

# OZONE

A F R I C A

A newsletter by the African Network of Environment Journalists

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## *Towards an Ozone Friendly Africa*

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INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE OZONE LAYER



# UNEP launches Africa Ozone Reporting Award

UNEP Ozone Compliance Assistance Programme in Africa, recognising the essential role of journalists in promoting understanding of environmental issues and specifically ozone related challenges, has announced the launch of the Ozone Africa Media Awards, to be presented for the first time in 2010.

The Awards open to journalists in Africa are aimed at encouraging the highest standards of excellence in Environmental/scientific reporting, focusing on Ozone issues and honour individuals for their outstanding achievement.

The build-up of ozone depleting substances and greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is largely the consequence of industrialization over the last centuries. However, the way the International community has responded to the challenge posed by the Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) has yielded tangible results and can, undeniably be presented as one of the success stories in the protection of the environment. Nonetheless, other challenges still need renewed attention and efforts.

In the view of the challenges laid ahead for phasing out HCFC within the agreed stepwise schedule, UNEP seeks to assist countries to meet compliance in a three-track approach including:

- Enabling compliance with 2010 control measures for total chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) phase out
- Preparing to ensure sustainability beyond 2010
- Implementing new responsibilities related to the

*The Ozone Africa Media Awards, intends to harness the power of the media, and to elevate the standards of excellence in print, audio and audiovisual media and offer winners a boost in marketing and exposure,*



Delegates pose for a group photo during an Ozone regional meeting in Lilongwe

HCFC phase-out adjustment. How have Africa and the world at large measured up to this threat? What can be done to arrest this trend, even while permitting developing countries to industrialize?

There are many criticisms of how the media has covered these issues to date, but many signs of improvement too. There is a clear challenge here for the media to examine how Africa faces the challenge of protecting the ozone layer.

It is against this backdrop that the UNEP Ozone Compliance Assistance Programme in Africa is launching the Ozone Africa Media Awards, which will

encourage highest standards of excellence in Environmental/scientific reporting. "The Ozone Africa Media Awards, intends to harness the power of the media, and to elevate the standards of excellence in print, audio and audiovisual media and offer winners a boost in marketing and exposure, " the UNEP Ozone Compliance Assistance Programme in Africa said in a statement announcing the awards.

Entries for the awards will be accepted until 20 September 2010, midnight, Nairobi time.

## Competition rules / eligibility requirements

1. Print, Radio, TV journalists from any African country are invited to participate in the Ozone Africa Media awards (as individuals).

2. All applicants are expected to have a knowledge/ understanding of Ozone issues and phase out of ODS
3. Applicants can only send one application. Applicants submitting more than one application will be automatically be disqualified.
4. Applicants must submit on news and current affairs pieces specifically referring to Ozone (non-journalistic works will not be accepted).
5. Works submitted should have been published since 15 September 2009.
6. For TV and radio pieces, the script should be attached in addition to audio/visual versions of the stories. Pieces submitted should not be longer than 8 minutes.
7. Articles/reports can be submitted English, French or Portuguese. A summary showing how the piece illustrates the theme, and highlighting its content and relevance locally / internationally should be provided in English.
8. Applications can only be made online until 15 September 2010
9. Titles of files uploaded should clearly indicate the surname and the country of applicant

### The selection Jury

Selection will be done by a jury consisting of representatives from UNEP, and other implementing agencies, and Media experts

(Africa Network of Environment Journalists- ANEJ, Kenya Environment/ Science Journalists Association-KENSJA and the Planeta Online-Comunicação para o Ambiente e Desenvolvimento). The jury will meet and select top 3 original content stories per category (Print, Radio, TV) from pre-selected stories.

1. Selection for the prize of the public will be made through the awards webpages.
2. The jury may choose not to award prizes if applications do not meet the minimum standards defined by the jury for its selection.
3. Decisions taken by the jury should be considered final and cannot be appealed.
4. Top winners will be invited to the venue of the 22nd Conference of Parties to the Montreal Protocol (all expenses paid) in November 2010, where they will meet Top Ozone leadership and receive their awards.

