



Continuing and future challenges facing the ozone layer protection effort

While the Montreal Protocol has made great strides in the effort to protect the ozone layer, the task is far from complete. The following are some of the challenges that the parties to the Montreal Protocol still need to tackle before they can rest assured that the ozone layer will be safe:

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 around the middle of this century is premised on full compliance with the phase-outs required by the Protocol. Over the next several years, the parties must therefore facilitate the complete elimination of the remaining substances covered by the Protocol. While support for related activities is being provided, the final phase-out of these remaining uses, which include the use of HCFCs in air conditioning and refrigeration equipment, will not be easy and will require a long-term commitment from developed and developing countries alike;

Facilitating a climate friendly transition to ozone-depleting substance alternatives: Because HCFCs and some related production byproducts are global warming gasses, their continued production and consumption contribute to climate change as well as to ozone depletion. Furthermore, some alternatives to HCFCs, such as hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), don't harm the ozone layer but are potent global warming gasses. The parties to the Montreal Protocol have recently been considering two proposed amendments to the Protocol that would lead to the control of HFCs under the Montreal Protocol, but to date no agreement has been reached. Finally, the essential transition away from ozone-depleting substance in the refrigeration and air conditioning sectors presents an opportunity to achieve substantial global warming benefits through enhancements in energy efficiency. Although not required by the Montreal Protocol, the parties have committed themselves to taking matters such as energy efficiency into account as they proceed with their HCFC phase-out;

Funding: Many Parties have found that now that most of the phase-out required under the Protocol has been accomplished it has become increasingly difficult to get the attention of, or funding from, policy makers to deal with the remaining phase-out. To date, most eligible developing countries have relied heavily upon funding from the Multilateral Fund to support their phase-out efforts, and continued assistance from the Fund will be important to ensure that a high level of compliance in these countries is maintained and that environmental benefits from the phase-out are maximized. 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 ozone depleting substances for continuing allowed uses 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 can be expected to increase. The Parties must redouble their efforts to address this issue;

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

Monitoring the ozone layer to ensure that it is healing as expected: Recent findings on the interaction between climate change and ozone depletion have 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 and the nexus between ozone depletion and climate change so that it can be confident that related risks are understood and are being adequately addressed.

