

Montreal Protocol

Possible Amendments Discussed

The nineteenth meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer convened from 15–18 June 1999, in Geneva. The meeting's main task was to discuss possible amendments to the Protocol and the replenishment of the Multilateral Fund, which assists developing countries in eliminating the use of ozone-depleting chemicals.

The Executive Secretary of the Ozone Secretariat, *K. Madhava Sarma*, reminded participants that the meeting came at a critical juncture in the life of the Protocol. The first control measures applicable to Article 5 Parties,* regarding the freeze in the production and consumption of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), would take effect from 1 July 1999. The fourth replenishment of the Multilateral Fund covering the period 2000–2002, would be decided upon that year.

On the positive side, the Executive Secretary noted that overall production and consumption of CFCs have dropped by 84 per cent since 1986, and developing countries appear ready to respect the production freeze as a result of implementation projects financed by the Multilateral Fund. In addition, the Multilateral Fund had

recently approved new CFC and halon phaseout projects in China, the world's largest producer of ozone-depleting substances among developing countries and negotiations were under way for the phaseout of CFC production in India, which has the second-largest production capacity in the developing world.

However, participants were reminded that danger signals remained. Illegal trade in ozone-depleting substances (ODS) continued. The pace of ratification of the Copenhagen Amendment** was very disappointing, with only 90 Parties having ratified so far. Given attempts by the promoters of methyl bromide to sell their products throughout the world, Madhava Sarma said that the dangers of non-ratification of the Copenhagen Amendment were obvious. In addition, only 14 Parties had ratified the Montreal Amendment. Halon and CFC-12 levels had increased in the atmosphere. Further, consumption of methyl bromide was increasing in certain fast-growing economies.

Global production capacity for ODS already far exceeded consumption demand, and in his statement to the meeting, the Executive Director of UNEP said he hoped governments would take steps to reduce that over-production.

Assessment Panel Reports

Prior to the meeting, the Assessment Panels had prepared their most extensive reviews to date of scientific, environmental, technical and economic issues surrounding the Protocol. Several proposals for strengthening the Protocol had been submitted and critical interactions between ozone depletion and global warming had been identified.

The reports of the Assessment Panels gave advice on the many significant issues to be considered at the meeting. Regarding hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) control measures, the reports suggested consideration of production controls, a reduction of the cap, trade controls, and a slight acceleration of the phase-out schedule. For methyl bromide, they suggested tightening the control for exempted categories.

The reports also supported the gradual reduction of the allowance given to industrialised countries to produce ozone-depleting substances for meeting the basic domestic needs of the developing countries.

Compliance Problems

With regard to data submitted to the Secretariat, UNEP's Executive Director said it was disappointing that only 127 of the 168 Parties had reported their data for 1997, even though eight months had passed since the deadline of 30 September 1998 and although data reporting was one of the essential obligations of the Parties to the Protocol. He stressed that non-reporting was non-compliance. He was happy to see that the trust funds of the Secretariat as well as the Multilateral Fund were financially in a healthy state and thanked the contributors for supporting these funds. However, a few countries had not contributed to the Trust Funds and there were continued delays by some in their contributions to the Multilateral Fund.

Main Issues

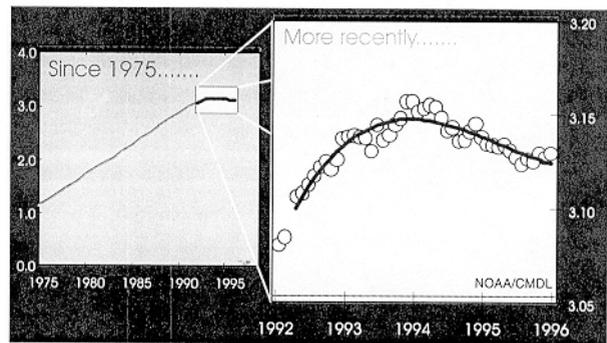
One of the main discussion points of the meeting was the presentation of a European Union proposal calling for an accelerated phaseout schedule for hydrochlorofluorocarbons and the imposition of new controls on the international trade in HCFCs.

