

MOP 34 Highlights: Thursday, 3 November 2022

The high-level segment (HLS) of the 34th Meeting of the Parties (MOP 34) to the Montreal Protocol opened on Thursday morning. Participants continued meeting in contact and informal groups even as the high-level statements began in afternoon plenary. In the evening, the Ozone Secretariat hosted a reception in celebration of the Protocol's 35th anniversary.

Opening of the High-Level Segment

MOP 33 President Samuel Paré (Burkina Faso) opened the HLS.

Cécile Siewe, Environment and Climate Change Canada, highlighted that the Montreal Protocol demonstrates how to unite government, science, business, and civil society. Speaking via video message, Steven Guilbeault, Minister, Environment and Climate Change Canada, highlighted the Kigali Amendment's role in reducing hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and thus avoiding further global warming. He underscored the importance of enabling developing countries to comply with the upcoming freeze on HFC consumption.

Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), congratulated participants via video message for their work, and underlined the importance of supporting the Protocol through sound science and the replenishment of the Multilateral Fund (MLF).

President Paré reflected on intersessional work since MOP 33, highlighting ongoing efforts to achieve universal ratification of the Kigali Amendment and the celebration of the pioneering work of the winners of the 1995 Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

Organizational Matters

Election of Officers for the 34th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol: President Paré presented the names of nominated officers, who were subsequently elected by acclamation: President: Hassan Mubarak (Bahrain); Vice Presidents: Jana Mašíčková (Czechia); Adrian Forde (Barbados); Alain Wilmart (Belgium); and Rapporteur: Cyrus Mageria (Kenya).

Taking the floor, MOP 34 President Mubarak thanked the outgoing President and parties for the confidence they had shown by electing him.

Adoption of the Agenda for the High-Level Segment: President Mubarak introduced this item (UNEP/OzL.Pro.34/1). The agenda was adopted as presented.

Organization of Work: President Mubarak introduced this item (UNEP/OzL.Pro.34/2), outlining a plan for the final two days of MOP 34. As the preparatory segment had not yet completed its work, he explained some contact groups would be working in parallel to the HLS and suspension of the HLS could be required at times.

Credentials of Representatives: President Mubarak asked all delegations that had not yet submitted credentials to do so (UNEP/OzL.Pro.34/2).

Presentation by the Chair of the Executive Committee of the MLF for Implementation of the Montreal Protocol on the Work of the Executive Committee, the MLF Secretariat and the Fund's Implementing Agencies

President Mubarak opened this item (UNEP/OzL.Pro.34/2; 34/7) and, as Chair of the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the MLF, presented relevant intersessional decisions and updates, with a focus on efforts to phase down HFCs.

Chair Mubarak highlighted that the ExCom requested the Secretariat to develop criteria for pilot projects on the energy efficiency of replacement technologies and to prepare an operational framework on institutional activities that could be undertaken by the MLF in the manufacturing and servicing sectors for the phase-down.

Chair Mubarak reported that: UNDP had enhanced capacity building through more than 30 online webinars; UNEP had continued to assist 93 countries with enabling projects; UNIDO is helping to implement HCFC Phase-Out Management Plans (HPMPs) in 64 countries; and the World Bank has been exploring ways to maximize climate change mitigation co-benefits.

Statements by Heads of Delegations and Discussions on Key Topics

High-level Roundtable: On Thursday morning, Mona Nemer, Chief Science Advisor of Canada, moderated a high-level roundtable discussion on the theme: "Montreal Protocol @35: The Kigali Amendment and its potential impact on climate." Panelists included: Cécile Siewe, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Environmental Protection, Environment and Climate Change Canada; Jan Dusik, Deputy Minister, Climate Protection, Czechia; Dawda Badgie, Executive Director, Environmental Protection Agency, The Gambia; Kerryne James, Minister, Climate Resilience, Environment, and Renewable Energy, Grenada; Abdulla Naseer, Minister of State, Environment, Climate Change and Technology, Maldives; Kylie Farrelley, General Manager, Refrigerant Reclaim Australia; and Klaus Peter Schmid Spilker, President, Chilean Chamber of Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning.

On the Protocol's contribution to delivering on the 1.5°C target, Siewe called for raising the profile of the Protocol's achievements and underscored that the Kigali Amendment's successful implementation can lead to 0.5 to 1°C in avoided warming. Dusik called for a holistic perspective on integrating the Protocol in the range of climate-change related instruments. BRAZIL underscored the Kigali Amendment's potential for producing co-benefits. INDIA highlighted two key features for the Protocol's success: the MLF and that adjustments and amendments are science-based.

On needs for addressing challenges to phasing down HFCs, Badgie highlighted the importance of training technicians. Naseer underscored the need for refrigeration alternatives in the residential sector. James emphasized the importance of a holistic approach. Participants subsequently discussed the need for increased bilateral cooperation to support technology transitions and the importance of strengthening capacity in customs and border control.

On plans to address the energy-related aspects of the HFC phase-down, Dusík highlighted the EU's efforts to achieve zero pollution by 2050 and move toward renewable heating and cooling systems. Farrelley cautioned that policy development should consider measures tailored to countries' needs. Spilker underlined issues of aging equipment, as well as transmission problems limiting transitions to renewable energy. James noted Grenada's minimum energy performance standard and spoke to the challenges of making investments under significant national debt, pointing to the private sector as the driving force of achieving targets under the Protocol. Badgie spoke to several efforts in The Gambia, including prioritizing renewable energy incentives and following climate-smart agriculture production techniques. Participants subsequently discussed the need to increase the visibility of the Protocol and national cooling plans to guide the transition towards energy-efficient and technologies with low global warming potential (GWP).

