

Military Enlisted to Combat Climate Change and Ozone Layer Damage

8th Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention and 20th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol

Doha/Nairobi, 20 November 2008--The military is being deployed to help save the ozone layer and to fight global warming under a unique partnership between the United Nations, national governments and several armed forces it was announced today.

Military personnel from Australia, the Netherlands and the United States are offering to assist countries in the safe collection of stockpiles and banks of unwanted, ozone-damaging substances.

The military experts will also give support and advice on the shipping, labeling and other logistical procedures needed to 'fast-track' the chemicals to disposal centers in various parts of the globe.

The 'partnership' could dramatically cut the costs of the disposal of chemicals such as Hydrofluorocarbons (HCFCs) and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) to a third or less of the current market cost.

Many armed forces have existing, competitively priced contracts already in place for destroying ozone-damaging chemicals found as gases and foams in old military air-conditioning units and other kinds of army, navy and air force equipment.

It is hoped that by joining forces, civilian destruction programmes will be able to benefit from these low cost contracts making them cheaper and more attractive to undertake.

News of the initiative comes as over 150 are meeting in Doha, Qatar for the 8th Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention and 20th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer.

Well over 90 per cent of chemicals that damage the ozone layer—the thin, high flying layer of gas that filters out the sun's harmful rays—have been phased-out.

But this means that significant quantities are stockpiled in old equipment and banked in existing devices which will soon come to the end of their life.

The conference in Doha has been told that releases from these sources could add to both ozone depletion and climate change because many of these substances are also potent greenhouse gases.

Without action to safely remove and destroy these chemicals experts fear that by 2015 releases equivalent to several billion tones of CO₂ could occur.

Marco Gonzalez, Executive Secretary of the UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) Ozone Secretariat, said:" The military in many countries have been at the forefront of efforts to phase-out ozone depleting substances—their experience can be invaluable for developing countries facing similar challenges”.

The new initiative, which will make use of technical experts in the military already on the ground, brings together a wide range of organizations and countries and is being spearheaded by the US Environmental Protection Agency and the US Department of Defence.

Notes to Editors

Partnership Overview

This partnership has a two pronged “Start and Strengthen” approach to support collection and destruction: 1) Sharing of information and 2) Consulting on logistics.

Better Treaty Coordination. The UNEP Ozone Secretariat has agreed to act as coordinator with the Basel Convention Secretariat and other conventions to ensure the transport of unwanted ozone depleting substances to countries with destruction facilities is correctly permitted. This activity itself will be helpful because it will streamline the desirable shipments of chemicals to proper destruction facilities.

Public Relations. Local military authorities will have the desirable experience of working with local environmental authorities, helping with state and community relations on other environmental issues faced at overseas bases.

More Efficient and Cost-Effective Waste Management. The partnership will coordinate an international “clearinghouse” to match supply with demand by connecting countries requiring ODS destruction to those having proper destruction facilities available. They will make every effort to minimize transport distances and maximize effectiveness. By having a global clearinghouse, small quantities can be aggregated for maximum destruction cost-effectiveness.

Partners

Argentina Ministry of the Environment

Australia Department of Defence

Australia Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

Federated States of Micronesia Ministry of Environment

Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development (IGSD)

International Network for Environmental Compliance & Enforcement (INECE)

Mauritius Ministry of Environment

Netherlands Halon Bank Association

Netherlands Ministry of Defence

United Nations Development Programme

United Nations Environment Programme

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

United States Department of Defense

United States Environmental Protection Agency

Quotes by Some of the Partners

“The military’s leadership shown by these partners will earn the praise of environmentalists and compliance officials from around the world,” said **Durwood Zaelke**, President of the Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development (IGSD), and Director of the International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (INECE), a network of 4,000 environmental authorities in more than 150 countries. “Protecting the earth against climate change is an environmental security campaign that we all support.”

“Argentina is proud to be one of the leaders promoting the climate benefits of the Montreal Protocol, and we welcome the opportunity to work with the technical logistics experts from the militaries of the world to continue these efforts to realize benefits for both the climate system and the ozone layer,” said **Romina Picolotti**, Secretary of Environment for Argentina. “Our goal is to be first to benefit from this assistance to achieve the highest possible ozone and climate benefits at affordable cost. Once again, Argentina wants to continue demonstrating through our actions that developing countries are willing to take on their fair share of climate responsibility when technology and financing are available.”

“The United States is committed to actions under the Montreal Protocol for the benefit of the global climate system and fragile ozone layer,” said **James L. Connaughton**, Chairman, US Council on Environmental Quality. “Experts who responsibly manage military ozone-depleting substances can transfer that know-how throughout the world to recover and destroy a significant portion of unwanted or unusable ozone-depleting substances.”

Island nations are among the most vulnerable to climate change,” said **Sateaved Seebaluck**, Permanent Secretary, Mauritius Ministry of Environment. “We must do everything possible within as well as outside the scope of the climate treaties to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as fast as we can to avoid passing the tipping points for abrupt climate changes, including sea-level rise that threatens Mauritius and all other island and coastal nations. That’s why Mauritius and Micronesia have proposed incentives for collection and destruction and why we welcome this partnership.”

“It is an honor for military logistics experts to use their considerable talent and experience to help the world protect the stratospheric ozone and climate,” said **Robert S. Thien**, US DoD ODS Program Manager. “I am confident that the United States Department of Defense and our partners can provide guidance to developing nations concerning collecting, storing/banking and someday destroying CFCs, HCFCs and other ozone-depleting substances that also threaten climate.”

“The Netherlands is proud of our national leadership in combined ODS banking for both industry and the military and pleased to share everything we know that can protect the

global environment,” said **Anton Janssen**, Head, Knowledge Centre for Occupational Safety and Health and Environment, Netherlands Ministry of Defence.” “Technical cooperation on ODS application and replacement avoids costly duplication of effort and builds trust and networks so experts can work together for the good of human society.”

“For more than a decade, experts in our Defense Logistics Agency have worked hard to perfect every detail of ODS bank management,” said **Kristen N. Taddonio**, Manager of Strategic Climate Projects, EPA Climate Protection Partnerships Division. “Military organizations know everything about putting ODS in secure long-term storage, moving ODSs to destruction facilities, and moving mobile destruction facilities to ODS.”

“Military organizations have protected the ozone layer through leadership, policy, procurement, and management,” said **K. Madhava Sarma**, Senior Expert Member, Montreal Protocol Technology and Economics Panel. He added, “With military leadership and technical expertise on ODS collection and destruction, the world is sure to succeed in preventing harmful emissions from the ODS banks.”