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Ozone Treaty Lauded for Climate Protection

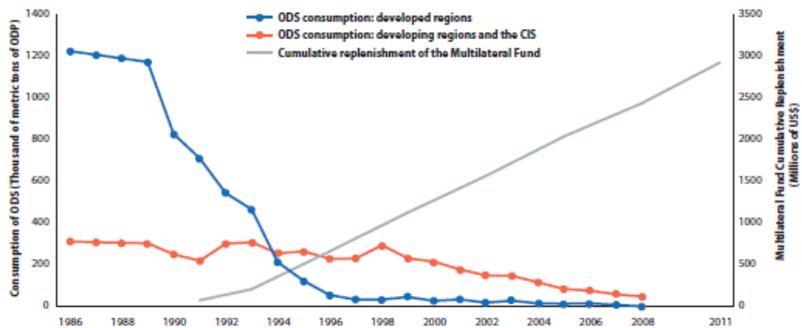
Washington, DC, July 2, 2010 – After almost 23 years in existence, the Montreal Protocol treaty is increasingly recognized for its success in saving the ozone layer – and in providing critical protection for the climate system. According to the 2010 **UN Millennium Development Goals Report** released last week, the Montreal Protocol’s regulation of ozone-depleting substances (ODSs) – also powerful greenhouse gases – “will have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of 135 gigatons of CO₂. This is equivalent to 11 gigatons a year, four to five times the reductions targeted in the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.”

“Montreal is sometimes left on the sidelines, mostly because it did its job so well – the bad news often makes it into the media more often than the stories of success,” said Durwood Zaelke, President of the Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development. “It’s important to recognize this success and to use it as proof that the world can come together on global environmental problems, to show that the Montreal Protocol has the potential to do even more for climate, and to mobilize countries to take action.”

The Montreal Protocol was [named today](#) as one of the five most effective pieces of environmental law, delivering a “one-two

The unparalleled success of the Montreal Protocol shows that action on climate change is within our grasp

Consumption of all ozone-depleting substances (ODSs), 1986-2008 (Thousands of metric tons of ozone-depleting potential) and Montreal Protocol’s Multilateral Fund replenishment, 1991-2011 (Millions of US dollars)



By 16 September 2009, 196 parties had signed the Montreal Protocol, making it the first treaty of any kind to achieve universal ratification. All the world’s governments are now legally obligated to phase out ozone-depleting substances (ODSs) under the schedules defined by the Protocol. This year—2010—marks the beginning of a world virtually free of the most widely used ODSs, including chlorofluorocarbons and halons.

Throughout the process, developing countries have demonstrated that, with the right kind of assistance, they are willing, ready and able to become full partners in global efforts to protect the environment. In fact, many

developing countries have exceeded the reduction targets for phasing out ODSs, with the support of the Montreal Protocol Multilateral Fund.

Between 1986 and 2008, global consumption of ODSs was reduced by 98 per cent. Furthermore, from 1990 to 2010, the Montreal Protocol’s control measures on production and consumption of such substances will have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of 135 gigatons of CO₂. This is equivalent to 11 gigatons a year, four to five times the reductions targeted in the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, the agreement linked to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Parties to the Montreal Protocol are now examining ways to use the treaty’s vigorous implementation regime to promote even greater climate change benefits.

Excerpted from the 2010 UN Millennium Development Goals Report.

punch” for ozone and climate protection.

At a symposium in Norway last week, U.S. Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs, Maria Otero, pointed out the achievements of the Montreal Protocol and described the 2010 North American proposal for a phase-down of HFC ‘super’ greenhouse gases under the Montreal Protocol (submitted jointly by the U.S., Canada, and Mexico), noting that “the Montreal Protocol is the best forum to promote practical action on this issue.” (See “[How the UN Can Contribute to International Cooperation on Climate Change](#)”.)

“HFCs are the most important climate mitigation opportunity available this year – more than 100 billion tonnes of CO₂-eq., or more than 8 billion tonnes per year of CO₂-eq. by 2050,” said Zaelke. HFCs are the current replacements for ozone-depleting HCFCs and can pack hundreds to thousands more global warming potential than CO₂. The North American proposal to phase down HFCs as well as a similar proposal by the Federated States of Micronesia could potentially avoid several hundred billion tonnes of CO₂-equivalent in emissions by 2050. “Montreal needs to be seen not just as a past success, but as a future success – taking action on these proposals could practically eliminate one of the six greenhouse gases.”

Phasing down HFCs under Montreal (production and consumption, *not* emissions, which would still be controlled by the Kyoto Protocol) is consistent with the past actions by the treaty which have explicitly recognized its climate benefits: in 2007, the treaty Parties agreed to accelerate the phase-out of HCFCs – the substitutes for CFCs – to reap climate benefits of up to 16 billion tonnes of CO₂-equivalent by 2040.

“To protect the climate savings that the Parties have already achieved, action has to be taken now on HFCs. If we let this problem go, HFCs could become almost half of CO₂ emissions by 2050 and push the world closer to abrupt climate change,” added Zaelke.

Decisions on the HFC proposals will be taken at the Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol, 8 – 12 November 2010 in Kampala, Uganda.

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2010 UN Millennium Development Goals Report:

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202010%20En%20r15%20-low%20res%2020100615%20-.pdf>

Reducing abrupt climate change risk using the Montreal Protocol and other regulatory actions to complement cuts in CO₂ emissions, by Mario Molina, Durwood Zaelke, K. Madhava Sarma, Stephen O. Andersen, Veerabhadran Ramanathan, and Donald Kaniaru. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 2009. <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2009/10/09/0902568106.full.pdf+html>