

**Address by
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to the
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Your Excellency, Madam President, distinguished delegates, colleagues, dear friends, it is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Ninth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol.

Madam President, first of all I would like to express my gratitude to the Government of Canada for the superb job that they have done in preparing for and hosting this Conference. A series of related events have contributed to this total Montreal experience and have been made possible by many people working behind the scenes. I want to recognize them.

Our work this week has been well prepared by those who participated in the Open-Ended Working Group Meetings in June in Nairobi, and last week here in Montreal, under the most able leadership of the co-chairs Ms. Clare Fearnley and Ms. Catalina Mosler-Garcia. Their commitment has been exemplary.

Events that mark the transition from one defined period to another - birthdays and anniversaries - are natural points in life for reflection. Times when you want to evaluate what you have been doing to see if you are on the right track. These are times to take stock of what we are doing with our lives, to recognize the patterns of our behaviour, to pull from the seemingly random sequence of historical events, the themes, the lessons, the wisdom we need to refine, or even redefine our future course.

Today, as we commemorate the Tenth Anniversary of the Montreal Protocol, there is ample cause for celebration and reflection.

So far, the results achieved under the Montreal Protocol have been very impressive. Some of those results are quantifiable, for example, the reduction in the world-wide consumption of ozone depleting substances - about one million tonnes. Both developed and developing countries have played their parts.

Developing countries have so far undertaken projects to phase out more than a third of their consumption - about 80,000 tonnes. The Multilateral Fund has already disbursed more than US\$ 600 million for the phase out of ozone depleting substances (ODSs) and has allocated US\$ 540 million for the biennium 1997-1999. This will enable developing countries to undertake projects to phase out a substantial volume of ozone depleting substances ahead of the year 1999, when their grace period for chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) ends.

This unique partnership between the developed and the developing world and acceptance of the concept of differentiated responsibilities and obligations has led to a decline in the growth rate of these substances in the atmosphere and in the case of some substances, even absolute decline. This is validated by recent ozone measurements.

Recovery of the health of the ozone layer was and is now clearly dependent on the actions of all countries regardless of where they are or the quantities of ozone depleting substances they produce and consume.

Clearly, there was and remains a compelling case for designing a mechanism that would enable international co-operation. On these grounds alone, the Montreal Protocol has been an

unqualified success. No less than 162 countries have so far ratified the Montreal Protocol.

This unique instrument was built on the precautionary principle – the acceptance of taking action while waiting for more scientific evidence to emerge. It is an ongoing process, not merely a static solution, a freezing of the *status quo*. This has been a key element of success.

Relying on periodic scientific, economic and technological assessments, it has adapted itself progressively to rapidly evolving conditions. The continuum of negotiations from Montreal to London to Copenhagen and beyond has served not only to clarify several ambiguous provisions of the Montreal Protocol, to accelerate the phase out of several ozone depleting substances but also to put many ambitious work plans in place.

In the implementation of the Montreal Protocol, we encouraged another type of partnership. We stepped across a policy/science/technology divide. Representatives of governmental decision-makers, scientists, technologists, and policy makers joined their counterparts in industry and non-governmental organizations to together understand the causes and consequences of ozone depletion and together search for environmentally, economically and

technologically appropriate solutions. The boldness of Governments signalled to industry the fact that ozone-depleting chemicals had no future. This "technology forcing" convincingly refuted the usual arguments for inaction and industry rose to the challenge in finding alternatives. The result was that farsighted decisions on preserving the ozone layer were taken.

There are many more indicators of success. It is my hope that in our analysis on this anniversary we act on what we have learned not only to further the objectives of the Montreal Protocol but to encourage similar success on other global environmental issues.

In a few months time, Parties to the Convention on Climate Change will gather in Kyoto with the primary purpose of agreeing legally binding commitments to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. I am sure some of you will be part of that congregation.

In Kyoto, we will be required to commit to emission control measures of sufficient magnitude and in a timely manner that will ensure that we meet the ultimate objective of stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. It is my hope that the spirit of Montreal will be present in Kyoto and that delegates will react with the generosity and common sense that guided delegates in Montreal ten years ago to take such wise decisions.

