

MOP-19 HIGHLIGHTS:

MONDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2007

The nineteenth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (MOP-19) began on Monday, 17 September, in Montreal, Canada. In plenary, a high-level segment took place throughout the day, including an award ceremony, organizational matters, statements from heads of delegations, and reports from assessment panels and the Multilateral Fund. Contact groups on hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), illegal trade in ozone-depleting substances (ODS), and terms of reference (ToR) for a study on the Multilateral Fund replenishment also met in the afternoon.

PLENARY

OPENING OF HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT: MOP-18 Bureau Vice-President Omar Tejada (Dominican Republic) opened MOP-19. John Baird, Minister of Environment, Canada, welcomed participants, describing the Montreal Protocol as the most effective international convention of our time. He stated that the use of HCFCs was always intended to be a temporary solution and called for an accelerated phase-out of HCFCs. In closing, he noted that climate change must be tackled with the same spirit that led to the Montreal Protocol's success.

Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP, welcomed delegates on behalf of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. He said that the multilateral system is complex and frustrating but extraordinary policy regimes such as the Montreal Protocol show that the international system can effectively address environmental issues. Steiner asserted that the Protocol now presents a challenge to governments in addressing issues such as the global warming effects of ODS.

AWARD CEREMONY: Steiner, Minister Baird, and Marco Gonzalez, Executive Secretary, Ozone Secretariat, presented numerous awards to individuals, international agencies, and government agencies as implementing agencies, in recognition of outstanding contributions to the implementation of the Montreal Protocol.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Parties elected Bureau members for MOP-19, namely: Khalid Al-Ali (Qatar) as President; Miroslav Spasojevic (Serbia), Nicholas Kiddle (New Zealand) and Mayra Mejia (Honduras) as Vice-Presidents; and Jessica Eriyo (Uganda) as Rapporteur.

MOP-19 Bureau President Al-Ali then introduced the proposed agenda (UNEP/OzL.Pro.19/1). He suggested, and delegates agreed, to defer Agenda Item 3d (credentials of representatives), and to refer Agenda Item 11 (consideration of a Montreal Declaration) to the Preparatory Segment. Delegates

adopted the agenda with an additional item proposed by the US. They also agreed to the organization of work, which included the establishment of contact groups on: HCFCs; illegal trade in ODSs; the ToR for a study on the Multilateral Fund replenishment; and institutions of the Montreal Protocol.

2006 ASSESSMENT PANEL REPORTS: A.R. Ravishankara, on behalf of the Steering Committee of the Science Assessment Panel (SAP), presented the latest results on ODS emissions and ozone recovery, which he said indicated that the Montreal Protocol is "working as intended." He showed that global ozone levels have leveled off and are not declining, but that uncertainty remained as to when the ozone layer would recover. He stated that methyl chloroform, methyl bromide, HCFC-22 and very short lived halogens are the main contributors to current ozone depletion.

Janet Bornman, Co-Chair of the Environmental Effects Assessment Panel (EEAP), reported on work examining the interaction between climate change factors and ozone depletion. She highlighted the adverse effects of increased ultraviolet (UV) radiation on human health, terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, air quality and materials. She emphasized that all types of skin cancers are expected to double from 2000 to 2015.

Stephen Andersen, Co-Chair of the Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP), stated that TEAP recommended an accelerated phase-out of HCFCs and called for alternatives to ODS in foam production. He further reported that: the civil aviation sector still widely uses halons; phase-out of CFCs for metered-dose inhalers (MDIs) is achievable by 2009; and alternatives for methyl bromide exist. Andersen outlined TEAP's view that refrigeration in Article 5 countries will likely depend on CFCs and HCFCs for some time, and called for accelerated use of alternatives.

STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS: Many countries thanked Canada for hosting MOP-19 and outlined national activities to eliminate ODS. FIJI called for closer cooperation with the Southeast Pacific network with the support of the Multilateral Fund. ARGENTINA noted that the G8 Summit, Ibero-American Ministerial Conference and Mercosur have all made declarations on reducing ODSs, and called for accelerated phase-out efforts. The SOLOMON ISLANDS, BHUTAN, BENIN and CROATIA referred to networks in their regions that support implementation of the Protocol.

The US stated that an accelerated HCFC phase-out would bring greater benefits for climate change amelioration than measures under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Kyoto Protocol, and called for reaching a decision on a phase-out at this conference. ZIMBABWE and SWEDEN called for an accelerated HCFC phase-out. GUINEA stressed the need to fully phase out both HCFCs and CFCs.

CHINA stressed that continued successful implementation depends on support from key industries, and listed current obstacles to an accelerated HCFC phase-out, including the lack of alternative technologies, and negative impacts on economic sectors and the workforce.

COLOMBIA said that reducing HCFCs required adequate financing for Article 5 parties from the Multilateral Fund. DJIBOUTI supported an accelerated phase-out but called for a realistic timetable due to the difficulties faced by developing countries in gaining access to reasonably-priced alternatives. Portugal, for the EUROPEAN UNION, offered to take a leading role helping developing countries accelerate the phase-out of HCFCs and suggested a focus on preventing illegal trade, controlling new substances, managing ODS banks, and ozone-layer monitoring.

BRAZIL highlighted their joint submission with Argentina for an accelerated HCFC phase-out and stressed the phase-out's dependence on sufficient funding. JAPAN asserted that any consideration of an accelerated HCFC phase-out must take available resources into account.

