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THEME: SAVE O₃UR SKY: BE OZONE FRIENDLY

Ozone is a layer found in the stratosphere about ten to thirty kilometres above us. This layer acts as a sieve to screen out the harmful ultraviolet rays, hence protecting life on earth.

There are several chemicals used in many products like refrigerators, air conditioners, foams and fire extinguishers which deplete the ozone layer.

If the ozone layer is depleted more harmful rays will reach the earth causing diverse effects. It will cause skin cancer and eye cataracts on people. There too will be a rise in temperatures which will be a threat to plant and animal survival. Ozone Layer depletion has been observed since the eighties in antarctic where an ozone hole is formed every spring.

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) a body formed to protect the environment established two international agreements; the Vienna Convention for the Protection of Ozone Layer in 1985 and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer 1987. The aim was to eliminate the use of all chemicals that deplete the ozone layer.

Because of the looming danger we must act very fast to protect the ozone layer both as individuals groups and the government, we should refuse to buy products and appliances such as insecticides, perfumes and refrigerators which contain chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).

We should also sensitize other people on the dangers of ozone depletion and chemicals that destroy the ozone layer in schools, churches, workshops and also through the mass media.

There is need to educate the masses on chemicals that destroy the ozone layer like carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide CFCs, halons, methyl bromide, chloroform and so on.

As groups we should ensure our offices and institutions only use ozone friendly substances.

Groups should also press the governments to force industries which remit dangerous chemicals to neutralize them before releasing them to the atmosphere.

The government on its part should advise industrialists which use CFCs, to seek funds from UNEP to enable them use ozone friendly technologies.

The governments should also enforce strict rules on any individual, or groups which destroy the ozone.

Remember the time is now. This is a choice between life and death BE OZONE FRIENDLY.