

speech



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"CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY"

Speech 1998/20

Statement by

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United Nations Environment Programme

at the

Tenth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol

Cairo, 23 November 1998

You are all aware of the main conclusions of the Scientific Assessment Panel. The Scientific Panel concluded that the total abundance of the ozone depleting substances in the lower atmosphere peaked in 1994 and is now slowly declining. Total concentration of chlorine is declining. But total concentration of bromine is still increasing. This is because of halons banked in fire fighting appliances and the new production of halons in some areas of the world.

The maximum ozone depletion will occur within the current and the next two decades. The ozone layer is predicted to recover by the year 2050, if all countries fully implement the Protocol.

If there were no Montreal Protocol, the effective chlorine loading by the year 2050 would have been at least 17 parts per billion, about five times larger than today's values. This would have led to ozone depletion of at least 50 per cent at mid latitude in the Northern Hemisphere and 70 per cent at mid latitude in the Southern Hemisphere, about 10 times larger than today. The additional incidence of skin cancer cases would have been about 20 million.

The ozone hole over the Antarctic has reached an area of 26 million square kilometres. This is an area larger than all of North America. This is nearly 1/3 larger than last year and about 5 per cent larger than the last record in 1996. This year's ozone hole was unusually deep. Near the centre, virtually all the ozone is gone, destroyed by CFCs.

I have been told that, even with the full implementation of the Montreal Protocol, the total emissions over the next decade will be about 1.5 million tonnes. This takes into account the consumption by developing countries and of HCFCs and methyl bromide by all the countries. The CFCs banked in the refrigeration and foam sector, the halons banked in firefighting appliances and the essential uses will also add to the emissions of the ozone depleting chemicals.

Clearly, for the next decade, we must ensure that the implementation of the Montreal Protocol by all countries stays on course and we do not overload the stratosphere with ozone depleting substances.

Allow me to highlight the critical role played by your Assessment Panels in the success of the Protocol. Over the last ten years they have provided us with sound advice on the options available to us. They have been perceptive and objective and commanded universal respect through their independent reports.

The industrialized countries have greatly assisted the process of assessment by supporting their experts in these Panels. The budget of the Secretariat supports participation only from developing countries. I urge the industrialized countries to continue this support. While the Protocol has been a success so far, much more needs to be done, particularly in developing countries to assure the protection of the ozone layer. The support of Assessment Panels will be crucial during the next decade.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The remaining tasks are many. Firstly, the Governments have to prevent the spread

has been replaced by the obligation to comply with a series of demanding international commitments. The task for the Multilateral Fund is to assist countries effectively to meet these commitments. There must be a new focus on this essential task. There are some clear areas for action.

First and foremost, the groundbreaking work to deal with the closure of production facilities for CFCs, needs to be brought to fruition. Many forward looking countries which do not produce CFCs are looking to progress rapidly towards phase-out. It is difficult for them to make the progress they seek, when they are beset by a surplus of CFCs at some of the lowest prices ever recorded. This situation must be remedied as soon as possible and the Multilateral Fund will play a pivotal role.

The needs of countries which consume only small quantities of ozone-depleting substances, and the needs of small enterprises in larger consuming countries have also come into focus. Both these issues will require innovative thinking on the part of the entire community charged with implementing the financial mechanism.

The time frame is short. Decisions made now will determine the shape of projects implemented in the next two to three years. These projects will themselves provide the impetus to enable countries to meet future commitments, especially the fifty per cent reduction in CFCs required by the end of 2005.

The implementing agencies of the Multilateral Fund, the UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO and the World Bank have recorded steady improvement in the implementation of the projects. I thank them for their services.

From now, the implementation of the Protocol will go hand in hand with the implementation of the projects. I trust the agencies to further improve the speed of completion of projects. I appeal to the developing countries to help by simplifying their procedures further to speed up preparation, approval and completion of the phase-out projects.

I would like to compliment the Implementation Committee for their diligent work this year. The Committee analysed the data for 1996 and has pointed out non-compliance by 8 countries of the former USSR. There have been reasons to sympathize with the inability of these countries to comply in the past. But the time has come when these countries should fulfil their obligations.

GEF is assisting them generously with nearly US\$120 million so far. Our thanks are due to the Global Environment Facility for this assistance. You are also aware of the recent success of the special initiative of the World Bank to close down the production facilities of the Russian Federation. Ten donors, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, Sweden, UK and USA have agreed to give a special contribution of \$19 million to the Russian Federation for the closure. I thank the donors for their contributions. As you are aware, the production capacity of the Russian Federation accounts for nearly half of the CFC capacity in the world. This closure will also benefit many other countries to implement the provisions of the Montreal Protocol.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is very important that the NGOs continue their awareness activities until the protection of the ozone layer is ensured. New generations of officials have taken charge in many countries in various sectors. We cannot presume that they know the gravity of ozone issues and the actions needed to protect the ozone layer. Particularly, in developing countries, the citizens need to be convinced on what they can do to protect the ozone layer. We must inform and educate them on the need to recycle refrigerants, prefer ozone safe products and boycott products with CFCs. Similarly, the servicing industry needs to be educated on protecting the ozone layer.

I am pleased that UNEP and the Government of Egypt have taken up many activities to create awareness in this area. The children's painting competition is a particularly important awareness generating example. I congratulate all the winners and the participants in this competition.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The Working Group of the Parties has considered all the issues thoroughly and made sound recommendations for your consideration. I am sure you will decide, as always, in the interests of the protection of the ozone layer.
