



Press Releases/Information Notes



INFORMATION NOTE

Remembering Our Future: Commemorating the End of Production of Ozone Depleting Chemicals

8 April 2005. Paris, France. For the first time ever, factories that produce chemicals that damage the Earth's protective ozone layer are being closed under a multilateral environmental agreement (MEA). Future generations should recognise and be inspired by this extraordinary action happening today. A unique new global initiative called "Remembering Our Future" to mark such sites worldwide where the manufacturing facilities for ozone depleting substances have been permanently closed has been launched by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) OzonAction Programme.

Ozone depleting substances (ODS) are being phased out under the international treaty known as the Montreal Protocol. Countries are closing these plants thanks to assistance provided by the Protocol's Multilateral Fund. Such closures send strong messages to the public and companies that use these chemicals that there will soon be significant restrictions in supplies of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons worldwide following the completion of agreements to close the production facilities, and countries should be prepared so that their industries are not caught unaware.

The first launch of "Remembering Our Future" was held in a special ceremony on 7 March in New Delhi, where UNEP, the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) of India and a private company, SRF Limited, gathered to mark the closure of a plant that used to produce halons.

The marker was unveiled by Mr. A. Raja, Union Minister for Environment and Forests, Dr. Pradipto Ghosh, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF), Government of India, Mr. Arun Bharat Ram, Chairman, SRF Limited, India and Mr. Rajendra Shende, Head of the UNEP DTIE OzonAction Branch at a commemorative ceremony in New Delhi. It will be displayed at the former plant site in Bhiwadi, Rajasthan. This marker initiative is part of UNEP's awareness-raising activities under the Communication Strategy for Global Compliance with the Montreal Protocol.

"Once upon a time, there was a plant on this site that produced halons. For the benefit of future generations, this production facility was shut down." the plaque reads. The closure of this plant was supported by the World Bank with funds from the Multilateral Fund from the Montreal Protocol and demonstrates India's continued commitment to complete ODS phase out under the Montreal Protocol. Mr. A. Raja said that he was delighted that India has once more passed an important milestone in the implementation of the Montreal Protocol. "The phase out of ODS production is not easy for India, but to realize and sustain the Montreal Protocol, we need to strike a balance between our domestic needs and our international commitments. We are proud to contribute to the global efforts to protect the ozone layer", Mr. Raja said.

The World Bank stressed that without the cooperation of the private sector, this endeavour would not have succeeded. "This shows that the private sector will take tough business decisions - such as this plant closure - when provided with the right package of incentives. It also underlines that the global supply of ozone depleting substances is dwindling." stated Mr. Steve Gorman from the World Bank.

Mr. Shende of UNEP DTIE said about the marker "Closing a plant and stopping halon production is real and tangible proof that there are actions behind the words. The Multilateral Fund, the Implementing Agency, the Government of India, and this enterprise are taking effective and concerted actions to protect our global environment"

For more information:

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Notes for the Press:

When released into the environment, halons destroy ozone in the protective layer of Earth's upper atmosphere that protects human, animal and plant life from the dangerous effects of solar ultraviolet radiation. Halons are controlled under the Montreal Protocol, and their production and consumption are being eliminated worldwide according to a strict timetable.

India is a signatory to the Montreal Protocol and has been actively working on projects to phase out production and consumption of ODS. To date, India has received technical and financial assistance from the Multilateral Fund amounting to more than US\$ 120 million. A producer of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), carbon tetrachloride (CTC), methyl bromide and hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), India has already discontinued halon production with Multilateral Fund assistance. The country is now in the process of phasing out CFCs and CTC under the Multilateral Fund.

Indian industry continues to play a proactive role in complementing national ODS phase out efforts. In May 2002, the four CFC producers in India had signed a voluntary pledge where they have reiterated their commitment to environment and are expected to undertake activities "over and beyond Montreal Protocol and CFC phase out". They are, as a part of their commitment, assessing how they can work on projects for mitigating climate change.

As the Implementing Agency with the global mandate for sharing information, facilitating communication and creating awareness, UNEP has created this marker initiative as The concept for the initiative emerged in 2003 during discussions between the UNEP Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP) and the Government of India Ozone Cell (Ministry of Environment and Forests). UNEP will eventually extend the marker initiative to other facilities and countries. The initiative is limited to ODS production closure in Article 5 countries. Currently, ODS production (CFCs, CTC, halons) is limited to 7 developing countries, of which the majority of production is concentrated in India, China, DPR Korea and Republic of Korea (a few developed countries also produce ODS to meet the basic domestic needs of the developing countries and for metered dose inhalers). All seven countries (except Venezuela) have reached an agreement with the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol for gradual reduction and eventual elimination of production of these substances.

About the Multilateral Fund:

The Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol was established in 1991 with a main objective of assisting developing country parties to the Montreal Protocol to comply with the control measures of the treaty. It is well on its way to achieving this goal: the Fund's Executive Committee has approved the expenditure of over US\$ 1.5 billion, to support over 4,300 projects and activities in 134 developing countries to be implemented through the four implementing agencies (UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO and the World Bank) and by bilateral agencies. The implementation of these projects will result in the phase-out of the consumption of more than 173,000 ODP tonnes and the production of about 62,200 ODP tonnes of ozone depleting substances. Of this total, about 127,890 ODP tonnes consumption and 52,260 production have already been phased out from projects approved through 2003.

About the UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme

This commemorative programme is part of the clearinghouse function provided by UNEP to developing countries to help them meet their obligations under the Montreal Protocol. The OzonAction Programme also provides other services (training and Networking of ODS Officers) as well as assistance with the development of national ODS phase out strategies (Country Programmes) and Institutional Strengthening support. For more information: <http://www.uneptie.org/ozonaction>



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