### Awards

The award is organized in cooperation with implementing partners, relevant government institutions and media establishments from around the region. The award places a premium on compelling stories occurring in or affecting Africa that report problems and solutions related to the Ozone issues with links to other major environmental challenges.

Awards will be given as follows:

- Best TV: USD 100
- Best Radio: USD 1000
- Best print (online and offline): USD 1000

All winning stories will be published on the UNEP and Partners websites. UNEP OzonAction reserves the right to publish all or any of the non-winning stories on the awards website. Applicant(s)/author(s) should include in their application an authorization for publication on these websites, and for non-profit use by the awards organizers and partners. Negotiations regarding media rights with other entities should be done directly by the applicant(s)/author(s)/editor(s).



Journalists in a small working group

# Tanzania on course to phase out ODS

By Deodatus Mfugale

**Almost four decades after scientists broke the news of ozone layer depletion, countries have struggled to phase out these substances in order to save mankind and the environment.**

Depletion of the ozone layer, scientists say, allows excessive ultraviolet rays from the sun to reach the earth, a situation which affects crop production and accounts for various human ailments including skin cancer and eye cataract.

Efforts by countries to phase out ozone-depleting substance were given impetus by the signing of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer on September 16, 1987 which directs the gradual ban on production, distribution and use of the substances, particularly chlorofluorocarbons, halons and carbon tetrachloride.

For developing countries, the total phase out date for these substances was January 1, 2010. Another date has been set for the total phase out of another batch of ODS which spans from January 1, 2015 to January 1, 2030. Substances which fall under this category include methyl chloroform, hydro chlorofluorocarbons and methyl bromide which is mainly used in the agricultural sector.

Tanzania ratified the Montreal Protocol in April 1993 and since then the country has taken several measures to ensure that it complies with the phase out schedule as required by the Protocol. A key milestone in the process was the enactment of the Environmental Management (Control of Ozone Depleting Substances) Regulations in December 2007.

The regulations aim to eliminate the production and consumption

of ozone depleting substances in accordance with the phase out schedule of Montreal Protocol, to regulate the production, import, export, trade, disposal and use of ozone depleting substances and its products. The regulations are also meant to control and monitor the amount of ozone depleting substances entering or leaving the country and provide a system of data collection that will facilitate compliance with relevant reporting requirements under the Protocol.

“The coming into force of these regulations has empowered officers from the National Ozone Unit to effectively monitor the illegal import, distribution and use of ODS in the country and so speed up compliance with the phase out schedule of the Protocol,” explains Kemi Mutasa, an officer with the Tanzania Ozone Office which is

*“We managed to meet the January 1, 2010 phase out deadline for CFCs” said Japhet Bagaga from the National Ozone Unit*

strategically in the Office of the Vice President. .

Mutasa said the regulations empowered environmental inspectors, regional environmental management experts and local government environmental experts to monitor the use of ozone depleting substances in their respective areas.

The efforts paid dividends as early as by 2007 when Tanzania was using less than 50 tonnes of CFCs from more than 200 tonnes in 2000. At the end of 2008 three major manufacturers

of insecticide aerosols and sponge products had converted to CFC free technology.

To intensify compliance, Tanzania has to date trained about 200 refrigeration technicians and 150 customs officers who help to control importation of ODS. More than 20 ODS identifiers have been procured and distributed to entry points as a similar number of ODS recovery machines and recovery and recycling units have been distributed to 20 refrigeration servicing workshops and vocational training centres.

“We managed to meet the January 1, 2010 phase out deadline for CFCs” said Japhet Bagaga from the National Ozone Unit. “We now have a mechanism in place to identify any remaining stock and store it safely. Unfortunately Tanzania, like many developing countries lack appropriate technology to destroy ODS equipment such old fridges, ACs and refrigerant containers.”

Tanzania, Bagaga said, was on course to eliminate other ODS such as methyl chloroform and methyl bromide which are due for phase out by January 1, 2015.



Jim Curlin of UNEP, in an Ozone presentation meeting

# 2010, a red card for Ozone Depleting Substances

By Busani Bafana

Come June 2010, South Africa will be opening its borders to soccer fans while the rest of Africa will be closing theirs from imports of substances linked to the depletion of the ozone layer – an umbrella shielding the earth from the harmful ultraviolet radiation (UV) radiation.

