

OZONews

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1- On the Environment, It Isn't All Bad News (The Johannesburg Summit)

WASHINGTON. As leaders prepare for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg later this month, some critics argue that progress on environmental problems has been elusive. There is some truth in that. In the last decade, environmental problems have mounted across the globe. Yet over the same 10 years, society has marshaled its resources to address these challenges. The original response was slow. But it is gathering speed, with technological breakthroughs and a growing awareness that a clean environment is essential for development. Of course, we should greatly intensify efforts to tackle poverty and environmental degradation. They endanger our health, security and the innumerable benefits that come to us from nature. But we should also remember our real accomplishments. We have slashed emissions of chemicals that deplete the ozone layer and threaten human health. Industrialized nations largely eliminated chlorofluorocarbons and halons, the major ozone-threatening gases, by the end of 1995. Fourteen countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia have reduced their consumption of ozone-depleting substances by more than 90 percent. And many developing countries are ahead of the timetable that gives them until 2010 to phase out those gases... The Johannesburg summit meeting should set firm commitments to reform inappropriate policies and mobilize additional financial resources to improve the environment. It should also set clear goals and targets for action, and identify means for monitoring progress. With this kind of impetus from the international community, we can build on the strengths we have developed over the past 10 years and move ahead with confidence that sustainable development goals are indeed achievable.

Full text @: <http://www.iht.com/articles/67466.html>

Source: Mohamed T. El-Ashry, Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Global Environment Facility, Editorial in The International Herald Tribune, Tuesday 13 August 2002

2- Wind Flows Tear at Ozone Layer

Climate change is giving scientists a new perspective on Northern Hemisphere ozone depletion. Ozone chemist Neil Harris says "it's now clear" that shifts in large-scale wind flows dilute the stratosphere's ozone and open mini ozone holes at northern mid-latitudes even when ozone-eating chemicals are not directly involved. He adds that this implies that we won't return to the pre-ozone-loss atmosphere even when the chemical culprits are gone. International efforts to curb the use of such ozone-eaters as chlorine-containing refrigerants and bromine-containing fire suppressants are beginning to pay off. Their concentration in the atmosphere should gradually decline. But, as Dr. Harris explains, this won't eliminate concern about increased exposure to solar ultraviolet (UV) radiation for heavily populated parts of the Northern Hemisphere... Last November, scientists working with data from the European Space Agency's ERS-2 satellite had a view of what can happen. For the first time, they could watch a mini-hole develop as it moved from Greenland to Scandinavia. What they found confirmed that this and other low ozone events over Europe "seem to be caused mainly by unusual air currents ... not by chemical breakdown of ozone,"

according to ESA's announcement... Some of this may result from mixing ozone depleted Arctic air down into lower latitudes. That would be an indirect effect of chemical breakdown in the Arctic. But that's not the whole story... Scientists following this research have not yet reached firm conclusions..They don't know whether this is a natural climate fluctuation or the result of manmade global warming.

Full text @: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0808/p13s02-sten.html>

Source: Robert C. Cowen, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, August 08, 2002 edition

3 - A Timely Pledge (Global Environment Facility)

United States/France-Thirty-two governments from developed and developing nations agreed to increase their support to a multibillion-dollar environment fund, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), on August 7 in Washington, D.C. The \$2.92bn replenishment of the GEF to fund its operations over the next four years represents an important boost for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, said Klaus Toepfer, executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in Paris..."The World Summit on Sustainable Development will be a crucial test of the world's ability and its enthusiasm for tackling the very pressing problems facing people and the planet today," Toepfer said. "The pledges for the GEF replenishment show that in one critical area we are starting to move from words to implementation."...This substantial replenishment will continue to finance existing focus areas- biodiversity, climate change, international waters and the replacement of ozone-depleting chemicals-while providing additional support for the new mandate of the GEF in the areas of persistent organic pollutants and desertification...The GEF has, over the past 10 years, committed more than \$4bn and mobilized some \$11bn for more than 1,000 projects in 160 countries. It has helped developing countries cope with the impacts of global warming, assisted poorer nations to conserve wildlife, monitored and improved the health of international waters and overcome land degradation.

Full text @: <http://www.tomorrow-web.com/>

Source: Tommorow Magazine, 9 August 2002

OzoNews is available on the OzonAction Programme web site @:

<http://www.uneptie.org/ozonaction/compliance/ozonews/main.html>

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