



Media Advisory

For immediate release: April 20, 2010



Ozone Treaty Takes Major Steps to Combat Climate Change, Opens Door for Amendment to Prevent Over 100 Billion Tonnes of CO₂-eq. Emissions

Parties to Montreal Protocol Remove Obstacles to Action on Super Greenhouse Gases; Climate Benefits from HFC Phase Out Could Rival UNFCCC Efforts

Last week, the Parties to the Montreal Protocol solved several major funding issues that last year had hampered efforts to eliminate hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). This creates an unparalleled opportunity for eliminating one of the six Kyoto greenhouse gases, and securing 100 or more billion tonnes of CO₂-equivalent in climate protection.

HFCs and other fluorinated or 'F-gases' are intentionally produced greenhouse gases (GHGs) responsible for one sixth (17%) of current global warming. The contribution from F-gases is projected to rise significantly from soaring use of HFCs as a substitute for ozone-depleting substances (ODS) in developing countries. HFCs are used in refrigeration, air conditioning, and foam-blowing, and are 'super' greenhouse gases with global warming potentials (GWP) hundreds to thousands of times greater than CO₂.

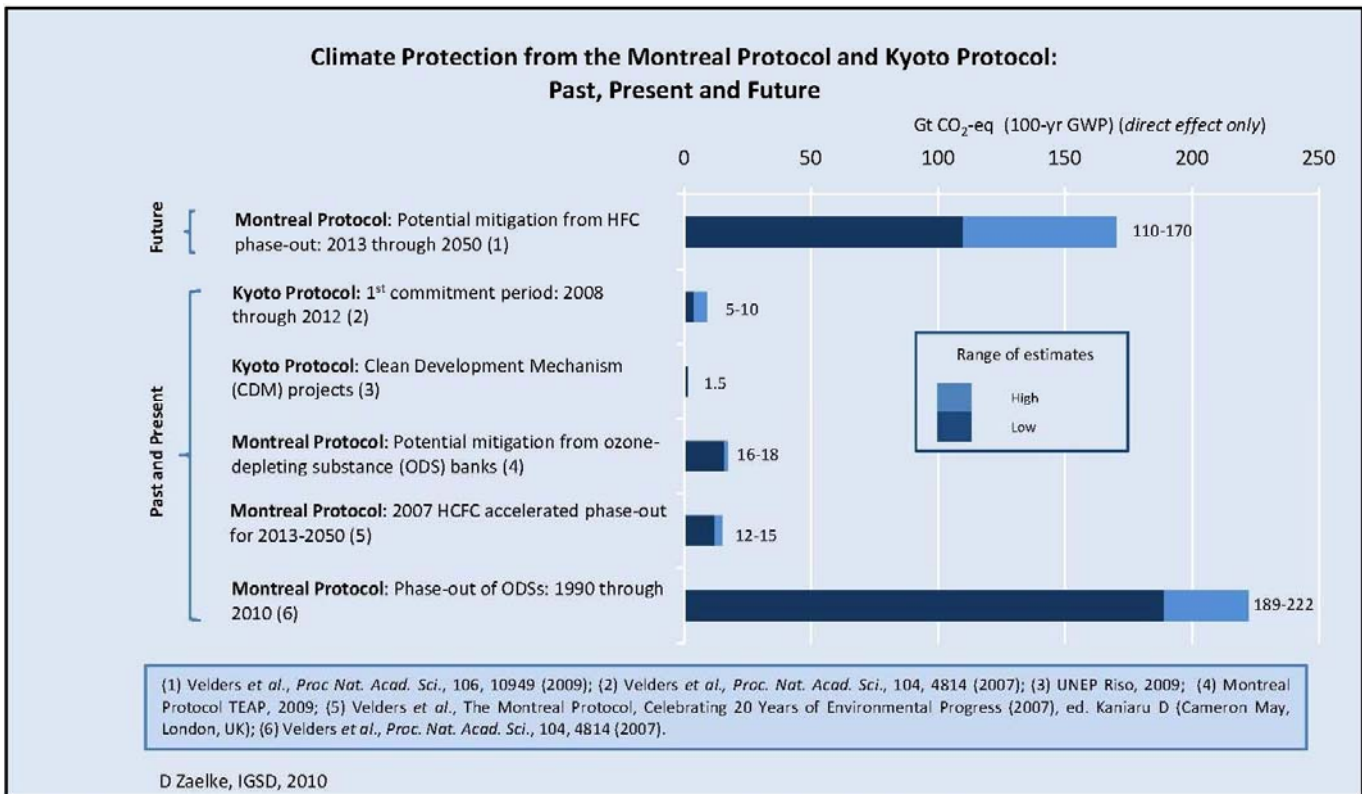
The U.S. is expected to re-submit a formal amendment later this month with Mexico and Canada to reduce production and consumption of HFCs under the Montreal Protocol (leaving emissions in the Kyoto Protocol). The Federated States of Micronesia, the small island nation that led efforts the last three years to increase climate protection under the Montreal Protocol, is also expected to re-submit an HFC amendment proposal. The North American and island proposals were originally proposed in 2009. A total of 41 Parties expressed their initial support in a declaration during the 2009 meeting of the Parties.