In its proposal, the EU stated that current controls on HCFCs need to be strengthened to maximize protection of the ozone layer and to take account of recent progress in finding non-ozone-depleting alternatives. Member States are "also concerned that HCFCs are the only ozone-depleting substance listed in the Montreal Protocol whose production remains entirely uncontrolled and is increasing and for which trade with non-parties is still permitted."

The EU urged that Parties adopt amendments that would introduce tighter controls on HCFC production and consumption for industrialised countries during the intermediate stages of the phaseout schedule under the Protocol and introduce a ban on trade in HCFCs with non-Parties. The Union also called for restrictions to be put on methyl bromide use under the Protocol's "exempted" category of quarantine and pre-shipment applications by lim-

Atmospheric abundance of ozone-depleting chemicals from humans (chlorine and bromine as "equivalent chlorine" in the troposphere, ppb).

Since 1994, the amount of these chemicals present in the atmosphere has decreased.



Use of CFCs, HCFCs, chlorinated solvents, and halons caused a dramatic increase in the atmospheric abundance of chemicals (chlorine and bromine) capable of depleting stratospheric ozone in the years before 1994.

Ozone-depleting chemicals have begun to decrease in the lower atmosphere

Note: For additional information see, <http://www.cmdl.noaa.gov/noah/totalcl/totalcl.html>

Source: Montzka et al. 1996. *Science*, 272, 1318–1322.

Courtesy: UNEP

iting a country's annual consumption and production to its 1996–1998 average. It stated that it was concerned that over 20 per cent of the current global use of methyl bromide was for quarantine and pre-shipment applications, entirely outside the Protocol's control measures.

The meeting further considered reducing the consumption of virgin CFCs, including proposals for action by non-Article 5 Parties to ban the sale of virgin CFCs and limiting trade in products relying on CFCs.

The experts also discussed a proposal from an ad hoc group of 14 countries calling for replenishment of the Multilateral Fund to US\$506 million for the period 2000–2002. The ad hoc group estimated that US\$306 million would be enough for developing countries over 2000–2002 to maintain compliance with the Protocol's phaseout schedule, but added that US\$807 million would probably be needed over 2003–2005 to keep pace. The group argued that securing an extra US\$200 million over the next three years would help avoid sharp increases in the next replenishment period and encourage faster phaseout in developing countries.

Although no decisions were taken at the meeting on these key issues, it is thought that the discussions will pave the way for decisions when governments meet at the 11th Conference of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol, scheduled for December 1999 in Beijing. (MJ) □

Notes

* Due to the ten years grace period, laid down in Article 5, paragraph 1, of the Protocol, developing countries would have to phase out CFCs and other ozone-depleting substances by 2006 (halons 2004). However, these countries interpreted the sentence added to Article 5, paragraph 1, by the Copenhagen Amendment as clarification that the Copenhagen Adjustment did not apply to them. Thus, the developing countries would be bound only by the control measures adopted at the London Meeting in 1990, which demand the phaseout of CFCs, halons and carbon tetrachloride by 2010 and of methyl chloroform by 2015. ▶▶

** Methyl bromide: Article 5 Parties, which had no commitments regarding methyl bromide under the Protocol as amended in Copenhagen, accepted to freeze the production and consumption of methyl bromide by the year 2002. As the basis for these control measures, the average of the calculated level for the period of 1995 to 1998 inclusive shall be used.

The Copenhagen Amendment obliged non-Article 5 Parties to freeze, by 1995, their production and consumption of methyl bromide at 1991 base year level.

At the Vienna meeting in 1996, the Parties agreed to phase out methyl bromide in industrialised countries by the year 2010, with reduction steps in 2001 (minus 25 per cent) and 2005 (minus 50 per cent).

CFCs: According to the Copenhagen Adjustment, which entered into force for the Parties without ratification, industrialised countries were obliged to phase out CFCs and other ozone depleting substances listed in Annex A and B by 1996 (halons 1994).