

CONTINUING AND FUTURE CHALLENGES FACING THE OZONE LAYER PROTECTION EFFORT



While the Montreal Protocol has made great strides in the effort to protect the ozone layer, the task is far from complete. The following are among the challenges that the Protocol Parties still need to address before they can rest assured that the ozone layer will continue to be safe for this and future generations:

Sustaining the momentum for the total global phase-out needed to ensure protection of the ozone layer: All scientific analysis predicting the healing of the ozone layer around the middle of this century is premised on the expectation of full compliance with the phase-outs required by the Protocol. Over the next several years, the Parties must therefore facilitate the complete elimination of the remaining ozone depleting substances. While support for related activities is being provided, the final phase-out of these remaining uses, which include the use of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) in air conditioning and refrigeration equipment will not be easy, and will necessitate a long-term commitment from developed and developing countries alike;

Facilitating a climate friendly transition: Because HCFCs and some related production byproducts are global warming gasses, their continued production and consumption contribute to climate change as well as contributing to ozone depletion. Further, some alternatives to HCFCs (such as hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) are also global warming gasses. **There is currently a proposed amendment for consideration at the Twenty Second Meeting of the Parties in November 2010, that would include HFCs under the Montreal Protocol basket of Controlled Substances.** Finally, the essential transition in the refrigeration and air conditioning sectors presents an opportunity to achieve substantial global warming benefits through enhancements in energy efficiency. Although not required by the Montreal Protocol, the Parties have committed to taking these types of issues into account as they proceed with their HCFC phase-out;

Funding: Many Parties have found that as the phase-out has progressed significantly, it has become increasingly difficult to get the attention of or funding from policy makers to deal with the remaining phase-out challenges. To date, most eligible developing countries have relied heavily upon funding from the Protocol's Multilateral Fund to support their phase-out efforts, and continued assistance from the Fund will be important to ensuring that a high level of compliance in these countries is maintained, and that environmental benefits from the phase-out are maximized. The essential completion of the phase-out in both developed and developing countries will require a commitment to both a continued high level of attention to the issue and continued funding;

Dealing with illegal trade and ensuring that continued use of ozone depleting substances are not diverted to illegal uses: As the continuing phase-out of ozone depleting substances further constrains their supply, the temptation to make money through illegal trade in such substances often increases; the Parties need to redouble their efforts to address this issue;

Ensuring control of new chemicals found to pose an undue threat to the ozone layer: The same creative entrepreneurial spirit that inspired the development of alternatives to ozone depleting substances may spark the invention of substances with ozone depleting properties. The Parties must be vigilant in the testing of new chemicals, lest new ozone depleters gain a foothold in the marketplace;

Monitoring the ozone layer to ensure that expected healing is taking place: Recent findings on the interaction between climate change and ozone depletion have led scientists to push back the date that they believe the ozone layer will be healed. The world community needs to continue to monitor the state of the ozone layer and the nexus between ozone depletion and climate change so that it can be confident that related risks are understood and are being adequately addressed.