



Press Releases/Information Notes



PRESS RELEASE

New book explores role of UN Environment Programme in protecting the Earth's ozone layer

Rome, 28 November 2002 – A comprehensive new book being launched here today details the role of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in protecting the Earth's fragile ozone layer through the Montreal Protocol. *Protecting the Ozone Layer: The United Nations History*, published in London by Earthscan, is the story of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer – considered by many to be the most successful environmental treaty in the world – and of the commitment and leadership demonstrated by thousands of individuals from an astonishing variety of international organizations, governments, and professions. "The credit for crafting the Protocol rightly goes to former UNEP Executive Director Mostafa Tolba – the true inspiration for the ozone treaties – as well as to key Governments, scientists and United Nations officials," said authors Stephen O. Andersen and K. Madhava Sarma.

"The Protocol's successful implementation has been due to the dedication shown by Dr. Tolba's successors at UNEP's helm, particularly Dr. Klaus Toepfer, and by international ozone officials, government representatives, and the hundreds of scientists and technologists participating in the ozone assessment panels, industry, and nongovernmental organizations. The story of the Protocol's success is, indeed, the success of the world community in harnessing the support of so many people of such diverse backgrounds to a common cause," they said.

Stephen Andersen has been a co-chair of the UNEP Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP) for the Protocol since its inception in 1988. Madhava Sarma was a senior UNEP official and Executive Secretary of the Montreal Protocol and its parent agreement, the Vienna Convention, for more than nine years. *Protecting the Ozone Layer* tells the history of ozone science, diplomacy, technology and many other aspects of this success. In his foreword to this book, Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations observed, "for the sake of present and future generations alike, I commend this book to the widest possible readership."

The book has also earned praise from the experts as "a superbly crafted, beautifully organized and totally authoritative account" (former US ambassador and lead ozone negotiator Richard Benedick); "an amazing story, scrupulously told. A masterpiece and a must read for anyone involved in issues of global scope and importance" (Pew Center President Eileen Claussen); "exhaustively documented, consistently insightful, and carefully balanced" (Global Environment Facility CEO and Chairman Mohammed El-Ashry); and "required reading for those grappling with issues of climate change, desertification, loss of biodiversity" (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Chairman Rajendra Pachauri).

"This is the first history of a global environmental issue published by the United Nations Environment Programme," said UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer. "Disseminating the story of how the global agreements on the ozone layer became such an outstanding success should inspire the world community to tackle other global environmental problems with equal energy."

UNEP's concern for the ozone layer began in 1973 and has remained a high priority since then. During the 1970s, when only a few countries took the threat to the ozone layer seriously, UNEP and the World Meteorological Organization launched a scientific process for studying the issue. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the US also played key roles in the resulting studies.

Based on the scientific consensus that emerged, UNEP began to organize diplomatic action to protect the ozone layer. At more than 500 meetings from the 1970s to the present, UNEP has worked with stakeholders from around the world to develop and disseminate findings on ozone science, policy, and technology. UNEP coordinated the unprecedented response that led to the creation, ratification, and implementation of the Montreal Protocol. This response involved

scientists, engineers, industry, environmental organizations, and the general public, as well as international agencies, governments, and diplomats. A number of countries known collectively as the Toronto Group also helped the process enormously.

By detailing the reasons for the Montreal Protocol's success, Protecting the Ozone Layer provides a blueprint for further action to protect the Earth for future generations. According to the authors, any worldwide endeavor to achieve any objective within a specific timeframe must go through a similar process of engaging all stakeholders. Mere agreements by governments will lead nowhere without this participatory process.

Note to journalists:

Protecting the Ozone Layer: The United Nations History is available from Earthscan at www.earthscan.co.uk, www.amazon.com or in bookstores. For more information please contact Michael Williams at +41-79-409-1528 (Swiss cell phone) or michael.williams@unep.ch.