Scientists have linked an increase in cancers, eye cataracts, weakened immune system in people and animals to the depletion of the ozone layer, a layer 16km above the atmosphere. This layer protects the earth from UV radiation. With the thinning of this layer, more UV radiation is reaching the reducing the level's of seas and oceans to absorb carbon dioxide – one of the gases that accelerate global warming.

As the world's beautiful game gets underway in 2010, Africa is set to be playing a different game in protecting its ozone layer and at the same time contribute to slowing down global warming, thanks to initiatives under the Montreal Protocol of 1987. The protocol has to date been signed by more than 192 countries. It mandates signatories to phasing out of Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), Halons and Carbon TetraChloride by January 1 2010. The refrigeration industry in Africa takes the lion share in the use of ODS which the continent does not produce.

It was in the realisation of the critical role of refrigeration technicians in the protection of the ozone that, the Africa office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has been conducting training workshops in southern Africa. The workshops are an effort to build on the awareness raised on the phasing out of ODS ahead of agreed deadlines.

About 1000 technicians have been trained in each African country on best practises to protect the ozone layer. Technicians are key stakeholders in the compliance to the Montreal Protocol and in raising awareness about the impending Armageddon should Africa continue importing CFCs when the continent hosts the Soccer World Cup. Despite a number of challenges in meeting the 2010 deadline, successes have been achieved in a number of countries in the training of technicians.

“The training of technicians in Africa has been successful, says Patrick Salifu, the Regional policy and enforcement Officer at the UNEP Regional Office for Africa in Nairobi, Kenya. “Once trained the refrigeration technicians have trained others and this has created a domino effect in raising awareness about best practises.”

UNEP has assisted signatories to the Montreal Protocol to come up with detailed country programmes to assess the use and phase out of ODS. From country programmes, countries have been assisted to initiate projects, some of whose components include refrigeration management plans and ODS policy regulations.

Swaziland, Lesotho and South Africa are examples of success stories by



Jeremy Bazye of UNEP, addresses delegates

countries that totally phased out CFCs ahead of the 2010 deadline.

“We have been successful in doing away with CFCs in our country and we are now targeting R600s which are hydrocarbons. We will phase them out too before 2015,” says Marvin du Pont, a trainer of technicians from Swaziland.

Refrigeration technicians, despite training on ODS are often challenged by lack of proper equipment and the high costs of the ozone friendly gases.

Mumba Friday, a trainer of trainers from Zambia, said the locally sourced equipment used by technicians and ozone friendly gases are often costly leading to the temptation to use ODSs. For example the price gap between an ODS like R12 and the ozone friendly alternative is huge. The R12 is not only efficient but cheaper than R134a.

In readiness for a total phase out of CFCs, alternatives such as the hydrocarbon drop-in technology was being promoted. Come 2010, Africa will be on host the world cup under an environment safer from the UV radiation.



# Plugging the Information hole in reporting Ozone Layer depletion

By **Busani Bafana**



Journalists in a small working group

**E**nvironmental reporting is a hot beat but leaves even the experienced of journalists stone cold when it comes to telling the story about climate change and the depletion of the ozone layer.

Climate change has been the flag bearer of environmental issues. The depletion of the ozone layer may not be eye popping as the mention of global hunger, water scarcity and the malaria epidemic as a result of climate change. Yet the depletion of the ozone layer is a critical green issue as climate change.

The ozone is a protective layer above the atmosphere which shields the earth from the harmful ultra violet radiation that scientists have linked to cancers and lowered immunity in human beings as well as disturbance of plant and animal life.

It was with this realisation that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has included journalists from East and Southern Africa in training workshops on ozone depleting substances (ODS)

for Ozone National Officers. Scientists have blamed ODS for thinning the protective ozone layer.

From reaching authoritative sources to explain scientific research findings to crafting simple, jargon-free media stories that would inform different audiences, some of whom have never heard of the ozone, are some of the obstacles in writing about ODS.

“Getting information as and when you want it, is a big challenge,” confirms Benedict Tembo, an environment reporter with the

Daily Mail in Lusaka, Zambia.

