

COP11/MOP29 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2017

The Vienna Convention COP 11 and Montreal Protocol MOP 29 HLS opened on Thursday, 23 November 2017, in Montreal, Canada. In the morning, plenary heard statements from dignitaries, watched a cultural performance, and took part in a ministerial roundtable.

Plenary reconvened in the afternoon with a science panel debate, after which delegates heard statements from heads of delegation on key issues.

Contact groups and informal discussions took place throughout the day.

COP11/MOP29 HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

COP 10 President Sydney Alexander Samuels Milson, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Guatemala, opened the HLS. Noting the ozone hole is at its lowest level since 1998, he called upon parties to support the Vienna Convention Trust Fund, saying “important, systematic research” can be hampered by limited funding.

MOP 28 President Vincent Biruta, Minister of Environment, Rwanda, lauded the 22 parties that have ratified the Kigali Amendment. He urged parties to finalize their “broad” agenda, including on MLF replenishment, noting that without “sufficient financial support” it is impossible to ensure implementation.

Erik Solheim, Executive Director, UN Environment (UNEP), called the Montreal Protocol “a testimony of the spirit of togetherness of nations and humans.” He cited the Protocol as an example of when collaboration between science, citizens, politics, and business offers a “universal recipe to solve problems.”

Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Canada, enjoined delegates to learn from the success of the Protocol, saying it showcases that if science, political leadership and industry come together in good faith, the world’s biggest challenges can be solved.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Election of Vienna Convention COP 11 Officers: COP 11 elected by acclamation: Canada as President; Egypt, Bangladesh, and Armenia as Vice-Presidents; and Paraguay as Rapporteur.

Election of Montreal Protocol MOP 29 Officers: MOP 29 elected by acclamation: Kuwait as President; Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Brazil as Vice-Presidents; and Burkina Faso as Rapporteur.

Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work: Delegates adopted the agenda (UNEP/OzL.Conv.11/1-UNEP/OzL.Pro.29/1, section II). On the organization of work, COP 11 President Marc D’Iorio (Canada) noted the HLS will adjourn where necessary to allow the Preparatory Segment to conclude its work.

Credentials of Representatives: COP 11 President D’Iorio requested delegations submit their credentials to the Secretariat for review, noting a report will be made in plenary on Friday.

MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLE: MONTREAL PROTOCOL AT 30—Identifying Future Opportunities and Priorities: This session was opened by MOP 29 President Yaqoob Al-Matouq (Kuwait), and moderated by Leyla Acaroglu, UN Champion of the Earth 2016.

Roundtable participants included: Khachik Hakobyan, Armenia; Meelis Münt, Estonia; Vincent Biruta, Rwanda; Sydney Alexander Samuels Milson, Guatemala; Catherine McKenna, Canada; Abdullah Ziyad, Maldives; Zoila González de Gutiérrez, Dominican Republic; C.K. Mishra, India; and Erik Solheim, UNEP.

The roundtable panel addressed a number of questions posed by Moderator Acaroglu. On replicable successes from the Montreal Protocol, Gutiérrez stressed strong institutions and capacity building at the national level. Hakobyan highlighted political will. Münt lauded the treaty’s universality. McKenna underscored political leadership and incorporating science into decision-making. Biruta underscored a strong legal framework at the national level. Milson drew attention to public participation, and compliance with the phase-out schedules. Mishra underlined the importance of a clear agenda, and dovetailing global problems with local challenges.

Responding to a question regarding the importance of catalysts that drive action, Biruta stressed affordable alternatives and a robust financial mechanism, noting the MLF’s role in the Protocol’s success.

On the role of education and awareness, McKenna recommended translating science into lay people’s terms. Solheim suggested: using understandable language; focusing on issues closer to people; and linking this discussion to employment opportunities. Milson said environmental education should include practical actions.

In general comments, Hakobyan called for holding chemical producing companies accountable to their corporate social responsibility. Gutiérrez called for support to carry out small projects and scientific research into alternatives. Solheim recalled that the countries that ratified the Kigali Amendment are vastly different, considering it a good sign that universal ratification will be reached; urged parties to address the issue of clean cooling; and highlighted “the costs of inaction are greater than the costs of action.”

SCIENCE EVENT – THE SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATION OF THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE: Mona Nemer, Chief Science Advisor, Canada, moderated the panel. Vitali Fioletov, Environment and Climate Change Canada, stressed the importance of data to monitor ozone layer thickness. Lauding the Montreal Protocol’s role in

atmospheric recovery, Nathan Gillett, Environment and Climate Change Canada, said global ozone is also dependent on greenhouse gas (GHG) levels.

Explaining that ozone depletion has led to stratospheric cooling, Amanda Maycock, Leeds University, said this is the result of carbon dioxide emissions and ODS. Guus Velders, Utrecht University, spoke on the climate effects of HFCs, noting that the climate benefit of the Montreal Protocol is five to six times larger than that of the Kyoto Protocol. He highlighted that developing countries will be the biggest HFC emitters by 2020. Velders underscored that ratification of the Kigali Amendment will make a 0.5°C reduction target reachable.

Anne Thompson, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), described ozone monitoring efforts from space and ground networks, noting that monitoring needs are acute due to a changing climate, and called for protecting and increasing monitoring networks.

