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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY
FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE OZONE LAYER
New York, 16 September 2007**

The battle to repair the ozone layer represents one of the great success stories of international cooperation. Levels of ozone-damaging substances in our atmosphere are falling. And initial signs suggest that the vital shield protecting us from the sun's deadly ultraviolet radiation is regenerating.

When the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer was signed twenty years ago, it was far from certain that such a turnaround was possible. At that time, the world spewed out nearly two million tons of ozone-depleting substances annually. These chemicals were used in agriculture and in refrigeration, in pharmaceuticals as well as in furniture manufacture. Their pervasiveness led some to believe that eliminating them was both impractical and unattainable.

Twenty years later, the developed world has nearly phased out these substances. And their use in the developing world has plummeted by over 80 percent. I congratulate all Parties to the Montreal Protocol for this remarkable achievement. Their vision and commitment have translated into real gains.

Our measures against ozone depleting substances have yielded broader benefits as well. Many of these chemicals contribute to global warming. Their dramatic reduction has helped bolster measures to counter climate change.

On the 20th Anniversary of the Montreal Protocol, these developments give us reason to celebrate, but not to become complacent. Scientists are warning that the ozone layer will remain particularly vulnerable some time. State Parties must continue to implement the agreement, and ensure that the production of chlorofluorocarbons in developing countries is completely phased out by 2010, the deadline imposed by the Montreal Protocol.

On this International Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to protecting the ozone layer. And let us hope that our successful efforts on this front will inspire sustained and resolute multilateral action on the world's many other environmental problems.