

## **Sweden and UNEP Team Up to Help Developing Countries Phase Out of Ozone Depleting HCFCs**

**Paris/Stockholm 19 November 2007** - Today sees the opening of a new chapter in work of governments and international organisations to help rid the world of a group of chemicals which, besides depleting the ozone layer, are also powerful greenhouse gases.

A partnership agreement signed on 16th November between the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the United Nations Environment Programme officially launches activities to provide assistance to developing countries to help them end their reliance on hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), chemicals which were adopted as alternatives to the ozone depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), used in applications like refrigeration, air conditioning and foam blowing. UNEP OzonAction has also unveiled today a new section of its website- The HCFC Help Centre- in response to the need for policy and technology information about HCFCs and their alternatives. The new Swedish-UNEP cooperation will raise the awareness of industry and governments in developing countries about commercially-available alternatives to HCFCs and aims to convince them about the benefits of adopting such technology.

Although HCFCs have considerably lower ozone depleting potentials than CFCs, they are nonetheless harmful to the ozone layer. In addition, many HCFCs have high global warming potentials - up to 2000 times that of carbon dioxide. By supporting the replacement or avoidance of HCFCs in developing countries, the partnership will therefore contribute to protection of both the stratospheric ozone layer and the global climate system.

This announcement comes quickly on the heels of an historic agreement that was negotiated this September under the Montreal Protocol - the global treaty established in 1987 to protect the Earth's ozone layer- which accelerates the phase out of HCFCs in developing countries. That adjustment to the treaty caps production and consumption levels in developing countries by 2013 and brings forward the final phase-out date of these chemicals by ten years.

The result of the adjustment to the Montreal Protocol will mean that, as well as phasing out a major remaining ozone depleting substance, the benefits for the climate system, subject to alternatives adapted, will be considerable - preventing the release of up to the equivalent of about 25 billion metric tonnes of carbon dioxide (gigatonnes) over the coming decades, where zero or low GWP substitute technologies are adopted by countries. There is an opportunity to gain additional significant climate benefits in improved energy efficiency of replacement technologies and other improvements, increasing the cumulative climatic advantage to the equivalent of around 38 billion metric tonnes (gigatonnes) of carbon dioxide.

Dr. Husamuddin Ahmadzai, Senior Adviser, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency said: "Having phased out HCFC consumption in Sweden, to a large extent, we have the experience to share in this regard. We have been working with UNEP's OzonAction programme to develop and apply our knowledge as a platform to benefit developing and emerging countries.

Mr. Achim Steiner, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UNEP said: "This new initiative by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and UNEP is a first important step to follow up on the historic decision on HCFCs under the Montreal Protocol. That decision is binding for 191 nations around the world and from 2013 developing countries will start to take action that will have major climate and ozone layer benefits. I have no doubt that this decision will be inspiring to the delegates of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali next month where activities beyond 2012 will be negotiated."

He added: "Support provided by Sweden to UNEP to assist developing countries to jump start the HCFC phase-out will help UNEP to effectively deliver this assistance both through our office in Paris, as well as through our teams working in UNEP's Regional Offices, which can provide focused and hands-on assistance"

The HCFC Help Centre will provide links to existing information from experts in international organisations, government, industry and NGOs sources about technologies and policies related to these chemicals. Please visit [www.unep.fr/ozonaction/topics/hcfc.asp](http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/topics/hcfc.asp)

For more information, please contact:

Sweden: Dr. Husamuddin Ahmadzai, Senior Adviser, Department of Enforcement and Implementation, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, SE-106 48 Stockholm, Sweden, Tel: +46-8-698 1145, Fax: +46-8-698 1602, [www.naturvardsverket.se](http://www.naturvardsverket.se)

UNEP: Nick Nuttall, UNEP Spokesperson, on Tel: +254 20 762 3084, mobile: +254 733 632755, or e-mail: [nick.nuttall@unep.org](mailto:nick.nuttall@unep.org)

Robert Bisset, on Tel: +33 1 4437 7613, Mob: 33 6 2272 5842, e-mail: robert.bisset@unep.fr

Anne-France White, Associate Information Officer, at tel: +254 20 762 3088, or e-mail: anne-france.white@unep.org

#### NOTE TO EDITORS:

#### Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer

The Montreal Protocol is an international treaty that is successfully protecting the Earth's stratospheric ozone layer by phasing out the production and consumption of ozone depleting chemicals, including CFCs, HCFCs, halons and methyl bromide. 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).

Ozone depleting chemicals including CFCs and halon have been phased out in developed countries by 1996 except for small essential uses. By 2010, production of ozone depleting substances will be banned in developing countries. The Protocol's Multilateral Fund has financed activities to phase out of consumption and production of these chemicals in more than 140 developing nations.

Due to its achievements to date, the Protocol has been hailed as an example of exceptional international cooperation and perhaps the single most successful international agreement to date. The global community celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the signing of this ground-breaking international treaty on 16 September 2007 in Montreal, Canada.

#### Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency is the central environmental authority under the Swedish government. The agency promotes and coordinates work towards establishing stronger and broader environmental responsibility in society. No. of employees: 550

#### 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.

#### About the OzonAction Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP)

The Montreal Protocol is at an advanced stage of implementation. Developing countries now operate under a "compliance phase" which requires them to achieve and sustain compliance with specific obligations, promote a greater sense of country ownership and implement the agreed Executive Committee framework for strategic planning. In 2002, as an Implementing Agency of the Protocol's Multilateral Fund, UNEP responded to this new compliance context by changing its mode of operation and structure to better assist developing countries with the implementation of the treaty. UNEP's OzonAction Programme established a Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP) that moved from a project management approach to directly assisting countries with specific compliance challenges. The CAP is delivered through specialized staff located in four of UNEP's Regional Offices (Bangkok, Manama, Nairobi, Panama City) and in the Paris office of the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE). The CAP teams provide countries in the respective regions with policy advice, compliance guidance and conduct training to refrigeration technicians, customs officers and other relevant stakeholders, promote bilateral and multilateral cooperation and support action-oriented awareness raising.

For more information about Division of Technology, Industry and Economics and the OzonAction Programme, please go to <http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction>.

Multilateral Fund Information can be found at [http://www.multilateralfund.org/about\\_the\\_multilateral\\_fund.htm](http://www.multilateralfund.org/about_the_multilateral_fund.htm)

