



United Nations Environment Programme

برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة • 联合国环境规划署
PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT • PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE
ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

INFORMATION NOTE

UNEP-backed SolarChill Vaccine Fridge wins Environmental Pioneer Award

Paris, 9 October 2006 – An innovative new solar-powered refrigeration technology developed by an alliance of seven international organisations, NGOs and the private sector has won the prestigious 2006 Cooling Industry Awards in the category “Environmental Pioneer” for refrigeration. The SolarChill Vaccine Cooler & Refrigerator Project will enable vaccines to be stored in locations that lack an adequate electricity supply and thereby directly help improve the health of children in developing countries.

The SolarChill partners are the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Greenpeace International, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organisation (WHO), GTZ Proklima, Programmes for Appropriate Technologies in Health (PATH) and the Danish Technological Institute. Over the last six years, the partnership has developed a versatile refrigeration technology that operates on solar energy; uses environmentally-safe refrigerants, bypasses the use of lead batteries, and can also be plugged into the electricity grid. SolarChill is applicable for emergency relief in natural or human made disaster zones. It has been field-tested in Cuba, Indonesia and Senegal.

Mr. Rajendra Shende, Head of UNEP's OzonAction Branch, remarked that “Receiving the Cooling Industry Awards is an important statement by industry leaders in refrigeration and air conditioning that they recognize the importance, innovation and societal benefits of SolarChill. UNEP and the other partners would like to thank the organizers and the jury panel members for this award.” Organized annually by RAC magazine in the United Kingdom, the Cooling Industry Awards recognize developments of new technology and approaches that protect the environment and make commercial sense. The SolarChill Project was one of 12 winners, alongside some of the world's biggest retailers, major end users, and refrigeration professionals.

Successful public health programmes rely on a supply of high-quality vaccines that need continuous cooling to remain effective. Many regions in the world with non-existent, inadequate or intermittent electricity supply cannot provide the required constant refrigeration, known as the 'cold chain', resulting in millions of dollars of spoiled vaccines each year, or in a total absence of vaccination programs. SolarChill will help remedy this.

The SolarChill technology is publicly-owned and will soon be freely available for any company in the world interested in producing the units. Once it receives WHO approval, the Partners will work with interested refrigerator manufacturers, Ministries of Health and Environment, foundations and others to have it commercialized and deployed across the globe.

The SolarChill Project is a multi-partner, public-private initiative contributes to the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, specifically reducing child mortality, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for sustainability.

SolarChill addresses environmental concerns about existing kerosene and battery-powered solar fridges, and is designed to provide a more reliable, safer and cleaner form of refrigeration than kerosene refrigerators. It improves on existing solar-vaccine cooling technology by avoiding the use of conventional lead batteries, which have proven to be a major obstacle to the uptake of solar technology in developing countries. Moreover, SolarChill does not use any ozone depleting substances (e.g. CFCs or HCFCs) or global warming gases (e.g. HFCs) which contribute to ozone depletion and climate change.

For more information, please contact:

Mr Jim Curlin, Information Manager - OzonAction Programme, UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, Tour Mirabeau, 39-43, quai Andre Citroen, 75739 Paris Cedex 15, France, Tel: +33-1-44371459, Fax: +33-1-44371474, e-mail: rmshende@unep.fr, www.unep.fr/ozonaction. For further details about SolarChill, please visit <http://www.solarchill.org>. For information about the Cooling Industry Awards, please visit <http://www.coolingindustryawards.com/winners.asp>