Extraordinary challenges require extraordinary responses. A generation ago, the world’s nations agreed to act definitively to protect the ozone layer, initiating an inter-governmental process that blazed new trails.

As we implement the outcomes of the 2012 Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development, the remarkable success story of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer provides a beacon of hope. It provides protection for the ozone layer, significantly contributes to climate mitigation and reminds us that, faced with existential threats, the nations of the world are capable of cooperation for the common good.

My hope is that this success will inform and inspire the international community in charting a new vision and responsive framework for the period beyond 2015, the deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Sustainable development -- enabled by the integration of economic growth, social justice and environmental stewardship -- must become our global guiding principle and operational standard.

On this International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, I commend all who have made the Montreal Protocol such an outstanding example of international cooperation. I urge Governments, industry, civil society and all other partners to apply the same spirit to the other great environment and development challenges of our times.