GABON, TANZANIA and SENEGAL raised concern over the future of the Protocol after 2010, and with SOUTH AFRICA and SAMOA drew attention to the need for assistance to address growing illegal trade in ODSs, and negative economic impacts of ODS reductions. UGANDA identified future challenges for the Montreal Protocol, including improving strategies for border control and increasing financial and technical support for development of alternative technologies. The EUROPEAN COMMUNITY emphasized the need for MOP-19 to achieve solid results that go beyond current commitments under the Montreal Protocol.

INDIA stressed the need for technology transfer to be provided under fair and favorable conditions. MAURITIUS highlighted the vulnerability of small island developing states to climate change. FRANCE noted the interrelationships between ODS, global warming, biodiversity and human health.

MEXICO advocated the elimination of methyl bromide use by all parties and, with the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, highlighted alternatives to methyl bromide. ITALY explained that it was once the second biggest consumer of methyl bromide, but that it has nearly completed its transition to elimination. CUBA stressed that political will was necessary to reduce methyl bromide consumption.

MULTILATERAL FUND: Philippe Chemouny (Canada), Chair of the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund, presented the Committee's report (UNEP/OzL.Pro.19/4). He highlighted an ongoing study on ODS and their destruction, and the establishment of a contact group to discuss funding for phasing out CFC consumption for MDI manufacturing. He added that the Multilateral Fund lacks guidelines for assessing the cost of phasing out HCFCs, but will consider the incremental costs of an accelerated phase-out at its next meeting. In conclusion, Chemouny congratulated China, Mexico and Venezuela for phasing out their consumption and production of CFCs ahead of schedule.

The implementing agencies of the Multilateral Fund then presented reports of their activities in support of the Montreal Protocol. UNDP listed its contributions to projects in 100 countries, including promoting better economies of scale, and building synergies in support of sustainable development. UNEP outlined activities including capacity building and technical support, regional networking, special compliance assistance, education of teachers and close cooperation with industry experts. UNIDO overviewed its work as implementing agency since 1992, supporting over 1000 projects in 81 countries including: promoting use of hydrocarbons to replace CFCs; and helping to establish national ozone units and phase out ODSs in developing countries. The World Bank reported its involvement in 600 Montreal Protocol projects in 25 countries, and said accelerated phase-out of HCFCs might be viable for

some countries, but there was a need to better understand supply and demand issues. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) explained their strategic mandate to support the HCFC phase-out and noted possible synergies with the UNFCCC.

CONTACT GROUPS

HCFCs: The contact group was co-chaired by Maas Goote (the Netherlands) and Mikheil Tushishvili (Georgia). Co-Chair Goote reported on Informal Consultations on proposals to phase out HCFCs that took place on Saturday, 15 September 2007, highlighting: a convergence of views on freeze and baseline dates; "positive signals" regarding funding; and discussions on essential uses and optimizing climate benefits.

The contact group discussed baseline data for measuring HCFC phase-out, including related issues of funding and technical assistance, and potential starting dates for an accelerated phase-out. While many recognized problems with older data, there were also concerns about further delaying action. Several Article 5 countries expressed concern about the continuity in funding required for five-year programmes of data collection in the lead-up to a freeze.

Other issues raised included: the need to take sector-based approaches for a phase-out; the application of common but differentiated responsibilities; and the needs of low-consumption countries.

Participants agreed that MOP-19 should endeavour to agree on baseline and freeze dates, reduction steps, financial and technological assistance, and possibly a floor and ceiling for funding. The Co-Chairs agreed to prepare a draft text to be considered on Tuesday afternoon.

TOR FOR THE STUDY ON MULTILATERAL FUND REPLENISHMENT: The contact group, chaired by Jozef Byus (Belgium), met to discuss a draft decision on the ToR for a study on the 2009-2011 replenishment of the Multilateral Fund (UNEP/OzL.Pro.19/3). The EU introduced an alternative proposal and the group agreed to integrate the two texts for later consideration.

The group also discussed longer replenishment periods, with one participant suggesting the study consider a 2009-2014 replenishment period and proposing that TEAP consider the financial and other implications of a possible 5 or 6-year replenishment period, and whether such a measure would facilitate more even levels of financial contribution.

ILLEGAL TRADE: Paul Krajnik (Austria) chaired the contact group, which considered draft decisions on illegal trade in ODSs (UNEP/OzL.Pro.19/3 – Section E). Participants discussed language on encouraging parties to include permits for each ODS shipment in their ODS licensing systems. Many delegates disagreed with this approach, citing the onerous nature of shipment-by-shipment approaches, and questioning the effectiveness of this approach in combating illegal trade. Others noted that this was only one of many approaches to licensing, and warned that singling it out may send a signal that it is the only control that is effective. Chair Krajnik deferred discussion until Tuesday.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As delegates basked in Monday's celebration of the Protocol's twentieth birthday, most were excitedly talking about the links between the ozone and climate processes, particularly the possible "win-win" from an accelerated phase-out of HCFCs. One participant enthused that HCFCs were the most significant issue to be tackled by the Montreal Protocol in recent years – a view possibly demonstrated by the shortage of seats in Monday afternoon's packed contact group. Others felt that the success of any phase-out would hinge upon the Multilateral Fund's replenishment. Meanwhile, despite the positive HCFC climate, at least one experienced participant foreshadowed the always-contentious issue of methyl bromide exemptions lurking in the wings.