

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS TO THE
CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE ON THE OZONE LAYER

It is with particular pleasure that I welcome you to the eighth session of the Co-ordinating Committee on the Ozone Layer. After repeated requests by participants on previous occasions, we have finally managed to convene a meeting of the committee in Nairobi - as I said I would at the seventh session. I must admit, however, that several member states considered a European venue more convenient. Nevertheless, we at UNEP consider this meeting to be most appropriate for the Organization's headquarters for it marks a milestone in UNEP's programme in support of the protection of the Ozone Layer commenced ten years ago. This is the first COOL meeting since The Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer came into being in March 1985. That this unique Convention was realised can in no small part be attributed to the work of the COOL. I refer to it as unique in the sense that no other legislative instrument has been formulated so far for the purpose of addressing a potential rather than an existing problem. The provision of scientific and technical information by the COOL to the ad hoc Working Group for the elaboration of the global framework convention has greatly facilitated its work in preparing the Convention document, and I am happy to convey, at its request, the appreciation of the Working Group to the COOL. Copies of the Vienna Convention are available should you wish to have one.

Whilst, at first glance, the agenda for this meeting resembles those of previous years, there are important differences which may well influence the way in which this session is conducted. As in previous years, members will be asked in turn to outline their country's or organisation's research programme and research results upon which the COOL assessment of ozone layer modification will be based. Before you, however, in draft form, is the product of a major international research and assessment programme orchestrated by the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration with the involvement of UNEP, WMO and other organisations and bodies. At the request of UNEP, this large volume has been condensed into a shorter assessment document which we are suggesting be used as a working paper that can be revised and amended until a COOL assessment is agreed.

You will note that we are here only concerned with preparing an assessment of the physical state of the ozone layer and its modification. Unlike previous years, we will not make an assessment of the effects of ozone depletion. This will be done in conjunction with a UNEP/US Environmental Protection Agency Conference on Effects of UV-B increase and ozone layer modification planned for June this year in Washington D.C. The separation off of the assessment process in two parts has been obliged upon us by the increasing complexity of the various issues involved and illustrated at this meeting by the voluminous documentation before us.

Shortly, we will discuss the organisation of the work during this session. I hope that you are able to accept my suggestion to use the draft assessment as a basis for our work and that we might also try to conduct our work in plenary session rather than in working groups as has been done in the past. It may be that certain sections may raise problems impossible to solve in the context of full committee discussion, and, if so, ad hoc working groups can be convened to effect their resolution but I feel that in the spirit of co-operation for which the COOL is well known (and may I say, envied by several other international committees) we should, in most cases, be able to arrive at consensus in full session. Indeed, such has been the broad international input into and agreement on the assessment document on which we will base the COOL interpretation, it is possible that we could complete our work inside the scheduled five days and hopefully release participants to enjoy the attractions of Kenya which motivated the requests of earlier sessions to hold a COOL session in Nairobi!

Earlier, I mentioned the planned Conference on Effects. At an appropriate point in the meeting the Secretary will tell you more of this conference and of other parallel and complementary activities with which UNEP is involved. These include the organisation of a Workshop on chlorofluorocarbons and the initiation of a process to elaborate a protocol on CFC's to the Vienna Convention. UNEP's role in the assessment of the greenhouse/gas climate issue, in particular, the results of the October 1985 Villach Conference on this issue will also be described.

Our meeting will conclude with agreement on an executive summary of the revised or rewritten assessment. I need not emphasise the importance of this document in the ongoing process to strengthen the Vienna Convention. It will be, together with the results of the CFC workshop, a basis upon which Governments can confirm the necessity or otherwise of a protocol on CFC's, and in the case of the former, for the reconvened working group to agree the content of such a protocol.

In the course of my address, I have made several suggestions on how we might proceed with the business of the meeting. It now is perhaps an appropriate time to consider those recommendations in the light of the draft agenda suggested for the meeting. I therefore, ask you to turn to documents UNEP/COOL.8/1 and UNEP/COOL.8/2 and invite your amendments and/or comments on the proposed workplan.