

## WEST ASIA GETS PREPARED WHILE CFCs GET READY TO BE PART OF THE HISTORY

**Sana'a, Yemen 10<sup>th</sup> May 2007-** In just about 30 months from now the chemical plants producing CFCs in the developing countries will be shutting down their reactors for ever. Developed countries have also halted most of the production of CFCs and remaining will also be stopped by that time. CFCs will then find their place in the history books. But not the refrigeration and Air Conditioning equipment that will keep running on CFCs for years to come, till their working life expires. The challenge before the world is how to keep these large number of refrigeration equipment that still depend on CFCs running when the production of CFCs come to halt.

*'This remaining challenge we can meet only by further strengthening our regional cooperation'* said H.E. Mr. Abdul Karim Al-Arhabi, Deputy Prime Minister of Republic of Yemen during the regional celebration of 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Montreal Protocol in Sana'a, capital of Republic of Yemen. The meeting of government representatives and Ozone Officers from 11 countries in West Asia, experts, and heads of the technical and vocational institutes debated this very point and came up with the way forward. Having eliminated 85% of the Production and consumption of CFCs on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007, as per the requirement of the Montreal Protocol, the remaining 15% will have to eliminate by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010. The task is considered daunting as most of the consumption is in the servicing and maintenance of the refrigeration and air conditioning equipment, where small businesses are active and such equipment are widely dispersed in the countries like Yemen. 'All over the world 119 million of the cars with air conditioning and more than half a billion of the domestic refrigerators still depend on CFCs. 'Maintaining these equipment now will have to be done by recovering and recycling of CFCs by the trained and certified technicians to ensure that CFCs are not emitted to the atmosphere', said Rajendra Shende, Head of UNEP OzonAction.

With the vast economic improvement in the West Asia, the boom in the building industry coupled with the hot weather condition, refrigeration and air conditioning demand has skyrocketed in the last decade. This in turn has increased number of service technicians, service shops which have to be aware of the need to contain, recover and recycle CFCs. The risk of the cross boundary illegal trade due to high demand and the scarcity of CFCs are eminent. The countries are in risk of sliding into non-compliance.

'Even after the complete phase out of the production of CFCs we have to keep CFC-dependent equipment running for the years to come. That is would need complete behavior change of the consumers and also the service technicians. A need for complete overhauling and updating of the curriculum of the technical and vocational training institutes and raising awareness among the consumers of impending danger is obvious' said Mr. Gazi Odat, Advisor to the Minister of Environment of Jordan.

Considering the impending challenge over next decade, Prime Minister of Yemen, H.E. Dr. Ali Mohammed Mujawar has encouraged this first ever regional discussion and under his patronage arranged 5-days of the dialogue from 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> May 2007 on sustaining the

phase out and addressing the remaining challenges. Minister of Water and Environment, Deputy Minister of Technical Education and Vocational Training, Chairman of the Environment Protection Authority also participated in the discussion. The meeting was organized by the Regional Office of West Asia of UNEP through its Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP) Team which is also part of UNEP OzonAction Programme in cooperation with the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) of Yemen.

Participation by Deputy Minister of Environment of Iraq which is the only country in the region not yet Party to the Protocol and representatives of Palestine Authority was the highlight of the meeting. Their participation was considered to be of vital importance as these countries are in the risk of turning into a dumping ground of CFCs and CFC-filled equipment.

Good news is that all the 11 countries in the region are at present in compliance with the Montreal Protocol, thanks to countries commitment towards Montreal Protocol, financial and technical assistance from the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol and the experience exchange activities facilitated by the networking.

Enhancing the South-South cooperation, awareness raising, continued training of the refrigeration technicians and updating the curriculum of the vocational training and enforcing the Codes of Practices were considered as priority for the countries. The countries also held informal discussion on the future of the Montreal Protocol beyond 2010. The regional recommendations will now be taken up in the international meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol to be held in Nairobi in June 2007.

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**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

For more information about the recovery of the ozone layer, see the Executive Summary of “UNEP/WMO Scientific Assessment of Ozone Depletion: 2006” and UNEP’s press release at [http://ozone.unep.org/Publications/Assessment\\_Reports/](http://ozone.unep.org/Publications/Assessment_Reports/)

**UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)**

UNEP is the United Nations system’s designated entity for addressing environmental issues at the global and regional level. Its mandate is to coordinate the development of environmental policy consensus by keeping the global environment under review and

bringing emerging issues to the attention of governments and the international community for action.

The **Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer** is an international treaty designed to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the production and consumption of a number of substances believed to be responsible for ozone depletion. The treaty was opened for signature on September 16, 1987 and entered into force on January 1, 1989. Since then, it has undergone five revisions, in 1990 (London), 1992 (Copenhagen), 1995 (Vienna), 1997 (Montreal), and 1999 (Beijing). Due to its widespread adoption and implementation it has been hailed as an example of exceptional international cooperation with Kofi Annan quoted as saying it is "Perhaps the single most successful international agreement to date..."

### **About the OzonAction's Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP)**

In 2002, UNEP as an Implementing Agency of the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol made a conscious departure from the past in assisting developing countries to enable them to implement the Montreal Protocol. This departure emerges from the new context in which developing countries now operate under the compliance regime of the Protocol. The new context of compliance regime requires countries to: achieve and sustain compliance, promote a greater sense of country ownership and implement the agreed Executive Committee framework for strategic planning.

In line with this re-orientation, UNEP regionalized its OzonAction so as to make the Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP) work from 5 regions, one of which is the West Asia regional office based in the Kingdom of Bahrain, that covers 12 countries (the Mashriq sub-region (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and Syria) the Arabian Peninsula (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Yemen).

Web sites

UNEP/ROWA : [www.unep.org.bh](http://www.unep.org.bh)

UNEP DTIE OzonAction [www.unep.fr/ozonaction](http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction)

Ozone Secretariat / 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Montreal Protocol <http://www.unep.org/ozone/>

Multilateral Fund: <http://multilateralfund.org/>