



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

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Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде

برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

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The Maldives, the First Winner in Carbon Neutral and Ozone-Friendly Race

Malé, 16 February 2010 - On 4 February 2010, the Maldives pledged to phase out Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), a group of chemicals which are ozone-depleting and powerful greenhouse gases by 2020, 20 years ahead of the Montreal Protocol phase out schedule. This decision is in line with the country's pledge to go carbon neutral by 2020 as its contribution to tackling climate change.

The Maldives is in the front line of the global environmental issues. It is perhaps the most vulnerable country in the world as a number of scientists have warned that if nothing was done to reduce global carbon emissions, the country would soon sink beneath the rising seas.

"You cannot cut a deal with Mother Nature. And we don't intend to try. This is why, in March (2009), the Maldives announced plans to become the first carbon neutral country in the world." stated President of the Maldives, Mohamed Nasheed.

"I believe in mankind's infinite capacity for innovation and change. New technologies allow us to both develop and maintain a healthy environment. Countries, and companies, that choose to lead this change, will be the winners of this Century. We are not part of the problem, but we would like to part of the solution by deploying innovative technologies and policies." added President Nasheed.

HCFCs and their cousins, HFCs were created in the 1980s as substitutes for chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) for use in refrigeration, including air-conditioning units, refrigerators and a wide variety of manufacturing processes. HCFCs not only destroy the stratospheric ozone layer which is essential to life on Earth but also contributes to climate change. In 2007, international community took an important step for accelerated phase-out of HCFCs.

UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) OzonAction Programme is currently assisting developing countries, including the Maldives designing the HCFC phase out management plan in their country. The plan includes phase out of consumption of HCFCs, mainly used in the air conditioning in its nearly 100 tourist resorts spread in its more than 1000 islands. The strategy would also include policy and legislations, training and capacity building activities and information outreach for HCFC phase-out. UNEP DTIE OzonAction would assist the Maldives in reaching their ambitious target by cutting its carbon footprints and benefiting from low hanging fruits, catalyzing energy efficiency and green economy.

Maldives' decision to stop the consumption of this group of chemical earlier than the phase out deadline is considered the first major concrete step to make the carbon neutral declaration a reality. This is a contribution to show case that there are low hanging fruits that countries can pick from the Montreal Protocol- the most successful environmental treaty that exists so far -to reduce the impacts of climate change.

"Our decision to phase out HCFCs and our declaration to go carbon neutral by 2020 will demonstrate to the world our determination to save the planet for humanity. Small Island States can also be at the frontline in the battle to save the planet" said Minister of Housing, Transport and Environment, Maldives, Mohamed Aslam.

When the plan succeeds, the Maldives will turn into the world's first most eco-friendly and ozone-friendly country. The Maldives being a small island nation with limited resources and capacity, these ambitious targets will become an example to all, including developed countries to step up to save the planet and join the Maldives in becoming the winners of the climate neutral and ozone-friendly race.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)

UNEP is the United Nations system's designated entity for addressing environmental issues at the global and regional level. Its mandate is to coordinate the development of environmental policy consensus by keeping the global environment under review and bringing emerging issues to the attention of governments and the international community for action.

Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer

The Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer is an international treaty designed to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the production and consumption of a number of substances believed to be responsible for ozone depletion. 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), and 1999 (Beijing). Due to its widespread adoption and implementation it has been hailed as an example of exceptional international cooperation "Perhaps the single most successful international agreement to date..."

About the Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP) of UNEP DTIE

UNEP as an Implementing Agency of the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol 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.

UNEP through the Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP) has moved from project management approach to a direct implementation initiative through its specialized staff. Consistent with the above approach the Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (ROAP) CAP team has developed to be the centre for policy advice, compliance guidance and conduct training to refrigeration technicians, customs officers and other relevant stakeholders on compliance issues, promote bilateral and multilateral cooperation and promote high-level awareness by utilizing UNEP's staff.

UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme: www.unep.fr/ozonaction

Multilateral Fund: www.multilateralfund.org

Ozone Secretariat: www.ozone.unep.org