But we cannot rest on our laurels. The process is working but as we all know ozone depletion recovery time is measured in decades and centuries. The CFCs released a decade ago are still destroying the ozone layer and will continue to do so well into the next century. That is why we must be vigilant about any more chemicals being loaded into the stratosphere during the next several decades.

Last year, the ozone hole over the South Pole was the longest lasting on record. This depletion of the ozone layer allowed more ultraviolet radiation to reach the earth's surface – ultra-violet radiation linked to increased incidence of skin cancer, eye cataracts and potentially lower agricultural crop yields. The American Academy of Dermatology has termed the alarming increase in the rate of melanoma skin cancer cases in the USA "**an undeclared epidemic.**"

Dramatic new evidence has emerged about the state of the ozone layer over the North Pole. In the northern winter of 1996/97, an ozone hole has been hovering above the Arctic for two months. It is the deepest, most intense and long lasting yet in the northern hemisphere and has taken even the scientists by surprise.

Seen in this light, perhaps the most important issue that has to be decided upon at this meeting is the issue of phasing out of methyl bromide.

As you all know, there are control measures in place to phase out methyl bromide in the developed countries in the year 2010, with a 25 per cent reduction of the 1995 base level of production and consumption to be achieved in the year 2001 and a further reduction of 50 per cent to be achieved in the year 2005. For the developing countries, the only control measure in place now is a freeze of production and consumption in the year 2002 at the average level of 1995 to 1998, which is yet to be determined.

The scientific evidence presents a compelling case for advancing the phase-out date of methyl bromide in developed countries and for setting a phase-out date for the developing countries. The reasons are numerous.

First, because of the short atmospheric lifetime of methyl bromide, its relative impact on the ozone layer is expected to be greatest in the coming decade, precisely when chlorine abundances and ozone losses in the stratosphere are predicted to reach their optimum level.

Secondly, ozone removal by bromine contained in Methyl Bromide is far more efficient on a per molecule basis than by chlorine contained in the CFCs, HCFCs, carbon tetrachloroform and methyl chloroform. Methyl bromide is now the most powerful ODS that has not been efficiently controlled.

Thirdly, setting a firm phase-out date for methyl bromide is crucial since in some countries there is now a significant and growing consumption of methyl bromide.

And if those were not reason enough, methyl bromide is an extremely toxic pesticide - harmful to farm workers, farmers and residents living near fumigated fields.

It is also important that we decide on the critical uses of Methyl Bromide in those cases where no alternatives were identified, and to permit the authorisation of emergency uses of small quantities of methyl bromide. The idea is that with methyl bromide exemptions covering critical uses and emergency uses, the Parties would be able to meet, without undue economic and technical difficulties, the new advanced phase-out dates proposed.

The second issue requiring our urgent attention is that of illegal trade in ODSs between Parties. Millions of pieces of

equipment and vehicles with CFCs are still in service. By the end of 1996, production and consumption of CFCs, halons, carbon tetrachloride and methyl chloroform had ceased in all developed countries, except for a few approved essential uses. But, in spite of stringent controls by Governments of the developed countries, there is evidence that CFCs produced to satisfy the basic domestic needs of developing countries have continued to flow to the developed countries.

In order to curb this illegal trade between Parties, the Working Group has recommended that each Party shall introduce a licensing system for import and export for new, or recycled substances. It is also proposed that the Parties be required to ban trade in ODS with other Parties which have not established such a system. Also under consideration is a prohibition for non-complying Parties to export recycled substances.

The Working Group has come to the conclusion that we need to develop a legal framework in international trade of ODSs if the objective of the Montreal Protocol is to be achieved. Greater volumes of trade lead to greater continued use of ODSs and continued ozone depletion. The several trade measures the Working Group recommends are worthy of your serious consideration.

Trade measures can be complemented by economic measures. But internalising the cost of ozone depletion in the price of products using ODSs has impacts that differ from country to country and consequently has different degrees of acceptance. The time taken for such an economic process to yield results will be very long and, in the meantime, there will be irretrievable losses to our environment.

Only 21 months remain until the commitment by developing countries to freeze their CFC consumption will come into force. This will be the beginning of the phase-out process to be completed in 2010.

