

**UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme under the Multilateral Fund****UNEP Initiates Assistance to Countries with Economies in Transition to Expedite their Compliance with the Montreal Protocol**

INFORMATION RELEASE

9-11 and 14-16 December 1998

A major initiative was taken to assist Countries with Economies in Transition (CEITs) to enable them to be in compliance with the Montreal protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Two Regional Workshops aimed towards this objective were concluded, one at Bratislava (9 to 11 December 1998) and the other one in Kiev (14-16 December 1998).

Thirty seven participants including the National Ozone Officers from twenty CEITs countries and their national ministerial counterparts dealing with the licensing of ODS, came together during these regional workshops to discuss how to improve their legal and institutional systems to control and monitor ODS consumption, in particular imports and exports. The participating countries were: Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia in Bratislava. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan in Kiev.

Representatives from the European Union, UNEP's OzonAction Programme, UNEP's Ozone Secretariat, UNDP, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Environment Canada and Germany's GTZ, also attended the workshops.

The workshops are part of the project "Promoting Compliance with the Trade and Licensing Provisions of the Montreal Protocol in CEITs" funded by the Global Environment Facility and being implemented by the OzonAction Programme under the United Nations Environment Programme Division of Technology, Industry and Economics.

The development of well designed and effectively working licensing systems will be a crucial step for these countries in their efforts to comply with the mandatory requirement of having an import/export licensing system adopted under the latest Amendment to the Protocol approved in Montreal in September 1997 and to properly report to the Ozone Secretariat on ODS consumption. These licensing systems will also be instrumental in facilitating compliance with the Montreal Protocol phase-out schedule for some of the countries which are in noncompliance.

The workshops were opened by Mr. Tamás Domény, the Head of Office of the Ministry of Environment in Bratislava and by Mr. Vasyl Vasylchenko, Vice Minister of Environmental Protection in Kiev. He highlighted that: "Ukraine has already established a very useful ODS licensing system and is willing to actively cooperate with other countries and international organizations in the establishment and improvement of such systems in the region to achieve the common goal of phasing out ODS consumption and production".

Ms. Jacqueline Aloisi de Larderel, Director of the United Nations' Environment Programme Division of Technology, Industry and Economics gave an opening statement for the project in Bratislava emphasizing that "CEITs have to put in place adequate control and monitoring systems for ODS, but setting these systems in place is not enough, they have to be properly implemented and enforced, to do this a close cooperation between government officials in charge of environment, industry and customs is needed. You are the actors and you have to develop the political will, you have to be the 'movers and shakers' that will make these changes happen".

At the end of the workshops each participating country presented a National Action Plan to establish or improve their National ODS Licensing System and the related policy and regulatory framework.

The project will continue with the implementation of the National Action plans at the national level and will finalize in October 1999 with two regional "Workshops on Training of Customs Officers on Implementing and Enforcing New Licensing Regulations and Policies".

At the end of the workshops the participating countries recommended, inter alia, the prompt development of ODS licensing systems in those countries that still lack them, the ratification by the participating countries of the London, Copenhagen and Montreal Amendments to the Montreal Protocol, the establishment of a regional network of Ozone Officers in order to exchange information and coordinate efforts and the establishment of institutional strengthening activities in the countries in order to facilitate and coordinate phase-out activities.

Ms. Hana Mesic's (focal point for Croatia) remark at the concluding session was: "We find that participating in the workshop was very useful: we now have an action plan for compliance and elements to proceed with the implementation of our country phase-out schedule. We now need to act". Mr. Vadim Backoumov's (focal point for Russia) remark was: " This regional meeting will go a long way in coordinating our efforts to reach the goal of protecting the Ozone Layer".

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About the Montreal Protocol

The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer is the international environmental agreement that has galvanized global cooperation to protect the stratospheric ozone layer. The Protocol was signed by 24 countries in 1987 and as of August 1998, has been ratified by 168 countries or Parties to the Protocol. A number of ozone-depleting substances (chlorofluorocarbons, carbon tetrachloride, methyl chloroform and halons) have already been phased out in developed countries, except for about 10,000 tonnes used as essential uses.

About UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme

Since 1991, the UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme in Paris has been strengthening the capacity of governments (especially National Ozone Units) and industry in developing countries to make informed decisions on technology and policy options that will result in cost-effective ODS phase-out activities with minimal external intervention. The Programme accomplishes this by delivering a range of need-based services, including:

Information Exchange

To enable decision makers to take informed decisions on policies and investments. Information and management tools already provided for developing countries include the OzonAction Information Clearinghouse (OAIC) diskette and World Wide Web site, a quarterly newsletter, sector-specific alternative technologies and policy guidelines.

Training and Networking

To provide platforms for exchanging experiences, developing skills, and tapping the expertise of peers and other experts in the global ozone protection community. Training and network workshops builds skills for implementing and managing phase-out activities and are conducted at the regional level (support is also extended to national activities). The Programme currently operates seven regional and sub-regional Networks of ODS officers comprising more than 80 countries, which have resulted in member countries taking early steps to implement the Montreal Protocol.

Country Programmes, Institutional Strengthening and Refrigerant Management Plans

To support the development of national ODS phase-out strategies and programmes, especially for low-volume ODS-consuming countries. The Programme currently assists 74 countries in the development of their Country Programmes and implements Institutional-Strengthening projects for 50 countries. The Refrigerant Management Plans will assist Low-Volume Consuming Countries (LCVs) in achieving integrated phase out of CFCs in the refrigeration sector.

About UNEP Industry and Environment

UNEP established its Industry and Environment office (UNEP DTIE) in 1975 to bring industry and government together to promote environmentally sound industrial development. UNEP DTIE is located in Paris. Its goals are:

- to encourage the incorporation of environmental criteria in industrial development plans;
- to facilitate the implementation of procedures and principles for the protection of the environment;
- to promote preventive environmental protection through cleaner production and other proactive approaches;
- to stimulate the exchange of information and experience throughout the world.

To achieve these goals, UNEP DTIE has developed the following main programme elements: Accident Prevention (APELL), Cleaner Production, Energy, OzonAction, Industrial Pollution Management, Tourism. UNEP DTIE organizes conferences and seminars, undertakes training and cooperative activities backed by regular follow-up and assessment. To promote the transfer of information and the sharing of knowledge and experience, UNEP DTIE has developed three complementary tools: technical reports, the quarterly "Industry and Environment" review and a technical query-response service.

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