



CONTINUING AND FUTURE CHALLENGES FACING THE OZONE LAYER PROTECTION EFFORT



While the Montreal Protocol has made great strides in the global effort to protect the ozone layer, the task is far from complete. The following are among the continuing challenges that the Protocol Parties still need to address before they can rest assured that the ozone layer will continue to be safe for this and future generations:

Sustaining the momentum for the total global phase-out needed to ensure protection of the ozone layer: All scientific analysis predicting the healing of the ozone layer is premised on the expectation of full compliance with the phase-outs required by the Protocol. Over the next three years, the Parties must therefore facilitate the elimination of the final 20–30 per cent of the most commonly used ozone depleting substances in developing countries in a manner that minimizes economic disruption. While support for related activities is being provided, the final phase-out of these remaining uses, which include the use of CFCs in millions of automobile air conditioners and refrigerators, will not be easy. The Parties must also address the continuing use of methyl bromide and the long term use of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) in both developed and developing countries. While many developed countries are phasing out HCFCs at a faster rate than is required by the Protocol, developing country use is growing. Current control schedules allow the production and import of HCFCs to continue until 2030 in developed countries and to 2040 in developing countries. Further, because HCFCs and some related production by-products are global warming gasses, their continued production and consumption also contribute to climate change, providing a further impetus for their expeditious elimination;

Funding: Many Parties have found that as the phase-out has progressed significantly, it is becoming increasingly difficult to get the attention of or funding from policy makers to deal with the remaining phase-out challenges. To date, most eligible developing countries have relied heavily upon funding from the Protocol's Multilateral Fund to support their phase-out efforts, and continued assistance from the Fund in the years up to and after 2010 will be important to ensuring that a high level of compliance in these countries is maintained. The essential completion of the phase-out in both developed and developing countries will require a commitment to both a continued high level of attention to the issue and continued funding.

Dealing with illegal trade and ensuring that continued use of ozone depleting substances are not diverted to illegal uses: As the continuing phase-out of ozone depleting substances further constrains their supply, the temptation to make money through illegal trade in such substances often increases; the Parties need to redouble their efforts to address this issue;

Ensuring control of new chemicals found to pose an undue threat to the ozone layer: The same creative entrepreneurial spirit that inspired the development of alternatives to ozone depleting substances may spark the invention of new substances with ozone depleting properties. The Parties must be vigilant in the testing of new chemicals, lest new ozone depleters gain a foothold in the marketplace;

Finding alternatives for remaining halon uses: While halons have been virtually phased out, some key uses (such as in airplanes and certain military applications) continue to rely on stockpiles of halons to meet continuing needs. Efforts to find alternatives for these uses must continue;

Monitoring the ozone layer to ensure that expected healing is taking place: New knowledge has recently led scientists to push back the date that they believe the ozone layer will be healed. The world community needs to continue to monitor the state of the ozone layer so that it can be confident that related risks are being addressed.