

**UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme under the Multilateral Fund****SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS MEET TO DEVELOP REGIONAL STRATEGY TO IMPLEMENT MONTREAL PROTOCOL****INFORMATION RELEASE**

Geneva, 17 June 1999: Eight island countries from the South Pacific held consultations today to agree upon a regional strategy to expedite implementation of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. They met in the margins of the meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol, that is being held here from 15-18 June 1999.

UNEP DTIE's OzonAction Programme initiated this project in cooperation with the Government of New Zealand and South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The regional strategy is aimed at developing and implementing a regional phase-out strategy for ozone depleting substances (ODS) in the Pacific region. It includes the following countries that are Party to the Protocol: Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa. Four countries that are not Party to the Protocol (Cook Islands, Nauru, Niue and Palau) have also expressed interest in participating in the strategy.

This is the first time that small island countries in the Pacific region have met to chalk out plans to support the implementation of the international agreement on ozone layer protection.

The economies of small island countries are dependent on fisheries and tourism, two critical economic sectors that rely on refrigeration and air-conditioning. Ozone depleting substances including chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) are commonly used in these applications.

"Though our consumption of ODS is insignificant compared to large countries, it is crucial that we phase out these substances early to ensure continuous supply of the alternatives that are essential in our fisheries and tourism industries" said Mr. Kenneth Bulehite, National Ozone Officer from the Solomon Islands.

Once country-level action plans have been developed, elements that can be implemented at the regional level in a cost-effective and expeditious manner will be identified and implemented. The regional strategy is expected to be implemented over a 3-year period.

It is expected that this programme will also assist the ratification process of the nonparty countries and their inclusion into the regional implementation plan.

Notes for the Press:About the Montreal Protocol

The Montreal Protocol on Substances that deplete the Ozone Layer is the international environmental agreement that has galvanized global cooperation to protect the stratospheric ozone layer. The Protocol was signed by 24 countries in 1987 and as of March 1997, has been ratified by 162 countries, or Parties to the Protocol.

A number of ozone-depleting substances (chlorofluorocarbons, carbon tetrachloride, methyl chloroform and halons) have already been phased out in developed countries, except for about 10,000 tonnes used as essential uses. For more information about the Montreal Protocol, visit the UNEP OzonAction Program Web Site at <http://www.uneptie.org/ozone/home.html> or the UNEP Ozone Secretariat Web Site at <http://www.unep.org/ozone>

About UNEP DTIE Energy and OzonAction Unit

Since 1991, the UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme in Paris (now renamed as Energy and OzonAction Unit) has been strengthening the capacity of governments (especially National

Ozone Units) and industry in developing countries to make informed decisions on technology and policy options that will result in cost-effective ODS phase-out activities with minimal external intervention. The Programme accomplishes this by delivering a range of need-based services, including:

Information Exchange

to enable decision makers to take informed decisions on policies and investments. Information and management tools already provided for developing countries include the OzonAction Information Clearinghouse (OAIC) diskette and World Wide Web site, a quarterly newsletter, sector-specific technical publications for identifying and selecting alternative technologies and policy guidelines.

Training and Networking

that provides platforms for exchanging experiences, developing skills, and tapping the expertise of peers and other experts in the global ozone protection community. Training and network workshops build skills for implementing and managing phase-out activities and are conducted at the regional level (support is also extended to national activities). The Programme currently operates seven regional and sub-regional Networks of ODS Officers comprising more than 80 countries, which have resulted in member countries taking early steps to implement the Montreal Protocol.

Country Programmes and Institutional Strengthening

that support the development of national ODS phase-out strategies and programmes, especially for low-volume ODS-consuming countries. The Programme currently assists 74 countries in the development of their Country Programmes and implements Institutional-Strengthening projects for 50 countries.

About UNEP DTIE

UNEP established its Industry and Environment office (now renamed as Division of Technology, Industry and Economics UNEP DTIE) in 1975 to bring industry and government together to promote environmentally sound industrial development. UNEP DTIE is located in Paris. Its goals are: 1) to encourage the incorporation of environmental criteria in industrial development plans; 2) to facilitate the implementation of procedures and principles for the protection of the environment; 3) to promote preventive environmental protection through cleaner production and other proactive approaches; 4) to stimulate the exchange of information and experience throughout the world.

To achieve these goals, UNEP DTIE has developed the following main programme elements: Accident Prevention (APELL), Cleaner Production, Energy, OzonAction, Industrial Pollution Management and Tourism. UNEP DTIE organizes conferences and seminars, undertakes training and cooperative activities backed by regular follow-up and assessment. To promote the transfer of information and the sharing of knowledge and experience, UNEP DTIE has developed three complementary tools: technical reports, the quarterly "Industry and Environment" review and a technical query-response service.

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