



Asia-Pacific Countries on Course for Montreal Protocol Implementation



Suva, Fiji, June 2016 – United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) OzonAction in collaboration with the Ministry for Local Government, Housing and Environment of Fiji, convened the regional Asia Pacific Meeting of National Ozone Officers (NOOs) of 38 countries (14-20 June 2016) to discuss and address new and emerging challenges faced in implementing national projects under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

Globally appreciated as one of the most effective multilateral environment agreements to date, the universally ratified Montreal Protocol aims to restore the Earth's protective stratospheric ozone shield by phasing out harmful ozone depleting substances (ODS), notably the hydrofluorochlorocarbons (HCFCs). The Protocol and its institutional mechanisms assist developing countries to switch to safe and cost-effective ODS alternatives with low global warming potential, particularly in the refrigeration and air-conditioning sectors. According to the Ozone Secretariat, all Asia-Pacific countries have met their national compliance targets and obligations under the Protocol for the reporting year 2014.

Over 80 delegates from 13 South Asia, 11 Southeast Asia and 14 Pacific Island countries participated in the Joint Network and Thematic Meetings of the National Ozone Officers of the Asia and the Pacific region which was organised with financial support from the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol. Representatives of the Multilateral Fund Secretariat, Ozone Secretariat and Implementing Agencies also took part along with international experts and shared experience and information on alternative technologies relevant to the national ODS phase out projects.

The Ozone Secretariat informed the Fiji meetings of the ongoing discussions by the Parties as regards the proposals submitted towards a possible amendment to the Protocol to include the greenhouse gas called hydro-fluoro carbons (HFCs) which are used as replacements to the ODSs.

Addressing the Asia-Pacific NOOs, Fiji's Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment, H.E. Mr Parveen Bala Kumar called for the development of more visible synergies between the Montreal Protocol and other sustainable development priorities, such as addressing climate change and promoting energy efficiency.

In his opening address, the Chief Officer of the Multilateral Fund, Mr. Eduardo Ganem, emphasised the common "inspiration" that binds Asia-Pacific countries ranging from the smallest consumer to the largest producer of ODS: *"The common work that we do to*

implement the Montreal Protocol is the steady stream of inspiration that flows among our separate countries and reminds us that we all have our role to play in the larger archipelago,” he said. Mr. Ganem reiterated the Multilateral Fund’s support to Article 5 Parties in the national phase out of ODS and provided an overview of the latest decisions taken by the Executive Committee as regards project funding and especially in the Asia Pacific region.

Ms. Shamila Nair-Bedouelle, Head of OzonAction, UNEP Division of Technology Industry and Economics, highlighted the role of the UNEP Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP) in providing technical assistance to Article 5 developing countries to sustain and meet their national obligations. She urged the NOOs to “put a face” to their work in order to continue to raise public awareness of the Protocol. *“The refrigeration and air conditioning sector has become a cornerstone of modern life providing the essential foundation for public health, food security, industrial processes and human comfort. The technology is omnipresent in our daily lives - from the mattresses we sleep on to the cars we drive and the vaccines we rely on,”* the OzonAction Head pointed out.

The United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative in Fiji, Ms. Osnat Lubrani informed the participants that national-level implementation of the Montreal Protocol has generated best sustainable development practices that other Multilateral Environmental Agreements could learn from. Moreover, the “Montreal Protocol is contributing towards achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals on Good Health (Goal 3), Good Jobs and Economic Growth (Goal 8), Responsible Consumption (Goal 12), and Climate Action (Goal 13).”

NOOs and other delegates also participated in the Joint Thematic Workshop on country surveys of non ODS alternatives. Participants agreed on the need for available standards and safety guidelines in order for countries to switch to certain ozone- and climate-friendly coolants and the active involvement of safety and health stakeholders. .

The Asia-Pacific NOOs meetings were held in parallel with the first-ever Pacific Low-Global Warming Potential Technology Summit (16-18 June), organised by the Government of Australia in association with the Fiji Ministry for Local Government, Housing and Environment and UNEP OzonAction. Over 200 refrigerant technicians, business representatives and government officials attended this Summit and exchanged first-hand know-how about a range of new market available refrigeration air-conditioning equipment and non ODS alternative technologies.

In the last 30 years, the 197 State Parties to the Montreal Protocol have reduced their ODS consumption by approximately 98 per cent. The innovative Protocol financing mechanism the Multilateral Fund, has supported the development and operation of National Ozone Units in 147 countries, and the design and implementation of over 6,000 projects and activities to phase out ODS valued at over US \$3 billion.

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