

A weekly electronic news service on ozone protection & related issues compiled by: UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme, Paris

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1. Ozone Hole Repairs Could See 'Life Expectancy Drop to 30'

Repairing the hole in the ozone layer could trigger an environmental catastrophe that would reduce life expectancy to 30 years, says the editor-in-chief of one of the world's leading science magazines, *New Scientist*.

Dr Alun Anderson, who is in Sydney for National Science Week, predicted that by 2070 rich people could be forced to live in city-sized domes to escape air pollution. Elsewhere, smog would make asthma the leading killer of young people, and countries such as Russia would be devastated by famine as poisoned crops failed.

He said the cause would be a "hydroxyl holocaust" - plummeting levels of a molecule in the atmosphere that few people have yet heard of, called a hydroxyl radical, which has a vital role mopping up pollutants.

Hydroxyl levels began to drop as the world produced more smog, but they rose again during the 1980s. The growing hole in the ozone layer allowed in more UV light, which stimulated the production of more hydroxyl.

Dr Anderson said that if the ozone hole was repaired, hydroxyl levels would be expected to decline dramatically, and the world would choke in smog...

...It describes how, in a "bizarre series of feedbacks", global warming could trigger a catastrophic ozone loss in the Northern Hemisphere, and devastating release of the greenhouse gas methane from peat bogs and tundra. It also paints a gloomy picture of a world with 9 billion people, where disease flourishes in megacities of refugees. National Science Week begins tomorrow. Program details are at <www.scienceweek.info.au>

Full Text @: http://www.smh.com.au/news/0105/03/text/pageone9.html

Source: The Sydney Morning Herald, 03 May 2001, by: Deborah Smith, Science Writer

2. Arab Environment Ministers Meet Tuesday in Rabat

Rabat, Morocco (PANA) - The executive board of the council of environment ministers from Arab countries will Tuesday convene its 6th ordinary session in Rabat to examine the Arab Zone Free Exchange, trade, environment and the impact of the Abu Dhabi declaration. Participants will also focus on the preparations for the second Earth summit and the seventh session of the summit of member countries of the Cadre Convention on the Weather Changes scheduled in Marrakech, Morocco. At the two-day conference, they will discuss how Arab countries can apply the Montreal Protocol on the protection of the ozone layer. The ministers are also expected to assess follow-ups of conventions and international meetings regarding the environment as well as means of cooperation between them and the UN Environment Programme. The Arab programme for environment for 2001 would also come up for scrutiny.

Source: PANA Press, 24 May 2001, @: http://www.panapress.com/english/2001/May/24/eng003459.htm

3. Environment Satellite Goes on Tour

PR 32-2001. On 31 May the European Space Agency (ESA) starts a yearlong travelling exhibition about its new environment satellite, Envisat. The largest and most up-to-date satellite for earth observation ever built will be presented in fourteen cities...

... The importance of the Envisat mission is highlighted by a sobering report issued recently by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, warning of drastic climate change linked to pollution and demanding immediate action. For this, scientists will require detailed data on the sources and mechanisms of pollution and on the complex system of interactions between the oceans, landmasses and the atmosphere.

... The travelling exhibition will present some of the uses of the data which will be gathered by Envisat, such as predicting changes to the ozone layer and warning of imminent natural disasters. The exhibition will also explain the scientific background of the mission...

Full Text @: http://www.esa.int/export/esaCP/ESA193QWVMC_Protecting_0.html Contact: Jocelyne Landeau, Head of Communication Office ESA/ESOC

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Source: European Space Agency (ESA), Press release 23 May 2001

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