

**UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme under the Multilateral Fund****UNEP Launches New Initiative to Assist Developing Countries Phase Out Ozone Depleting Substances**

UNEP News Release 1999

NAIROBI, 30 March 1999 - The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) announced today that it is launching a major initiative, which will help developing countries phase out ozone-depleting substances (ODS). This initiative, launched in Montreal at the 27th meeting of the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer, comprises a number of steps which will significantly reduce the use of Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) around the world.

The Committee unanimously approved UNEP's US\$ 7 million business plan, which will step up assistance to developing countries to enable them to meet their obligations under the Montreal Protocol. The Committee also agreed to give US\$ 30 million to CFC-reduction projects in developing countries. To date, more than US\$ 900 million have been allocated to such projects.

This decision could not have been more appropriate, as 1999 is a landmark in the history of the Protocol. It is the year when the grace period given to developing countries to start phasing out CFCs comes to an end.

Of note is the Committee's decision to approve, at a cost of US\$ 150 million, the closure, over the next 10 years, of all CFC-producing facilities in China - the largest producer of this substance in the world. This project also includes implementation by UNEP of a policy-setting training programme for all local environmental protection bodies.

The Committee also approved the innovative approaches for the terminal phase out plans for the Bahamas, Malaysia and Thailand - three countries, which are preparing themselves to phase out ODS earlier than the timeline stipulated in the Montreal Protocol.

"These critical decisions made by the Committee give a clear signal to all industries, which are using CFCs to quickly convert to alternatives", says UNEP's Executive Director, Mr. Klaus Töpfer. "It also raises the need to ensure that refrigerators and other CFC-based equipment shall be able to be serviced without CFCs".

While the programmes of countries which consume large amounts of CFCs are well underway, the programme for countries which have low volume consumption (LVC) needs to be intensified. Plans for legislation and regulation systems are being implemented by LVCs through the committed participation of governments, technicians and consumers. UNEP through its OzonAction Programme is assisting more than 25 small countries in preparing and implementing such plans.

The Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol has also developed and supported innovative approaches of Refrigerant Management Plans where LVCs follow the integrated strategy of containment of leakage, conservation and recycling of CFCs.

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