows the ratification by more than 20 governments of The Beijing Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

Under the amendment, countries have agreed to monitor the consumption and production of bromochloromethane which is an industrial solvent and a fire extinguisher under the name Halon-1011.

The new controls mean that nations will gain a better understanding of the precise quantities of this substance being used and manufactured around the globe.

The amendment, which was adopted at the Eleventh Meeting of the Parties in Beijing on 3 December 1999 and which is now due to enter into force on 25 February 2002, also brings in new trade rules for Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs).

These were developed as replacements for the far more damaging and banned Chlorofluorocarbons which are better known as CFCs. HCFCs are primarily used in fridges as coolants.

The new trade rules will ban imports and exports of HCFCs between countries who have not ratified the previous Copenhagen amendment which was agreed in 1992.

Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), said: "The coming into force of the Beijing Amendment sends a strong signal that countries are committed to protecting and restoring the ozone layer which shields life on Earth from harmful levels of ultra violet light".

" It shows that nations are fully behind efforts to enforce the Montreal Protocol, the treaty to which the Beijing Amendment is linked. 20 countries is the minimum needed to bring it into force. However, I urge all nations to ratify as a sign of solidarity with the global effort to protect the ozone layer".

Notes to Editors: The Beijing Amendment establishes a new ban on trade of imports and exports in HCFCs with countries that have not yet ratified the Protocol's Copenhagen Amendment and extends controls to the production of HCFCs. It also add controls on a new substance, bromochloromethane, which has an ozone-depleting potential of 0.12 and is supposed to be phased out in 2002.

The Beijing Amendment has, so far, been ratified by the following countries chronological order- Chile, Gabon, Luxembourg, Jordan, Canada, Czech Republic, Palau, New Zealand, Finland, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Samoa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Burundi, Congo, Malaysia, Netherlands, Germany, Sao Tome and Principe, Togo, Federated States of Micronesia and Norway.

The full text of the Beijing Amendment is available at the web site of the Ozone Secretariat, at the following address: <http://www.unep.org/ozone/Handbook2000.shtml>

The primary purpose of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and its Amendments is to phase-out both production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances (ODS) according to the schedule provided in the Protocol in order to protect human health and the environment.

The Beijing Amendment, the fourth of such Amendments since the original Montreal Protocol was concluded on 16 September 1987, should have entered into force on 1 January 2001 provided that at least twenty instruments of ratification had been deposited by states or regional economic integration organizations that are Parties to the Montreal Protocol.

This condition was not fulfilled until 27 November 2001, when the required twenty ratifications were achieved. The Beijing Amendment is now expected to enter into force on the ninetieth day following the deposit of the twentieth instrument of ratification.i.e. 25 February 2002.

CFCs have an ozone depleting potential or ODS of 1. Bromochloromethane and HCFCs have an ODS of 0.12 giving them 12 per cent of the damaging potential of CFCs.

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