“Journalists have ideas all the time but getting the voices to go

along with those ideas is not easy as we have to send a query to get official comment and that takes forever.”

Seasoned environmental writer and columnist with the Malawian Sunday Times, Charles Mkoka echoed Tembo’s sentiments about the getting official comments to environmental issues.

UNEP Regional Office for Africa, Policy and Enforcement Officer, Patrick Salifu says the media have a role in raising awareness on ODS, particularly as developing countries prepare to meet the 2010 deadline to phase out CFCs altogether.

The 1987 Montreal Protocol seeks to reduce and eventually eliminate ozone-depleting substances through the development of alternative substances and manufacturing processes. The Protocol signed by over 190 nations is considered one of the most successful international agreements, with 95 per cent of ozone-depleting substances production already phased out giving the ozone layer a chance to recover.

Senior reporter with Swaziland Television Authority, Setsabile Si-bisi, said the UNEP training workshops were an incentive to be more proactive about issues on ozone depletion; while Dalitso Chimwala-Phiri, principal editor and regional reporter for Malawi Television, believes that training workshops on environmental issues enable scientists and technicians in the case of ODS to simplify issues and concepts for journalists to write about them more authoritatively.

Despite the commitment of journalists in reporting the environment accessing experts on the subject and on time affects the quality and frequency of reporting on ODS. For Bernard Ndege, a reporter with Malawi TV and a producer of a local environment programme, the UNEP-sponsored workshops have helped him understand the impact of ODS and how the loss of the ozone layer impacts on the well being of the people.

Given growing discussions about climate change and ozone, it is critical that journalists in particular, know the difference between the two, said Laetitia Kameya Umhuza, a radio and television producer on environmental issues from Rwanda

# Trade Sanctions looming for Botswana?

By Florah Mmereki

It is early in the morning at the Tlokweng Border gate, 15 km from Gaborone, Botswana's capital. Dozens of loaded trucks are crossing into Botswana from neighbouring South Africa with tonnes of chemicals. The customs officer asks the driver of one arriving truck about the cargo and the driver replies, "pesticides".

The customs officer thumbs through the bill of entry and other documents. He waves the driver on without verifying if the truck's cargo of pesticides could contain Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS).

It appears local Customs officials here are not aware of ODS substances even if they enter legally into the country.

A Customs official at the border post says, "All we look for in a vehicle that is carrying chemicals is a declaration certificate to show that the chemicals are not being smuggled into the country."

He said they do not test the chemicals to establish whether they could be Ozone depleting as they do not even have the equipment to carry out such tests. The officer who preferred anonymity said they are not even trained to identify such substances.

Botswana could be a haven for ODS which destroy the ozone layer exposes people to skin cancers and eye cataracts among other dangers. Botswana is a signatory to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its associated Montreal Protocol on the substances that deplete the Ozone layer.

In becoming a signatory to the Protocol, Botswana committed to phasing out ozone depleting substances. But even though Botswana is party to the Protocol, the government has not ratified some of the Montreal Protocol amendments to help accelerate the phase out of CFCs, HCFCs and other ozone depleting substances.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme Chief Legal Officer, Dr. Gilbert Bankobeza, Botswana has not put in place ODS regulations to help control the importation of such substances.

The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (a protocol to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer) is an international treaty designed to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the production 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. The Montreal Protocol amendments bring in additional measures to enhance implementation of the Montreal Protocol as well as introduce more Ozone Depleting substances to be controlled and finally phased out under the protocol. Botswana needs an import and export licensing system which can facilitate the phasing out of ODS and to control illegal trade in ozone-depleting substances. An apparent problem is the lack of testing equipment at the Tlokweng Border Post for Ozone Depleting Substances and at other border gates in the country.

A senior meteorologist with the Department of Meteorological

Services, Keitumetse Monaka, said the delay to ratify the Montreal Protocol Amendments was due to the fact that Botswana has not yet put in place the ODS regulations. She indicated that not all customs officials have been trained on how to identify ozone depleting substances saying she could not specify as to when other customs officials would be trained in such matters.

