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Secretary-General

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**MONTREAL PROTOCOL ON OZONE-DEPLETING SUBSTANCES EFFECTIVE, BUT
WORK STILL UNFINISHED,**

SAYS SECRETARY-GENERAL IN MESSAGE FOR INTERNATIONAL DAY

Following is the message by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, 16 September:

The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer is effective and working. Since the entry into force of this multilateral environmental agreement, there has been tremendous progress in global efforts to repair the ozone layer. As a consequence, there are now early signs that we are on the road to recovery of this precious life-support system.

In the latest of a series of scientific assessments conducted under the auspices of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), more than 300 scientists from 34 countries of the developed and developing world have found clear evidence of a decrease in the abundance of ozone-depleting substances in the lower atmosphere, as well as indications that their destructive impact in the stratosphere has also started to decline.

Improved chemistry-climate modelling used in the assessments has given us a more accurate estimate of the expected dates for total ozone layer recovery. In the mid-latitudes and the Arctic, recovery is now anticipated around 2049, five years later than was previously estimated. In Antarctica, recovery is expected by about 2065, 15 years later than the previous estimate.

The assessment's findings are solid evidence that the international community has delivered on its promises. As noted by the eminent scientists in the assessment report, however, failure to comply with the Protocol would delay or could even prevent recovery of the ozone layer. I, therefore, urge all countries to reaffirm their commitment to implementation. The work is still unfinished, and it is only through persistent dedication over the course of this century that our generation and future generations will realize the benefits of full ozone layer recovery.

The theme of this year's observance, "Protect the Ozone Layer: Save Life on Earth", invites the international community to build on its achievements to date by accelerating the phase-out of ozone depleting substances. I appeal to Governments, in partnership with industry, non-governmental organizations and citizens all over the world, to celebrate this year's International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer by promoting activities that will continue to sustain public and political awareness until the task is fully accomplished.

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