



Training Customs Officers to Protect the Environment

New Training Manual from UNEP Promotes Compliance with Montreal Protocol Controls

26 January 2008, Brussels -- Like many other large-scale industrial chemicals, ozone depleting substances such as CFCs, halons and methyl bromide are traded daily on the global market to meet industrial, agricultural and consumer needs. Unlike those other chemicals, these products deplete the Earth's ozone layer if released to the atmosphere so their trade is strictly controlled under the international treaty known as the Montreal Protocol. Under that agreement, every country must set up trade controls known as import-export licensing systems to regulate such trade. This "border control" system must operate effectively if a country is to meet its compliance obligations under the Protocol.

Customs officers are at the heart of these trade control systems, so it is crucial that customs officers and other border control personnel have the necessary training and information to implement the licensing system, control legal ODS trade, and prevent illegal ODS trade.

The enforcement of these import-export systems is particularly critical between now and 1 January 2010 – a major milestone in the life of this multilateral environmental agreement - when developing countries are expected to achieve the 100% phase out of CFCs, halons and carbon tetrachloride as required by the Montreal Protocol.

To help them do this job, the United Nations Environment Programme Division of Technology, Industry and Economics OzonAction Programme has produced the second edition of its *Training Manual for Customs Officers: Saving the Ozone Layer – Phasing out Ozone Depleting Substances in Developing Countries*, which is launched today on the occasion of International Customs Day. Produced with support from the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, this manual is part of an integrated capacity building programme for customs officials in developing countries to enhance enforcement of their national ODS controls.

Developed by a diverse international team with extensive experience in Montreal Protocol-related customs issues, the manual is designed to be either part of a training course, or a stand alone "refresher". It includes all of the key knowledge a customs officer needs to understand about the reason for the control of such trade, what products and substances are concerned, and how to identify legal and illegal shipments. This updated version takes into account the latest developments in the field of monitoring and controlling ODSs listed under the Montreal Protocol. It particularly features the recent Harmonised System codes issued by the World Customs Organisation for mixtures containing ODS and provides additional information on HCFCs, methyl bromide, carbon tetrachloride and methyl chloroform. A new chapter showcases different international and regional cooperation initiatives to combat illegal ODS trade.

UNEP is recommending to developing countries that they adopt this updated manual as part of the regular curriculum in the national customs training academies, so that all customs officers will benefit from it. UNEP is providing the manual in hardcopy and CD-ROM formats, including the

desktop publishing files to enable countries to translate, adapt or print the materials in high-quality.

UNEP has also recently developed another important tool to assist customs officers in their efforts to combat environmental crime items such toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes, as ozone depleting substances, endangered species and living modified organisms – ***The Green Customs Guide to Multilateral Environmental Agreements***. This guide, which was developed in coordination with the Partners to the Green Customs Initiative, provides information and guidance to Customs and other border control officers to assist in their efforts to monitor and facilitate the legal trade and to detect and prevent the illegal trade in environmentally sensitive commodities. The Green Customs Guide explains the Green Customs Initiative and provides an overview of the relevant trade-related treaties and organisations that are included in this initiative. Information is provided on how trade is regulated and the responsibilities of Customs officers in implementing the various controls are described.

Note to journalists:

The Montreal Protocol is an international treaty that is successfully protecting the Earth's stratospheric ozone layer by phasing out the production and consumption of ozone depleting chemicals, including CFCs, HCFCs, halons and methyl bromide. The treaty was opened for signature on September 16, 1987 and entered into force on January 1, 1989. Since then, it has undergone five revisions, in 1990 (London), 1992 (Copenhagen), 1995 (Vienna), 1997 (Montreal), 1999 (Beijing) and 2007 (Montreal).

Ozone depleting chemicals including CFCs and halon have been phased out in developed countries by 1996 except for small essential uses. By 2010, production of ozone depleting substances will be banned in developing countries. The Protocol's Multilateral Fund has financed activities to phase out of consumption and production of these chemicals in more than 140 developing nations.

Due to its achievements to date, the Protocol has been hailed as an example of exceptional international cooperation and perhaps the single most successful international agreement to date. The global community celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the signing of this ground-breaking international treaty on 16 September 2007 in Montreal, Canada.

UNEP as an Implementing Agency of the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol through the OzonAction Branch of the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, has a unique regionalized programme that delivers compliance assistance services to countries to assist them meet the international commitments under the Protocol. The compliance regime requires countries to: achieve and sustain compliance, promote a greater sense of country ownership and implement the agreed Executive Committee framework for strategic planning.

The Green Customs Initiative is a partnership of international organisations cooperating to prevent the illegal trade in environmentally-sensitive commodities and facilitation of the legal trade in these. Its objective is to enhance the capacity of customs and other relevant enforcement personnel to monitor and facilitate the legal trade and to detect and prevent illegal trade in environmentally-sensitive commodities covered by the relevant conventions and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). These include ozone depleting substances (ODS), toxic chemical products, hazardous wastes, endangered species and living-modified organisms. This is

achieved through awareness-raising on all the relevant international agreements as well as provision of assistance and tools to the enforcement community. Green Customs is designed to complement and enhance existing customs training efforts under the respective agreements.

The partners of the Green Customs Initiative comprise the secretariats of the relevant multilateral environmental agreements (Basel, Cartagena, CITES, Montreal, Rotterdam Stockholm), Interpol, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, UNEP and the World Customs Organization. The Green Customs Initiative also works closely with a number of other regional and international organisations

To download a PDF version of the Customs Training manual:

<http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/topics/customs.htm>

For more information about UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme:

<http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction>.

For more information about the Multilateral Fund:

http://www.multilateralfund.org/about_the_multilateral_fund.htm

To download a PDF version of the Green Customs Guide:

<http://www.greencustoms.org/reports/guide.htm>

For more information about the Green Customs Initiative:

<http://www.greencustoms.org/>