

Iraq moves forward on ozone protection

Friday 10 July 2009 - Iraq's country strategy to eliminate ozone-depleting substances is on track after being approved at the 58th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol.

Iraq wants to eliminate ozone depleting substances (ODS) such as CFCs from its refrigeration and foam industries by 1 January 2010 in accordance with the target set under the Montreal Protocol, an international treaty set up to protect the ozone layer.

The Multilateral Fund will provide Iraq with almost US \$6.3 million to finance its plans to phase-out CFCs, halons, carbon tetrachloride and trichloroethane. UNEP and UNIDO, the Multilateral Fund's implementing agencies, will work together with the Government of Iraq and Iraqi enterprises and will discuss the choice of replacement technologies to explore whether new ozone friendly technologies with additional climate benefits can be utilized in order to make the finance Iraq receives work on two environmental protection fronts.

During their meeting, Executive Committee members commended the commitment of the Government of Iraq which became a Party to the Montreal Protocol only in June 2008. Iraq has made colossal strides towards achieving compliance with the 2010 Montreal Protocol deadline despite the difficult circumstances prevailing in the country.

The Executive Committee applauded the assistance and guidance provided to the Government of Iraq by UNEP and UNIDO. The work of the agencies led to Iraq's ratification of the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol and all its amendments in 2008, the establishment of a system to monitor trade in ODS, and the preparation of the national ODS elimination plan for Iraq. Due to security restrictions staff from UNEP and UNIDO were unable to enter Iraq and so instead the agencies worked with national Iraqi experts in workshops and meetings outside Iraq in nearby countries.

Iraq is also working on plans to reduce its consumption of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) commonly used in air-conditioning appliances, in accordance with the Montreal Protocol's accelerated phase-out schedule agreed in 2007. In 2008 Iraq received finance from the Multilateral Fund to prepare a plan to address the freeze the consumption of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFC) in 2013 and reduce consumption by 2015 and expects to submit a full HCFC phase-out management plan to the Executive Committee in 2009.

Notes to Editors:

The Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol began its operation in 1991. The main objective of the Multilateral Fund is to assist developing country parties to the Montreal Protocol whose annual per capita consumption and production of ozone-depleting substances is less than 0.3 kg to comply with the control measures of the Protocol. These countries are referred to as Article 5 countries.

The Fund is managed by an Executive Committee chaired in 2009 by Mr. Husamuddin Ahmadzaiof Sweden. The Committee is assisted by the Fund Secretariat which is based in Montreal. Activities are implemented by four international agencies (UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, World Bank) and a number of bilateral implementing agencies of donor countries. Responsibility for overseeing the operation of the Fund rests with the Executive Committee comprising seven members each from Article 5 countries (China, Dominican Republic, Gabon, Namibia and Yemen in 2009) and non-Article 5 countries (Australia, Belgium, Germany, Japan, Romania, Sweden and the USA in 2009). Since 1991, the Multilateral Fund has approved activities including industrial conversion, technical assistance, training and capacity building worth over US \$2.3 billion.

For more information please contact:

Julia Anne Dearing

Information Management Officer

Multilateral Fund Secretariat


1800 McGill College, 27th floor

Montreal, QC, Canada H3A 3J6

Phone: or

Email: secretariat@unmfs.org

Website: www.multilateralfund.org

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