According to Dr. Bankobeza, if Botswana does not put in place the ODS regulations and ratifying the two Montreal Protocol Amendments, the country could face trade sanctions on ODS importation.

Trade sanctions from the Protocol will impact negatively on the economy of this country as Botswana may no longer be able to import HCFCs gases such as R134 that are still in use in refrigerators and the R22 that is used in air conditioners.

Botswana currently uses HCFCs heavily in different industries such as in chillers used in mortuaries and in the meat processing industry.

"It is important to ratify these amendments as this would help in accelerating the phasing out of CFCs, HCFCs and other ozone depleting substances hence protect the ozone layer," Dr. Bankobeza said.



# Somalia in defense of the Ozone layer

By Menesia Muinjo

Despite its unresolved political battles that have been raging for more than 20 years, Somalia is one of the governments that have so far ratified the Montreal Protocol.

In October 2009, Somalia added her name to the list of countries that have honored the protocol, calling for the phase out of the production and consumption of Ozone Depletion.

But, to the surprise of some, especially during the 16th Main Ozone Depleting Substances, Officers Network Meeting for English Speaking countries held in Malawi in May 2010, Somalia stood tall among the nations that have complied with the protocol. While the war in fighting in Somalia would be a good excuse not to ratify, this has not been the case.

Director of Environment in the Ministry of Environment in Somalia Dr Abdullah M. Issa, who

was instrumental in the ratification of the protocol in his country, spoke about the strategies he used to convince his government to finalize the matter.

“When you have a pain on your back, you will know how to manage to sleep, using the side which is not sore,” Dr. Issa said adding that, “Just do your part! If you are committed, you will do anything, that’s important. That’s how we managed to ratify the protocol.”

Asked as to whether the process of ratifying the protocol was difficult, Dr. Issa said it was not because he sought advice from UNEP key personnel on the process of ratification in line with the international protocol.

Now that Somalia has ratified the protocol, how did it get the Montreal Protocol message across?

“We work with Universities, NGO’s, Traditional leaders, Private Sector. Our society is an oral society, it’s nomadic, and therefore we use radio a lot, especially the BBC Universal Somali radio based in London and TV to reach our people”.

Last February Somalia organised a workshop on natural calamities which was televised for all to follow the proceedings and the next cause of action in implementing the protocol requirements. Dr. Issa advised countries such as Botswana, Angola and Mozambique which are yet to

ratify the Protocol to approach their foreign ministries for help and that as the country Focal point for Ozone related matters in his country,

he was ready to assist fellow Ozone Officers from the countries that are still struggling with the processes of ratification.

*In October 2009, Somalia added her name to the list of countries that have honored the protocol, calling for the phase out of the production and consumption of Ozone Depletion.*



# Q & A

## Methyl bromide phase out, a boost for food security

By *Busani Bafana*

**M**ethyl Bromide, a colourless and odourless gas widely used for pest control in agriculture, has been identified as an ozone depleting substance (ODS). ODS are different man-made chemicals responsible for destroying the ozone layer, a delicate layer of gas between the stratosphere which absorbs harmful ultraviolet light and reduces its intensity on earth. Exposure to high level of what scientists call UV-B is harmful to all forms of life.

Africa, which does not manufacture Methyl Bromide but one of the major users, is well on track to meet the 2015 internationally binding deadline. Busani Bafana, spoke with Florence Asher, Regional Methyl Bromide Officer, UNEP Regional Office for Africa (ROA) Ozone Action Compliance Assistance Programme, based in Nairobi about Methyl Bromide and agriculture. Below are excerpts of the interview:

### **BB: How does Methyl Bromide impact on agriculture and food security?**

**FA:** In agriculture, Methyl Bromide is mainly used for soil fumigation for control of soil-borne pests, diseases and weeds of high-value crops, post-harvest fumigation of durable commodities, for structural fumigation and quarantine and pre-shipment applications.

