



**UN Secretary General urges countries to leapfrog HFCs to protect climate**  
*Notes pending proposal to phase out HFCs under Montreal Protocol*

Washington, DC, September 16, 2011 – Countries and companies should leapfrog HFCs to protect the climate, according to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in a [statement](#) issued today on International Ozone Day. HFCs are super greenhouse gases 2,000 times more potent than carbon dioxide at warming the climate.

Executive Secretary of the Ozone Secretariat Marco Gonzalez emphasized in his earlier [statement](#) that the climate benefits of the current accelerated HCFC phase-out under the Montreal Protocol could be undermined if HFCs are selected as replacement gases. Due to the 2007 accelerated HCFC phase out, HFCs have become the fastest growing greenhouse gas in the United States and in many other countries. If HFCs are not controlled they could make up more than one third of climate forcing by mid-century.

The Secretary General highlighted the success of the Montreal Protocol in protecting the global climate as well as the ozone layer. The 1987 Montreal Protocol has provided the equivalent of 11 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in climate mitigation each year for the past 20 years. Parties explicitly added additional climate protection as well as additional ozone benefits in 2007 with their accelerated phase-out of HCFCs. The Secretary General called this phase-out a “unique opportunity” not only to eliminate ozone-depleting compounds “but do so in a way that lowers energy costs and maximizes climate benefits” by leapfrogging HFCs.

The Secretary General noted, “Parties to the Montreal Protocol are now considering ... proposals to bring hydrofluorocarbons, or HFCs, under the Protocol...” The proposed HFC amendment was first put forward by the Federated States of Micronesia in 2009, and would reduce 85-90% of HFC production and use, achieving climate mitigation equivalent to 100 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> by 2050. The United States, Canada, and Mexico followed with a similar HFC proposal. Last year 91 countries supported reducing HFCs, and more are expected to follow in the coming months. A consortium of 400 companies also pledged to start reducing HFCs by 2015.

Adding further momentum, earlier this week the European Parliament passed a strong [resolution](#) calling for fast action to cut HFCs and other non-CO<sub>2</sub> climate forcers, including black carbon, ground-level ozone, and methane.

“Climate change is advancing faster than the policies to address it. We’re losing ground every day and we need the Montreal Protocol to get us back in the game,” warned Durwood Zaelke, President of the Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development. “Very few opportunities exist to effectively target such a significant amount of mitigation, so cheaply, and with 100 percent assurance that it will get done. That’s the beauty of the Montreal Protocol. We know it will work because it has already worked for 96 other chemicals.”

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