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**United Nations
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**Thirty-Second Meeting of the Parties to
the Montreal Protocol on Substances
that Deplete the Ozone Layer**
Online, 23–27 November 2020

**Issues that the Secretariat would like to bring to the attention of
the parties**

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The present note summarizes issues of relevance to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and activities that have taken place, or will take place, during the period from July to October 2020 that the Secretariat wishes to bring to the attention of the parties.

II. Activities of the Ozone Secretariat

A. World Ozone Day 2020

2. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/114, the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer (World Ozone Day) is observed each year on 16 September to commemorate the signing of the Montreal Protocol on 16 September 1987. As a result of the restrictions on travel and large gatherings owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Secretariat decided to develop additional digital and social assets to facilitate the implementation of activities under both the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol. Those additional assets comprised an interactive quiz on ozone, a video celebrating 35 years of protection of the ozone layer in recognition of the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Vienna Convention, and a significant social media package. The materials were developed in line with the theme for World Ozone Day 2020, which was “Ozone for life: 35 years of ozone layer protection”, and were in addition to the usual output for World Ozone Day, such as posters, a message from the Secretary-General and the video message by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Ms. Inger Andersen.

3. The Secretariat and the Environmental Effects Assessment Panel supported a number of online events, with expert contributions to discussions to mark World Ozone Day organized by Kenya, the Philippines, South Africa, Act4Eco (as part of the Horizon 2020 programme of the European Union), the TERRE Policy Centre, and Bhakta Kavi Narsinh Mehta University, India. The additional tools developed to support online events and promote World Ozone Day generated 1,554 visits to the World Ozone Day 2020 webpage between 1 and 31 August, which increased to 11,821 visits between 1 and 17 September 2020.

B. Multilateral environmental agreement collaboration

4. To enhance the collaboration between UNEP and UNEP-administered multilateral environmental agreements, UNEP organizes quarterly meetings with focal points from those agreements to explore potential synergies, nexus-building, cooperation, knowledge sharing and lessons learned. The Ozone Secretariat participates in those meetings, whose current focus is on the work of biodiversity- and chemicals-related multilateral environmental agreements on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the post-2020 Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. The development of a network of gender officers or focal points within the multilateral environmental agreements is also under discussion, as is the creation of a common working platform to share ideas in an informal yet interactive manner between UNEP and the 15 multilateral environmental agreements.

C. Carbon offsetting for 2019

5. Further to the update provided to the Open-ended Working Group at its forty-second meeting, the Secretariat is completing the process of measuring and offsetting the greenhouse gas emissions created during the meetings held and operations conducted under the Montreal Protocol in 2019, which consisted of the emissions associated with the travel of meeting participants, including travel to assessment panel meetings, and related operations during the year.

6. The Secretariat anticipates an offset of 1,402 tonnes of CO₂-equivalent for its 2019 operations. This is the sixth consecutive year in which the operations of the Secretariat anticipate being carbon neutral.

7. Of the tonnes of CO₂-equivalent produced in the operations of the Secretariat in 2019, the Government of Italy contributed to the carbon offsetting of 715 certified emission reductions in compensation of the carbon emissions produced in connection with the Thirty-First Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, held in Rome from 4 to 8 November 2019.

D. Website enhancements

8. Work on developing and enhancing the web-based services offered by the Secretariat has continued. Further to the update provided to the forty-second meeting of the Open-ended Working Group, the Secretariat has developed a tool to help in the tracking and reduction of illegal trade in controlled substances. Furthermore, to better support the work of the parties, a new platform for managing meetings organized by the Secretariat has been developed.

