Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development

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Science report confirms Montreal Protocol's past successes, warns of future danger

World's best environmental treaty puts stratospheric ozone layer on path to recovery,

Protects climate more than climate treaty

Washington, DC, 10 September 2014 - A report to be released today by the Scientific Assessment Panel (SAP) of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer confirms that the Montreal Protocol has put the stratospheric ozone on the path to recovery by 2025-2040 in the mid-latitudes and by 2045-2060 in the Antarctic by phasing out 98% of the production and consumption of over 100 ozone-depleting substances (ODS).

Phasing out these 100 chemicals also has provided powerful climate protection, avoiding the equivalent of an estimated 9.5 billion tonnes of CO_2 emissions per year – approximately five times more than the emissions reductions of the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period (2008-2012).

"This remarkable treaty, along with earlier boycotts and national measures to avoid chlorofluorocarbons and related chemicals, has managed to solve an amount of climate change that otherwise would be equal to the amount of warming caused by carbon dioxide warming today," said Durwood Zaelke, President of the Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development. Carbon dioxide currently causes 55% of global warming.

The science report warns of two future dangers, however. The first is that the climate protection provided by Montreal Protocol could be wiped out by the growing use of super greenhouse gases, hydrofluorocarbons, or HFCs. Although they do not directly destroy stratospheric ozone, HFCs are the fastest growing climate pollutant in many countries, including China, India and the U.S., and will be a major cause of climate change in the future.

The report also warns that climate change itself poses a risk to the recovery of the stratospheric ozone layer, as tropical ozone levels may be depleted by changes in atmospheric circulation driven by climate change. Ozone depletion over the tropics would increase skin cancer cataracts, suppress the human immune system and damage agricultural crops and ecosystems.

There are pending proposals to amend the Montreal Protocol to phase down HFCs. The first proposal was filed five years ago by the Federated States of Micronesia and other small island States to provide fast climate mitigation to slow sea-level rise and violent storm surges that continue to threaten the existence of these islands. Shortly after, the U.S., Canada and Mexico submitted their own proposal to phase down HFCs. Over100 countries have indicated their political support for phasing down HFCs.

Later this month United Nationals Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon will host the 2014 Climate Summit in New York City for more than 100 heads of States to catalyze more ambitious climate commitments, including commitments to phase down HFCs and other short-lived climate pollutants, in an effort to provide momentum for the UN climate treaty expected to be concluded in December 2015 and go into effect in 2020.

"The world owes the Montreal Protocol a debt of gratitude for doing so much to protect both the climate and the stratospheric ozone layer," said Zaelke. "It's now time to finish the HFC amendment, and take another big bite out of the climate problem—avoiding the equivalent of somewhere between 100 and 200 billion tonnes of CO_2 by 2050, and avoiding up to 0.5°C of warming by the end of the century."

The *Assessment for Decision Makers* will be available here at 3PM.

WMO-UNEP Media Advisory

Media Preview of Latest Scientific Assessment of Ozone Depletion

Implications for Global Action on Climate Change

Wednesday, 10 September 2014, at 14:15

Press Briefing Room (S-237), UN Headquarters

Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director and

Assessment Panel Co-Chairs:

Dr. Paul Newman, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center

Prof. A.R. (Ravi) Ravishankara, Colorado State University

The Assessment for Decision-Makers, a summary document of the Scientific Assessment of Ozone Depletion 2014, is the work of a United Nations panel of 300 scientists and is the first comprehensive update in four years. The report analyses the impact on the Earth's protective ozone layer of concerted international action since the adoption of the Montreal Protocol in 1987. It also assesses the implications of the phaseout of ozone-depleting substances on efforts to address climate change.

An advance copy of the Assessment for Decision-Makers is available, under strict embargo, to interested media.

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For media queries, please contact: Jim Sniffen, UNEP-NY, at +1-212-963-8094; sniffenj@un.org. The press conference will be webcast live at http://webtv.un.org. Questions can be emailed to sniffenj@un.org for subsequent reply.

For more information, please visit: www.wmo.int/pages/prog/arep/gaw/ozone/index.html and www.unep.org/ozone.

IGSD's *Primer on HFCs* is here.