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\$440 Million Agreed for Phasing Out Developing Country CFCs

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BEIJING/NAIROBI, 3 December 1999 - Officials from 129 governments agreed here today on a multi-million-dollar funding package that will enable developing countries to maintain the momentum of their efforts to phase out CFCs and other ozone-depleting chemicals, as required under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

The agreed funding includes \$440 million in new contributions plus \$35,700,000 carried over from the previous period, for a total budget of \$475,700,000 for the three-year period 2000-2002.

This constitutes the fourth replenishment of the Protocol's Multilateral Fund and is in addition to some \$1 billion already spent by the Fund since 1991 on reducing the production and use of CFCs and other harmful substances in over 110 developing countries. The funds are used to support the adoption of more ozone-friendly technologies for refrigerators, air conditioners and other consumer products and industrial processes.

"Phasing out CFCs in developing countries is by far the most important next step in protecting the ozone layer", said Mr. K. Madhava Sarma, Executive Secretary of the ozone treaties. "We need to maintain this momentum and build on it if we are to ensure the eventual recovery of the stratospheric ozone layer".

Under the Protocol, developing countries are to freeze their CFC and halon emissions at average 1995-97 levels during the 12-month period that began on 1 July 1999. They must then cut back rapidly to 50 per cent by the year 2005 and fully phase out by 2010. Developed countries phased out the use of these chemicals almost completely in 1996, although Russia and several others have experienced delays in meeting their deadlines.

This leaves China, the meeting's host, as the world's largest producer and consumer of CFCs and halons. Last March the Multilateral Fund's Executive Committee agreed to spend \$150 million to fund the complete closure of China's CFC production facilities over the next 10 years. Meeting again last week in Beijing just before this week's Montreal Protocol conference, the Committee adopted a similar arrangement worth \$82 million for India, the world's second largest developing-country producer and consumer of CFCs.

The Protocol meeting also adopted new controls on the production of hydrochloro-fluorocarbons (HCFCs). HCFCs were developed as the first major replacement for CFCs but, while much less destructive than CFCs, they also contribute to ozone depletion. Under the Protocol, they are to be phased out in developed countries by 2020 and in developing countries by 2040.

The new amendment will ban trade in HCFCs with countries that have not yet ratified the Protocol's 1992 Copenhagen amendment, which introduced the HCFC phase-out; this will provide an incentive to these countries to ratify as soon as possible.

It will also require developed countries to freeze the production of HCFCs in 2004 at 1989 levels (measured as the average of consumption and production levels) and developing countries to do so in 2016 with a similar baseline of 2015. Production of 15 per cent above baseline will be permitted to meet the "basic domestic needs" of developing countries. In addition, the production of bromochloromethane (a recently developed ozone-depleting chemical) is to be completely phased out in all countries by 2002. The Beijing amendment will enter into force after it has been ratified by 20 governments.

Because the chemicals industry is constantly creating new products, many governments are concerned that new ozone-depleting chemicals could be created and marketed in the future. The meeting therefore asked the Scientific Assessment Panel and the Economic Assessment Panel to develop criteria for assessing the ozone-depleting potential of any new chemicals and to explore mechanisms for facilitating cooperation with the private sector on such assessments.

Several minor adjustments to the production controls for CFCs, halons and methyl bromide were adopted, as were a number of technical decisions dealing with the use of international

customs codes, data reporting, restrictions on the use of ozone-depleting substances for laboratory use and other matters.

The meeting concluded by adopting the Beijing Declaration reaffirming the political commitment of the world's governments to accelerating the phase-out of substances that destroy the stratosphere's protective ozone layer.

The Declaration states that, despite the success so far of the Protocol, governments "cannot afford to rest on our laurels, since scientists have informed us that the ozone hole has reached record proportions and that ozone layer recovery is a long way from being achieved". The Declaration also appeals for continued efforts to "address illegal trade in ozone-depleting substances".

This week's conference, which included three days of preparatory talks followed by the 11th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol and the 5th Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention, was attended by close to 700 participants from governments and observer organizations. The 12th Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol will be held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in October 2000. It will be preceded by a preparatory meeting of the Working Group from 10-14 July in Geneva.

Under the 1987 Montreal Protocol, governments have agreed to phase out chemicals that destroy stratospheric ozone, which is essential for shielding humans, plants and animals from the damaging effects of ultraviolet light. Recent years have seen record thinning of the ozone layer, including an ever-large ozone "hole" over Antarctica. Yesterday, the European Space Agency reported that its remote sensing satellite detected abnormally low ozone levels over northwestern Europe, in some places as little as two thirds of the normal level for this time of year. Scientists predict that the ozone layer will start to recover in the near future and will fully recover some time in the 21st century - but only if the Protocol continues to be vigorously enforced.

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Official documents and other materials are available on the Internet at <http://www.unep.org/ozone> or <http://www.unep.ch/ozone>.

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