9. Further subsites of the “Ozone and you” section of the website have been updated and improved, including “20 Q&As”, the “Ozone timeline” and “What you can do”. A number of new subsections have also been developed, designed to provide additional information and resources for visitors wishing to expand their knowledge of the impact of the Montreal Protocol on ozone protection in “Facts and figures” and an in-depth analysis of the influence of the Montreal Protocol on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

E. Life cycle-based hotspot analysis of food refrigeration (cold chains) and air conditioning

10. As a follow-up to the Thirty-First Meeting of the Parties and the Rome Declaration on the Contribution of the Montreal Protocol to Food Loss Reduction through Sustainable Cold Chain Development, the Secretariat commissioned a study entitled “Hotspots analysis for value chains involving substances controlled under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer”. The study is coordinated jointly with the Life Cycle Initiative of UNEP, the objective of which is to facilitate the application of life cycle knowledge in the global sustainable development agenda to achieve global goals faster and more efficiently. The Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez in Chile has been selected to develop the hotspot analysis, in view of its experience in working with life-cycle-based indicators linked to controlled substances and similar contaminants, and in informing policy.

11. The value chains examined in the hotspot analysis are food refrigeration (cold chains) and air-conditioning systems. Their ozone-depleting and climate-change effects occur either directly or indirectly throughout the stages of their life cycle. Applying a life-cycle-based hotspot methodology, the study will identify key areas of those effects for more focused and effective interventions for their reduction, with an understanding of undesired trade-offs in the phase-down or phase-out of controlled substances. The objective of the study is to raise the awareness of the parties and inform their

programmes for the implementation of the Montreal Protocol as part of the national sustainable development agenda.

12. The results of the study will be presented in a summary report and infographics, and will be made available on the Secretariat website.

F. Online training on the Montreal Protocol

13. The United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (InforMEA)¹ portal is the official United Nations database for multilateral environmental agreements and provides a comprehensive resource on international environmental law. Its course entitled “Introductory course to the international legal framework on ozone depletion” explains the basics of the ozone regime to a broader audience which may be unfamiliar with the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol. The Secretariat has partnered with the University of Massachusetts, Boston, to update the course with the most recent data on the science, negotiations and implementation status of the ozone treaties and expand it into an intermediate-level course. The expansion will include two streams of specialized modules: one for governmental users (such as national ozone officers, small country delegations and focal points in other multilateral environmental agreements) and another for non-governmental users (such as students and scholars, industry and civil society more broadly).

14. The work on the revision of the online course will start in October 2020 and will be completed by the Thirty-Third Meeting of the Parties.

G. UNEP Environmental Rights Coordination Group

15. In response to the United Nations Secretary-General’s remarks to the United Nations Human Rights Council on 24 February 2020, under the title “The Highest Aspiration: A Call to Action for Human Rights”, the Secretariat, together with other secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements hosted by UNEP, has been invited to participate in the UNEP Environmental Rights Coordination Group, led by its Law Division.

16. The nexus of human rights and the environment is an important emerging issue. Working jointly with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNEP has spearheaded the building of consensus on the relationship between human rights and the health of the environment, and the development of international norms on environmental rights. The multilateral environmental agreements play a vital role in that work, including the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol, both of which recognize the connection between health and environmental degradation and guide the efforts of States to protect the ozone layer and curb climate change, which is fundamental to a healthy environment and human development.

17. The role of the Group is to identify areas and actions for mainstreaming the concept of environmental rights into global work on environmental sustainability in a more coordinated and systematic manner.

H. Departure of the Executive Secretary

18. Ms. Tina Birmbili, the Executive Secretary of the Ozone Secretariat, left the Secretariat on 30 September 2020 to take up a new appointment as Deputy Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, from 1 October 2020. Ms. Birmbili joined the Secretariat in November 2013 at a time when the parties to the Montreal Protocol were involved in intense negotiations to amend the Protocol and control the production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons, which had previously been used as replacement chemicals for ozone-depleting substances, in particular chlorofluorocarbons. She steered those negotiations by working closely with the parties and in October 2016 the parties adopted the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol. The Amendment has since entered into force and to date has been ratified by over 100 parties. During her tenure the Secretariat updated its data reporting system and moved it online and provided many other digital tools and applications for facilitating the work of the stakeholders of the ozone treaties.

¹ <https://www.informea.org/en>.