A successful HFC amendment can prevent 110-170 Gt. of CO₂-eq. emissions. See graph below. The incremental cost is estimated at \$4 billion over 30 years.

High-level political leadership will be needed, from the U.S., Mexico, and Canada, as well as the EU, to ensure an equitable deal with China and India, as well as Brazil and South Africa.

The Obama Administration is in position to capitalize on this immediate opportunity to dramatically combat climate change, essentially buying the equivalent of a ten-year delay in carbon dioxide emissions. The HFC phase-out has bipartisan political support in the U.S., as well as strong support from NGOs and industry.

Action on HFCs under the Montreal Protocol is the fastest, cheapest climate mitigation available: 100 billion tonnes or more of CO₂-equivalent, for a cost of only \$4 billion in public funds over 30 years.



GRAPH: Over the last few decades, the Montreal Protocol has been successful in phasing out 97% of almost 100 chemicals damaging to both the ozone layer and the climate system, resulting in up to 222 billion tonnes of CO₂-eq. in mitigation by 2010. The Parties' decision in 2007 to accelerate the phase-out of HCFCs (the replacements for CFCs) was the first time the Parties explicitly recognized the Montreal Protocol's responsibility to address climate change. To achieve the full benefits of the 2007 decision, the Parties will need to address HFCs, the current substitute for HCFCs, which do not harm the ozone layer but have high global warming potentials. An amendment this year to phase down HFCs under the Montreal Protocol would reap enormous benefits for climate and would not affect HFC emissions controlled under the Kyoto Protocol. Another climate mitigation opportunity for the Montreal Protocol is to address ozone-depleting substances in stockpiles and old equipment ("banks") that will leak into the atmosphere if not properly recovered and destroyed.

EIA and IGSD participated in last week's Executive Committee meeting of the Montreal Protocol, where the following key decisions were taken:

Agreement Reached on HCFC Guidelines: The Multilateral Fund (MLF) of the Montreal Protocol finalized funding guidelines for the historic 2007 HCFC accelerated phase-out that had been stalled for 2 1/2 years. This action removes a key obstacle to reaching agreement on new control measures for reducing HFCs. Last year several key Parties would not support a phase-out of HFCs because they needed assurance that the 2007 HCFC phase-out would be adequately funded before they would consider controls on HFCs, which until recently were considered appropriate substitutes for HCFCs.

Ozone Treaty Formally Agrees to Assume Larger Role on Climate: For the first time, the Montreal Protocol agreed to make additional funding available for projects specifically designed to provide climate benefits in addition to reducing the use of ozone-depleting substances (ODS). The MLF agreed to provide an additional 25% in funding beyond the ozone-only cost-effective thresholds for projects that will provide additional climate benefits, thereby providing an incentive for countries to choose energy efficient, low-GWP replacements instead of high-GWP HFCs when phasing out HCFCs.

Discussion of Alternative Sources of Funding to Enhance Climate Benefits of the ODS Phase-Out: The Secretariat continued discussions on ways to increase funding to maximize benefits from the elimination of ozone-depleting chemicals. This additional funding could be used for example, to recover and destroy ODS stored in discarded products and equipment (estimated to be up to 16-17 billion tonnes of CO₂-eq.) and fund projects that replace HCFCs with low-GWP alternatives.

Projects Approved for Employing Low-GWP Alternatives to HFCs: For the first time, the MLF approved projects to transition from HCFCs to low-GWP alternatives giving incremental funding for the climate benefits the projects would achieve. Historically, the MLF has always selected the lowest cost project that would achieve the required reduction in ODS. Projects in Colombia, Croatia and the Maldives were approved that were funded in part based upon the climate benefits these projects are projected to achieve from transitioning from HCFCs directly to low-GWP alternatives.

The mid-year Montreal Protocol meeting (Open-ended Working Group) is scheduled for Bangkok, 15 –18 June 2010, with the Meeting of the Parties tentatively scheduled for Nairobi, 25-29 October 2010 (the meeting is expected to be changed to 8-12 November 2010 in Kampala, Uganda). See <http://ozone.unep.org/Events/meetings2010.shtml>.

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