

MOP 31 Highlights: Thursday, 7 November 2019

The penultimate day of the thirty-first Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol (MOP 31) convened on Thursday, 7 November 2019, in Rome, Italy. The High-Level Segment (HLS) opened with statements from dignitaries, following which delegates participated in a high-level roundtable on the Montreal Protocol's contribution to the cold food supply chain. Delegates then heard the findings of the Assessment Panels' 2018 synthesis report, the report of the Multilateral Fund's (MLF) Executive Committee (ExCom) and statements from heads of delegations.

The preparatory segment convened briefly in the afternoon to hear updates on outstanding agenda items. Contact groups and informal discussions took place throughout the day.

In the afternoon, Tina Birnpli, Executive Secretary, Ozone Secretariat, recognized the two outgoing co-chairs of the Environmental Effects Assessment Panel (EEAP), Nigel Paul and Min Shao, for their work with the Protocol.

High-Level Segment

MOP 31 President Liana Ghahramanyan (Armenia) opened the HLS. Sergio Costa, Italian Minister for the Environment, Land and Sea, welcomed guests, underscoring the Government of Italy's commitment to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and addressing environmental challenges so that "no one is left behind." He noted MOP 31 marks the beginning of several international conferences that Italy is hosting in the coming year.

Inger Andersen, UNEP Executive Director, highlighted that "this eternal city where the great Roman civilization was built, is a model for this Protocol, which can also achieve lasting impacts for generations." Andersen underscored the interconnectedness of environmental challenges and stated that "nothing short of universal ratification of the Kigali Amendment is acceptable." She encouraged parties to remain vigilant in their commitment to this Protocol.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, Holy See, on behalf of Pope Francis, cited aspects of a successful model of environmental protection and human development, such as dialogue on shared responsibilities and utilizing technology that takes interconnectedness into account. He urged delegates to consistently reflect whether "the goals of our progress are for the common good?"

Qu Dongyu, FAO Director General, highlighted the impact that sustainable food chains can have on agriculture and food production. He reiterated that there are clear benefits to phasing down HFCs, and lamented the prevalence of plastic pollution in the agriculture industry. He said addressing these through, among others, synergies, and innovation will ensure positive results. Dongyu stated environmentally-friendly practices are a necessity for the agricultural sector.

Organizational Matters: MOP 31 elected by acclamation: As MOP 31 President, Martin Alvin Da Breo (Grenada) for the Latin American and Caribbean States; and, as Vice-Presidents, Ezzat Lewis Agaiby (Egypt) for African States, Norlin Jaafar (Malaysia) for Asia-Pacific States, and Patrick McInerney (Australia) for Western European and other States. The nominee for rapporteur from Eastern European States remains to be decided.

MOP 31 President Da Breo introduced the agenda (UNEP/OzL.Pro.31/1, Part II) and organization of work, which were adopted without amendment. He urged parties to submit their credentials as soon as possible.

High-Level Roundtable Discussion: Jim Walker, Sustainable Energy for All, moderated the discussion on the contribution of the Montreal Protocol to food loss reduction through sustainable cold chain development. The roundtable featured: Inger Andersen; Roberto Morassut, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of the Environment, Italy; Krista Mikkonen, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Finland; Khadeeja Naseem, Deputy Minister of Environment, Maldives; Geeta Menon, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, India; Bintony Kutsaira, Minister of Natural Resources, Energy and Mining, Malawi; René Castro-Salazar, Assistant Director-General, Climate, Biodiversity, Land and Water Development, FAO; Jose Raul Rios, Agropecuaria Malichita, Mexico; Liz Goodwin, Director, Food Loss and Waste, World Resource Institute; and, David Appel, President, Carrier Transcold.

On the relevance of cold chains and actions taken, Morassut noted that Italy is set to adopt tax incentives to encourage new technology development and job creation. Menon described India's Cooling Action Plan and recent legislation to increase farmers' income by improving cold chains. Minister Mikkonen underscored that circular economy is a high priority for Finland and the EU. Minister Kutsaira lamented the partial coverage of cold chain infrastructure in rural Malawi. Deputy Minister Naseem stressed the importance of an unbroken cold chain for population health and tourism since almost all food is imported through Maldives' central port and then distributed across its 190 islands.

Walker asked the panelists what actions are needed to achieve the SDGs. Castro-Salazar stressed the urgency of scaling up successful pilot projects and facilitating coordination between the UN and industry. Andersen stressed the creation of norms and standards and mentioned the Cool Coalition, launched in 2019. Rios noted that improved cold chains have helped decrease food waste two-fold and create 12,000 jobs, and facilitated integration with international markets. Appel indicated the potential for cold chains to curb greenhouse gas emissions significantly by reducing food waste. Goodwin presented the findings of a recent report with recommendations aimed to reduce emissions from food waste, including improving food production without expanding land use.

In their calls for action, Andersen urged parties to incorporate cold chain plans into NDCs, Goodwin called for increasing public-private partnerships (PPPs) to facilitate industry participation, and Rios emphasized the importance of economic incentives.

Participants also discussed the possibility for cooperation in sustainable cold chains at both national and international levels. Menon highlighted India's efforts to link sustainable cold chain infrastructure development to energy efficiency, safety and design standards, and specialized training. Minister Mikkonen stated cooperation between governments and businesses can foster innovation, while Morassut emphasized Italy's efforts to utilize PPPs. Minister Kutsaira urged that cooperative efforts should focus on areas where infrastructure is currently lacking.

