



Regional Ozone Protection Strategy Agreed for South Pacific States



Bangkok, May 3, 2001 - South Pacific Island countries are better equipped to play their part in preventing the depletion of the ozone layer, following a meeting in Apia, Samoa last week.

Organized by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the three-day meeting (April 24-26) developed national action plans and a regional strategy to phase out ozone depleting substances (ODS). The meeting was supported by Governments of Australia and New Zealand.

Mr Rajendra Shende, Chief of the UNEP Energy and OzonAction Unit, said that "although Pacific Island countries consume less than 100 metric tonnes of ODS, less than 0.1 percent of the global total, it is important they meet their phase out commitments as Parties to the international Montreal Protocol."

The newly-agreed regional strategy emphasizes the sharing of information and experience between 'ODS officers', responsible for implementing the national programmes to comply with the Protocol, and helps to improve import control mechanisms, trade monitoring by customs officers, and training of refrigeration servicing technicians to minimize ODS emissions.

"It is an excellent beginning of the end for ODS in the region," said John Bungitak, General Manager of Environmental Protection Authority of Republic of Marshall Islands, one of ten countries represented at the meeting. "Strengthened national initiatives backed up a regional strategy supported by UNEP and SPREP will enable the Pacific to play its part in this international concern."

The Montreal Protocol has been ratified by Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The remaining non-Party countries in the region were encouraged to ratify and gain the support provided through the Regional Network of ODS Officers.

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Note to Editors:

Under the landmark international agreement, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, 175 countries have committed to a precise schedule for reducing and eventually phasing out their consumption and production of ozone depleting substances (ODS). The first major milestone for developing countries (Article 5 countries) is the "freeze" of Annex A CFCs (CFC-11, -12, -113, -114, -115) at the 1995-1997 average levels, which came into effect on 1 July 1999. After this date, Article 5 countries must reduce these substances 50% by 2005, 85% by 2007 and 100% by 2010. July 2000 marked the end of the first year of the compliance regime for developing countries that have ratified the Montreal Protocol. Governments and industry in Article 5 countries are meeting this challenge through a combination of means, including public awareness campaigns, setting conducive policies and incentives, implementing investment projects, and non-investment activities such as training, information exchange, and

experience-sharing. Over the past 9 years, the Protocol's Multilateral Fund has provided over US\$ 1 billion in financial and technical assistance to support such phase out activities in more than 110 Article 5 countries. This investment by the international community will result in the elimination of approximately 140,000 ODP tonnes of ODS consumption and will contribute significantly to the recover of the ozone layer.

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ROAP Information Note 01/02

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About the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics

The mission of the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics is to help decision-makers in government, local authorities and industry develop and adopt policies and practices that:

- are cleaner and safer;
- make efficient use of natural resources;
- ensure adequate management of chemicals;
- incorporate environmental costs;
- reduce pollution and risks for humans and the environment.

The UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (UNEP DTIE), with its head office in Paris, is composed of one centre and four units:

- The International Environmental Technology Centre (Osaka), which promotes the adoption and use of environmentally sound technologies with a focus on the environmental management of cities and freshwater basins, in developing countries and countries in transition.
- Production and Consumption (Paris), which fosters the development of cleaner and safer production and consumption patterns that lead to increased efficiency in the use of natural resources and reductions in pollution.
- Chemicals (Geneva), which promotes sustainable development by catalyzing global actions and building national capacities for the sound management of chemicals and the improvement of chemical safety world-wide, with a priority on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and Prior Informed Consent (PIC, jointly with FAO).
- Energy and OzonAction (Paris), which supports the phase-out of ozone depleting substances in developing countries and countries with economies in transition and promotes good management practices and use of energy, with a focus on atmospheric impacts. The UNEP/RISØ Collaborating Centre on Energy and Environment supports the work of the Unit.
- Economics and Trade (Geneva), which promotes the use and application of assessment and incentive tools for environmental policy and helps improve the understanding of linkages between trade and environment and the role of financial institutions in promoting sustainable development.

UNEP DTIE activities focus on raising awareness, improving the transfer of information, building capacity, fostering technology co-operation, partnerships and transfer, improving understanding of environmental impacts of trade issues, promoting integration of environmental considerations into economic policies and catalyzing global chemical safety.

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