On applying the Protocol's successful partnership between governments and industry to the Kigali Amendment, Naseer explained how the Maldives supported major industries through financial incentives and capacity-building. Farrelley noted better policy arises from stakeholder involvement, as industry understands best how policy will impact them. Siewe indicated the Protocol's success was tied to its clear vision combined with sufficient time for the private sector to adjust. Parties and panelists also commented on how the model of successful public-private partnership can be exported to other environmental challenges through more effective communication and education. Commending the clear policy direction arising from the panel, Nemer closed the roundtable discussion.

Delegations' statements: In the afternoon, President Mubarak invited heads of delegations to deliver statements to the HLS.

The EU stressed the importance of multilateral cooperation and mutual respect to solving environmental challenges and condemned the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified act of aggression against Ukraine with the complicity of Belarus. CANADA, speaking on behalf of many countries, echoed this condemnation, underscoring it is causing environmental damage and transboundary harm. She called on the Russian Federation to cease all hostilities and secure rapid humanitarian assistance to those in need.

BARBADOS called the phase-out of 98% of ozone-depleting substances (ODS) worldwide a testament to the difference humanity can make when working together.

SAMOA lauded the "admirable" commitment toward obligations under the Protocol in the face of recent years' challenges and highlighted that his country has already exceeded the 65% HCFC consumption phase-down target for 2025.

ESWATINI reiterated his country's commitment to HCFC phase-out by the 2030 deadline and transitioning directly from ODS to climate-friendly alternatives.

SAUDI ARABIA highlighted projects undertaken under Saudi Arabia's Green Initiative. Noting international environmental treaties are key to protecting the planet, he underscored the importance of: adopting scientific and objective approaches, providing just and balanced support, and refraining from overstepping a treaty's mandate through politicization.

CANADA reported HFC reductions 38% below baseline, underscored support for replenishing the MLF to support meeting Kigali commitments, and outlined ongoing efforts to sustain and strengthen global monitoring capacity.

ANGOLA outlined progress in phasing out HCFCs and said they expect to submit their national programme for the reduction of HFCs in 2023.

CAMBODIA explained that, through its energy efficiency plan, it will incentivize businesses to transition to more efficient appliances and products, noting this will bring co-benefits for public health, energy security, and climate mitigation.

SOUTH AFRICA highlighted its work to implement the Montreal Protocol, noting it is prioritizing actions that have potential to provide social, economic, and environmental benefits.

Saying it is encouraged by the tangible results of implementation of the Protocol, MYANMAR called for redoubling collaborative efforts and highlighted that it is in the process of ratifying the Kigali Amendment.

PHILIPPINES called for developing country-specific strategies to meet phase-down targets for HFCs and engaging the private sector in implementation.

Presentations by the Assessment Panels on Progress in Their Work and Key Issues Emanating from their 2022 Quadrennial Assessments

Scientific Assessment Panel (SAP): Co-Chair Bonfils Safari (Rwanda) introduced the SAP's forthcoming quadrennial assessment. Co-Chair Paul Newman (US) highlighted declines in ODS since the Protocol's adoption. Underscoring that ozone in the upper stratosphere continues to recover, he noted ozone in the lower stratosphere does not show signs of recovery, but the uncertainty is large.

Co-Chair John Pyle (UK) presented a chapter on climate intervention or "geoengineering," specifically Stratospheric Aerosol Injection (SAI). He noted that while SAI could lead to 0.5°C surface cooling, it could result in ozone depletion comparable to that in the 1990s.

Environmental Effects Assessment Panel (EEAP): Co-Chair Janet Bornman (Australia) presented highlights from the EEAP's forthcoming quadrennial assessment. She provided a brief overview of the report's key findings relating to the interactive effects of stratospheric ozone and climate change on a number of issues, including, human health, ecosystems, natural and synthetic materials, and microplastics in the environment.

Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP): Co-Chair Bella Maranion (US) outlined the TEAP's forthcoming quadrennial assessment. On foams, she noted progress in the adoption of low-GWP foam blowing agents, but continued challenges in the accessibility of these alternatives. On halons, she noted that proposed changes to legislation around perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) could leave halons as the only viable alternative to HFCs. She further explained that viable technical alternatives now exist for uses of methyl bromide but some present concerns due to their GWP.

After President Mubarak opened the floor for questions, participants discussed, among other items, information available on unknown emissions of carbon tetrachloride; projections on short-lived substances; and the impacts of volcanoes and wildfires on the stratosphere.

In the Corridors

Coming between 35th anniversary celebrations and parties' reports of substantial progress, for some the preview of the assessment panels' forthcoming reports was a stark harbinger of the challenges that lie ahead. Others were excited to get a taste of the panels' foray into new issue areas, including geoengineering and plastic pollution. What both the panel presentations and high-level roundtable made clear, however, was that the Montreal Protocol lies squarely at the heart of what UNEP describes as the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

"It was incredible to see all of the connections to other issues," said one delegate, who listed a lengthy series of global processes on other issues—oceans, plastic pollution, and persistent organic pollutants, to name a few—that are affected by depletion of the ozone layer and efforts to repair it. "The days of siloed work on the environment are way behind us," he said, "or at least they should be."

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of MOP 34 will be available on Monday, 7 November 2022 at <https://enb.iisd.org/montreal-protocol-meeting-parties-ozone-mop34>