In some developing countries, consumption of ODSs has doubled in recent years, but there have been notable instances of developing countries taking initiatives to phase-out CFCs ahead of the year 1999. One is the extraordinary success story of Thailand which ceased production of CFC-based refrigerators and banned all imports in January 1997. A second example is that of Cameroon, which marked the 10th Anniversary of the Montreal Protocol by beginning the production of its own CFC-free refrigerators and freezers with assistance from the Multilateral Fund.

While we applaud these successes we must also acknowledge several problems in implementation. The status of ratifications of the Vienna Convention, Montreal Protocol and London Amendment remain unchanged since the last Meeting of the Working Group in June in Nairobi. 165 countries have so far ratified the Vienna Convention and 162 the Montreal Protocol, 116 its London Amendment and 72 its Copenhagen Amendment. The slow pace of ratification of the Copenhagen Amendment is particularly worrisome. I appeal to all Governments, who have not yet ratified the London and Copenhagen Amendments, to expedite their process of ratification.

You have heard me say before that the key to monitoring the implementation of and compliance with the Montreal Protocol is the accurate and timely reporting of data regarding production and consumption. As of August 1997, only 43 countries have reported data for 1996, and 113 have reported data for 1995

Finally, the successful implementation of the Montreal Protocol is contingent upon the timely availability of financial resources among other things. I must bring to the attention of this Meeting the alarming trend in the contributions still outstanding to the Multilateral Fund and the Trust Funds for the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol.

As of 31 August 1997, only 26 per cent of the 1997 contributions to the Trust Funds of the Vienna Convention, Montreal Protocol and the Multilateral Fund had been received. I would urge Parties to pay their contributions for 1997 and any other outstanding contribution for previous years as soon as possible.

Although this is a special anniversary, let us remember that for the preservation of the ozone layer, every year will be a new anniversary of environmental action. Let us be sure that they are causes for celebration and renewal commitment. Ozone protection is not yesterday's problem. It is today's and tomorrow's. For the well-being of future generations the price we pay today is indeed a small price to pay.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, I have the privilege to turn the spotlight on several Article 5 countries which have demonstrated exceptional efforts to implement their commitments to the Montreal Protocol.

The Fund Secretariat, the Implementing Agencies, Regional Network Co-ordinators, Bilateral Agencies and the Ozone Secretariat were invited to propose candidates from each of the regions. These candidates were then shortlisted by a panel who unanimously agreed upon 12 deserving countries to receive the

award. UNEP is pleased to present awards for outstanding achievement to the following national ozone units. I would ask representatives from each of the countries to please approach the podium: Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ghana, Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Peru, Philippines, Singapore, Tunisia, Turkey, Uruguay and Venezuela.

It is unusual for the United Nations to recognize publicly the work of its staff. After all, these are people just doing their jobs, doing what is expected of them. But on this celebratory occasion I want to pay special tribute to:

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), in particular Mr. Schuetz-Mueller, Ms. Gauvin, Ms. Geka and Ms. Huls.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in particular Mr. Pinto, Ms. Reno, Mr. Van Engel, Mr. Ojala, and Ms. Corpus.

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), in particular Mr. Si Ahmed and Mr. Grof.

The World Bank, in particular Mr. Newcombe, Mr. Rahil, and Ms. Poppele.

The World Meteorological Organization, in particular Mr. Bojkov.

The Multi-lateral Fund Secretariat, in particular Dr. El-Arini, Mr. Abrokwa-Ampadu, Mr. Ganem, Mr. Reed, Mr. Smirnov, Mr. Subramanian, Mr. Wakai and Ms. Leyva.

And of course, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in particular from our Industry and Environment Office Mr. Shende, Ms. Hernandez, Mr. Curlin and Ms. Mercado; from UNEP's Environmental Law team Dr. Rummel-Bulska, Mr. Sand and Ms. Seki; from our Atmosphere Unit Mr. Peter Usher; from our Information and Public Affairs Unit, Mr. Brevik; and last but not least from the UNEP Ozone Secretariat, Mr. Sarma, Mr. Sabogal, Mr. Bankobeza and Mr. Silfvenius.

Will the heads of these organizations please come forward to receive a meritorious service certificate.

My final word this morning must be to recognize my predecessor Dr. Tolba. Without his vision and persistence it is most unlikely that we would be celebrating this tenth anniversary. I thank him on your behalf.