In the ensuing discussion, Fioletov underscored that the ozone layer is not yet healed. Gillett said there are various ways in which GHGs affect ozone, highlighting that models have shown that while some GHGs will accelerate the recovery of ozone, others will decelerate it. On how recovery will affect surface temperatures, Maycock said that GHG emissions will continue to have an impact on ozone in the tropics. Thompson highlighted the “good news” of networks monitoring areas previously not measured, and called for taking ozone measurements regularly and consistently in order to calculate trends. Velders, responding to a question on ozone projections beyond 2050, said a good deal depends on the uptake of alternative technologies in the implementation of the Kigali Amendment.

STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATION: Peter M. Christian, President, FSM, noted the Montreal Protocol is proof that when knowledge and political will are combined it is possible to make a difference. CHINA noted their intention to eliminate CTC use from 2019 onwards, and to ratify the Kigali Amendment.

The EU stressed that the Kigali Amendment’s challenge of transitioning from refrigerants with high-GWP can be done through cooperation with relevant institutions. BAHAMAS noted the particular vulnerability of SIDS to climate change and underscored that the Montreal Protocol is the best-suited treaty to address global warming.

SLOVAKIA recalled his country’s contribution of US\$1 million to the MLF for the last triennium. BAHRAIN emphasized his country’s key role in bridging different countries’ points of view. NIGERIA acknowledged the MLF’s critical role in ensuring continued and sufficient funding for his country to implement the Protocol. The US qualified the Kigali Amendment “a balanced and pragmatic approach” to address the phase-out of HFCs. KIRIBATI called for more transparency in the MLF Replenishment process.

GUATEMALA highlighted efforts to train personnel in the import and export of low-GWP refrigerants. KUWAIT drew attention to his country’s efforts in working with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries to reach consensus on the Kigali Amendment, and expressed concern that there is a lack of funding for HAT countries’ technological needs. PAKISTAN stressed that the phase out of HCFCs in the informal sector will be challenging without access to sufficient, affordable alternatives.

TANZANIA urged the Montreal Protocol to continue funding research on the protection of the ozone layer. BANGLADESH called for viable alternatives for HFC uses in the medical sector. UZBEKISTAN highlighted the country’s goal of phasing out HCFCs by 2030. CHILE underscored their efforts to phase out HCFCs and replace them with zero-GWP alternatives.

BRAZIL said that once ratified, the Kigali Amendment will contribute to their Nationally Determined Contribution to the Paris Agreement. MALDIVES called for assistance in finding alternatives for HCFCs in the fisheries sector. GERMANY noted their contribution of 10% to the MLF. MALAYSIA stressed that in order to effectively phase down HFCs, there is a need for affordable alternatives.

CONTACT GROUPS AND INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS

DATA REPORTING: Parties discussed data reporting under Article 7 of the Montreal Protocol (UNEP/OzL.Pro.29/7). Discussions focused on HFC-23 emissions. Disagreement arose on whether or not to include columns for the voluntary reporting of information. One party suggested these be moved to an annex to make the distinction between mandatory and voluntary reporting clearer. Parties also touched on reporting for HFC-23 in the production sector. Informal consultations will continue until the group’s next meeting.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY: After initial debate on which CRP should be addressed first, delegates agreed to continue reviewing the CRP submitted by Saudi Arabia and others (UNEP/OzL.Conv.11/3-UNEP/OzL.Pro.29/3). Issues discussed include: viewing energy efficiency solely as it relates to the Kigali Amendment, with some calling it “unadvisable” to link this discussion to other bodies that deal with climate change; specifying the environmental benefits of energy efficiency, for example by quantifying CO₂ avoided; and asking the TEAP to conduct a study on how to replace HFCs *vis-à-vis* energy efficiency, acknowledging that parties still need to offer clear guidance on this request to the TEAP.

IN THE CORRIDORS

On Thursday morning, delegates gathered in a celebratory mood anticipating the opening of the HLS. Speakers lauded the success of “the world’s greatest environmental treaty” and congratulated each other on the Protocol’s thirtieth birthday. UN Environment’s Erik Solheim, stating that “‘together’ is probably the most important word of the decade,” exemplified this by saying the Protocol is a “testimony of what can be achieved when nations and humans come together.”

In more grounded statements, speaker after speaker turned to the giant issue of finance. MOP 28 President Vincent Biruta firmly stated that without sufficient financial support, implementation is impossible. Many referenced both the Trust Fund and the MLF as being instrumental for developing countries to meet their commitments under the Protocol, thus bringing about a gradual healing to the ozone hole. One delegate expressed the hope that the message of togetherness and cooperation for success had reached the MLF replenishment contact group.

However, there seemed to be little reason to celebrate as the small group of delegates working on the issue were holed up for most of the day, making what some describe as slow progress on the matter. It was evident to many that a healthy MLF replenishment will act as the glue that binds the parties together to this most successful treaty, and will pave the way for even greater goodwill. Whispers of the difficult negotiations on the “the money issue” travelled the hallways. Even the ICAO cafeteria baristas were worried that the meeting may be hanging in the balance.

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of this meeting will be available on Monday, 27 November 2017 at <http://enb.iisd.org/ozone/cop11-mop29/>