



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente

Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

联合国环境规划署



Sky meets the Ocean: Stars of South Asian Ozone Network gather in the Pearl of the Indian Ocean



Colombo, 30 May 2014 - With the theme “Only 219 days to 1.1.2015!!,” officials and experts from 13 countries in the South Asia region gathered in the beautiful capital city of Sri Lanka from 27-30 May 2014 for the Regional Ozone Network Meeting for South Asia, organized by UNEP and the Government of Sri Lanka, through Ministry of Environment and Renewable Energy. This forum is part of a global programme to enable National Ozone Units (NOUs) to meet their countries’ commitments under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.



This multilateral environmental agreement includes time-bound and measurable deadlines to phase-out ozone depleting substances. The theme refers specifically to the 1 January 2015 target for hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), ozone depleting gases that are used widely in South Asia in air conditioners and foam manufacturing. All countries in the region must reduce their consumption of these gases by 10% by that date. It also includes 100 percent phase out of another gas, Methyl Bromide, used in agriculture and fumigation.

The inauguration ceremony was held at the Grand Oriental Hotel with a welcome procession performed by Kandyan dancers and a lighting of a traditional oil lamp. Honorable Anura Priyadarshana Yapa, Minister of Petroleum Industries, and the Minister of Environment and Renewable Energy, Honorable Alhaj A.R.M Abdul Cadar, welcomed the participants to the country and opened the meeting.

The South Asia network includes 13 countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Iran, Democratic Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Japan is the developed country partner of the network. The network is managed by UNEP's Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP) with financial support from the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol. The European Commission, the Multilateral Fund Secretariat, UNDP, UNIDO and World Bank participated in this week's meeting.

Refrigeration and air conditioning accounts for the majority of HCFC consumption both globally and in the region, therefore the involvement of this sector, is critical for the success of the Montreal Protocol. Accordingly, the Network meeting featured a one day thematic seminar on the establishment of refrigeration associations and technician certification programmes. The seminar shared the experiences of technical experts from the Air conditioning and Refrigeration European Association (AREA) and the Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Contractors' Association Australia (RACCA), as well as case studies from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Indonesia, and China. The European Commission provided details of new European regulations designed to control and reduce hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), alternatives to HCFCs but many of which are high global warming potential.



The discussions reaffirmed the critical importance of strategic partnerships between the government and the private sector, as well as representatives of civil society, in order for a country to reach its HCFC phase out milestones, while mindful of other matters of national concerns such as climate change and energy efficiency. The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) organized a side-event on "Business opportunities and Energy-efficient co-benefits from transitioning to low-GWP refrigerants in refrigeration and air-conditioning sector" attracting much interest among participating countries. The Ceylon Tea Board hosted a tea ceremony featuring the world-renowned Sri Lankan tea that has been produced without methyl bromide fumigants, thanks to a project supported by the Multilateral Fund and implemented by UNDP.

Ozone Officers were offered also opportunities to witness the on-going phase-out efforts of the host country through a field visit to Sri Lanka Customs and to the Regnis company, which successfully converted its foam to non-ozone depleting alternatives with Multilateral Fund assistance. UNEP took the opportunity of the meeting to organize a special set of training sessions for new ozone officers, to complement the detailed technical knowledge gained during the main meeting.



For further information:

Mr. Atul Bagai, Senior Regional Network Coordinator,
UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
Tel: +668 4700 2257
Email: atul.bagai@unep.org

Ms. Anne Fenner, Information Manager,
UNEP OzonAction Programme
Tel: +33 1 4437 1454
Email: anne.fenner@unep.org

Mr. G. M. J. K. Gunawardana
Senior Assistant Secretary and Director, National Ozone Unit
Ministry of Environment and Renewable Energy
Tel: +94 112883417
Email: ozone@noulanka.lk / janakagunawardana@yahoo.com
Website: www.noulanka.lk

URL: <http://www.unep.org/ozonaction/News/Features/2014/StarsofSouthAsianOzoneNetworkgather/tabid/838797/Default.aspx>