Participants concluded by emphasizing the role that sustainable cold chains play in, *inter alia*: price stabilization; food security; enhanced profitability; more secure livelihoods; social and economic development gains; fair and just sustainability transitions; SDG attainment; research, development and innovation; synergistic action; and, restoration of degraded lands.

Closing, Walker stressed that "the pilot phase of sustainable cold chain infrastructure is over, it is time to go to scale."

Presentations by the Assessment Panels on their Synthesis of the 2018 Quadrennial Assessments: Representatives from SAP, TEAP, and EEAP presented the synthesis report, noting that: the implementation of the Protocol has significantly lowered the occurrence of cataract and skin cancer; 2019 has marked the smallest ozone hole since 1983 due to unusual meteorological conditions not related to climate change; the decline of methyl bromide in the atmosphere has ceased; and, carbon tetrachloride (CTC) emissions are higher than expected due to unaccounted emission sources and revised CTC lifetimes. They underscored that understanding ODS banks is key to understanding ozone recovery.

Presentation by the MLF ExCom Chair: MLF ExCom Chair Philippe Chemouny (Canada) presented on activities undertaken since MOP 31 (UNEP/OzL.Pro.31/9). He provided updates on: firstly, policy matters related to HCFCs, global emissions of CFC-11 and the Kigali Amendment; secondly, the status of MLF-funded projects, including their number and type, the ODS reductions achieved to date, and the status of monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV); and, thirdly, business planning, and, administrative and financial matters, including the status of contributions and disbursements, budgets, costs and business plans.

Statements by Heads of Delegation: TUNISIA, PAKISTAN, NIGERIA and the BAHAMAS outlined their steps to implement the Protocol. The GAMBIA highlighted efforts to develop national capacities. MALAYSIA and UGANDA urged alternatives to HFCs be made available in Article 5 countries at reasonable and competitive prices.

JAPAN expressed concern that the unexpected emissions of CFC-11 have brought the credibility of the Protocol into question. NIGER and VANUATU highlighted the status of the Kigali Amendment as a "turning point" in the Protocol's link to broader climate change efforts.

TANZANIA and COSTA RICA lauded the Protocol's successes. TIMOR-LESTE said they are committed to implementing the Kigali Amendment in spite of the challenge it represents. UZBEKISTAN emphasized their intention to focus on international cooperation to achieve a just and green economic transition.

BENIN praised the Protocol as a source of hope for their country, particularly because they have very low ODS consumption but will benefit disproportionately from their phase-down. ETHIOPIA highlighted using forestry as a vehicle for climate action.

Preparatory Segment

In the afternoon, OEWG 41 Co-Chairs Wilmart and Arciniegas reconvened plenary to hear an update on outstanding agenda items.

MLF ExCom Membership: ARMENIA reported that parties' positions remained the same regarding representation in ExCom Membership.

Development and Availability of Laboratory and Analytical Procedures that can be performed without using Controlled Substances under the Protocol: CANADA said it intends to submit a CRP on the matter shortly.

Contact Groups

MLF Replenishment: Parties continued their discussion on the draft decision text requesting the TEAP prepare a report on the appropriate level of funding for the 2021-2023 replenishment of the MLF. They considered: when and how to differentiate between low-volume-consuming countries and Article 5 countries; adequately capturing both energy efficiency and HFC phase-down goals; limitations on the amount of detail that can be requested of the TEAP; what leap-frogging might look like in different contexts; and, how to ensure that funding is justly distributed across all countries who need it. Ultimately, parties bracketed more text than they agreed, and noted their need for additional time to discuss.

CTC: Discussions oscillated between whether to request information from the TEAP on CTC usages in an intermediate report or whether to allow TEAP enough time to provide this information in the quadrennial report. Delegates agreed to continue informal discussions.

CFC-11: Parties addressed the complexities of the TEAP mandate on reporting on CFC-11 emissions, and questioned whether TEAP should be responsible for monitoring and reporting on illegal trade of CFC-11. Some maintained that TEAP's mandate is to examine and report on the economic drivers for illegal trade. After a lengthy discussion, the group concluded with an agreement to continue informal discussions on the margins of MOP 31.

In the Corridors

The high-level roundtable on food waste reduction through sustainable cold chain development was viewed by many as the most important event of the day. It represented a growing sentiment among many delegates that new technology in the cooling sector can connect the dots among the many multilateral environmental agreements and contribute to the achievement of multiple international goals. As one observer stressed, this presented a reminder that the Protocol cannot and should not work in isolation; it is, in fact, providing parties with a unique chance to spearhead action on climate change through the implementation of the Kigali Amendment.

However, many delegates were concerned about the lack of progress in negotiations on the MLF replenishment since financial support is crucial for new technology development. Major MLF donors were heard expressing concern over the distribution of funds and growth in the number of Article 5 parties over the last 30 years. They questioned whether the current resource allocations are sustainable in the long term.

ENB Summary and Analysis: The Earth Negotiations Bulletin summary and analysis of MOP 31 will be available on Monday, 11 November 2019, online at: <http://enb.iisd.org/ozone/mop31/>