Methyl bromide is probably the only Ozone depleting substance which is directly related to food security globally. The impacts of Methyl Bromide phase-out on food security and poverty eradication, is felt more in Africa, where agriculture is the economic base. So, we have to exercise extra care in the selection of phase-out strategies of methyl bromide, to avoid hurting the agricultural industry during the implementation process. One way of protecting the African agricultural industry from adverse effects of Methyl Bromide phase-out is by ensuring that, the alternatives promoted are not just technically feasible, but in addition they ought to be economically and commercially viable. Indeed, clearly presented cost-effective and commercially feasible Methyl Bromide alternatives would not need much effort in convincing growers to adopt.



Florence Asher during an interview session with Busani Bafana



Agricultural extension workers in a farm.

**BB: Why do farmers prefer methyl bromide to other alternatives?**

FA: Some of the unique issues associated with methyl bromide phase-out, unlike the industrial sector ozone depleting substances (ODS), is the fact that there is no single replacement for methyl bromide. Methyl bromide has a high efficacy coupled with a broad spectrum of activity, wide range of uses and low price compared to some alternatives. This makes methyl bromide phase-out a complex process. However, a variety of technologies have been developed for specific uses to replace the use of methyl bromide. But even with the identification and dissemination of some of these technically feasible technologies, without regard of the economics and commercial feasibility aspects, are not enough when it comes to convincing farmers to abandon methyl bromide. So, I think that analysis of the economic and commercial feasibilities of the technically viable methyl bromide alternatives is crucial in convincing growers to adopt the alternative technologies commercially.

**BB: We have five years before the phase out could farmers afford these technologies?**

FA: In recent years, Africa has witnessed the emergence of technically, economically and commercially feasible alternatives to Methyl Bromide. This has come as the first fruits of many years effort by many stakeholders. The most promising alternative to methyl bromide in the soil fumigation sector in Africa, soilless culture, is highly knowledge-dependent. However, these technologies are not documented, thus making technical capacity building efforts difficult. This is perhaps the biggest drawback for sustainable methyl bromide phase-out in the continent. The driving force behind the grower is the economic and commercial feasibility of the alternative



technologies; however, this force bears no fruit unless the alternatives are implemented in a technically sound manner.



**BB: What is the average cost of these technologies?**

In the case of soilless culture technology, the initial soilless culture set-up and production inputs may be slightly high, however, one can easily break-even because the production systems can be re-cycled for several years. Also, the market-based standardization organizations such as Global-GAP are very instrumental in facilitating market sensitivity to environment-friendly agricultural production systems. By way of awarding a premium price for products of environment-friendly production systems, growers using Methyl Bromide alternative technologies have benefited from the premium prices. This has also facilitated a turn-around effect when using the more costly Methyl Bromide alternatives. This is a new way of circumventing the challenges posed by the low prices of Methyl Bromide.



## INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE OZONE LAYER



### Message by the United Nations Secretary General

This year, the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer highlights the central role of good governance in pursuit of environmental goals. In general, successful environmental agreements require a broad framework, clear targets and a gradual approach to implementation. Then, as governments gain confidence, they build on initial steps and set more ambitious goals. The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer – which last year achieved universal ratification – is an excellent example of this process.

When the Montreal Protocol was signed in 1987, governments did not originally envision the phase-out of any ozone-depleting substance. Yet, as a result of strong national and global compliance, Parties to the Montreal Protocol have cut

production and consumption of these harmful chemicals by more than 98 per cent. Furthermore, because ozone-depleting chemicals are also greenhouse gases, the Protocol is instrumental in the fight against climate change. It has already averted greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to more than 135 billion tons of carbon dioxide, and will continue to play an important role.

The Montreal Protocol could not have delivered such profound achievements without robust governance and compliance structures put in place by its Parties, both collectively and individually. The foundation of the Protocol is fairness. Through the principle of “common but differentiated responsibility”, the treaty provides a grace

period to developing country parties, a funding mechanism governed by an equitable representation of developing and developed countries, compensation for the cost of phasing out ozone-depleting chemicals, capacity building for national ozone offices in 147 developing countries, and dissemination of the most up-to-date ozone-friendly technologies.

I encourage Parties to the Montreal Protocol to continue to build on this model and to explore synergies that could help to address other environmental challenges, especially climate change. Let us use the governance tools contained in the existing ozone and climate treaties to reduce environmental threats to sustainable development and human well-being.

