

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

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1. Togo Sets Deadline to Control Anti-Ozone Substances

Lome, Togo is seeking to eliminate Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) by 2005 instead of the buffer deadline of 2010 as set for developing countries. This is, at least, the objective determined by the national sensitization campaign officially launched Thursday in Lome by the Togolese minister of the environment and forestry production, Koffi Adade.

The campaign has taken up the themes of the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol, which provide for the gradual elimination of ozone depleting substances and equipment containing them.

It should also sensitise all the sectors concerned technicians in the refrigeration sector, importers of refrigerating equipment and users on the existence in the markets of alternative substances and equipment.

Already, importers operating in the port sector in Togo have been sensitised and non-compliant imports will be banned from 1 January 2003.

The gases involved and ordinarily called CFC's are used in the refrigeration and subsequently released in the atmosphere. They are contained in air conditioners, fire extinguishers, refrigerators, freezers, industrial cleaning devices, sprays and other types of equipment.

The emission of such gases results in the reduction of the ozone layer, a veil of gas protecting the earth against ultra- violet rays.

According to the minister, the depletion of the ozone layer by CFC's is a major issue for the planet, the human, animal and vegetable elements of which are exposed to such radiation, which aggravate risks of sterility, skin cancer, cataract and the reduction of the immunity provided by a number of vaccines in people.

It also reduces crop yields and seriously affects the food chain in oceans, Adade added.

He asserted that the depletion of the ozone layer also contributed to the hothouse effect in conjunction with the process of climatic mutations and the warming up of the earth.

The programme prompted by the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol includes, among others, the elimination of ozone depleting substances (ODS), the sharing of experiences among countries, the circulation of information and the dissemination of new recycling technologies.

Source: Panafrican News Agency, By: Afeto Kuma, March 24, 2001 @: http://allafrica.com/stories/200103240026.html

2. Manila to Begin Recovery of Halons

Manila Department of Energy and Natural Resources (DENR) acting secretary Jose Marie Gerochi recently announced that the country will launch an initiative to begin recovering halons. Halons are among several categories of ozone-depleting substances (ODS).

Gerochi said that DENR's \$114,000 halon recovery bank in Paranaque City will recover, recycle and manage banned halons from all fire extinguishers. Specifically, the bank will handle halons 1211 and 1301, which are used as fire extinguishing agents and refrigerants.

Full text @: http://www.denr.gov.ph/030801a.htm

Source: Philippines Department of Energy and Natural Resources (DENR), Press Release 08 March 2001.

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3. Pacific Island Nations Consider Protection Measures

Fiji has become the first Pacific Island country to initiate serious measures to protect the ozone layer, according to the UN Environment Program (UNEP).

At a training session held last week in Fiji for refrigeration technicians who service equipment containing ozone-depleting substances, the government launched an island-wide training program to reduce the emissions of the life-threatening substances.

Fiji has also committed itself to phasing out such chemicals in advance of the 2010 deadline established by the Montreal Protocol. Fiji may meet that deadline by 2002, UNEP said.

The training session is scheduled to be followed by a regional compliance action workshop on the Montreal Protocol to be held in Western Samoa in April. Fourteen Pacific Island countries are expected to participate **Source:** UNEP release, 15 March 2001, @: http://www.unfoundation.org/unwire/unwire.cfm#12

4. Sanya Strives to Become China's First Freon-Free City

Hotels, government organizations, as well as bus drivers in Sanya, a well-known tourist destination on the southern tip of this Chinese tropical island of Hainan

http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/data/province/hainan.html>, have been busy replacing freon in refrigeration and using a new freezing agent.

That is just part of a city-wide campaign launched to eliminate freon traditionally used as a freezing agent for refrigeration in air conditioners and other freezing equipment since the beginning of the year.

The campaign will go through 2002, said a local official.

Sanya, which falls under the jurisdiction of Hainan Province, is one of the country's best cities for tourism development and a role model for horticulture and ecological balance. It is also considered one of the cities that has the best air quality in the world.

"Eliminating freon is an important step to maintain a fine ecological environment and steady growth in Sanya's tourism industry," said the official.

Among punitive measures for violations, many shops engaged in freon business in the city are shut down, and freezing equipment and freezing agents that go against the freon-free standard will be confiscated, the official warned.

The local administrative departments will not approve annual check-up documents of drivers who continue to drive vehicles with freon as the freezing agent.

Developers for new or extension projects that will require the use of freon as a cooling agent can get neither construction approval nor credit support from commercial banks, said the official.

Source: English People Daily @: http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200102/25/eng20010225_63315.html

5. Twelve Arrested in Alleged Illegal Freon Ring Wednesday

LOUISVILLE - Police in Jefferson County, Kentucky, United States, think they have broken up a ring that stole the ozone-depleting refrigerant Freon and then illegally sold it to businesses.

Twelve men were arrested on Tuesday and 10 tons of the coolant has been seized. The Freon was estimated to be worth \$1 million on the black market, authorities said.

Source: The Associated Press, Cincinnati Enquirer,14 March 2001, @: http://enquirer.com/editions/2001/03/14/loc arrested in alleged.html

6. UN Web Site Encourages Recycling of Greenhouse Gas

The United Nations launched a Web site on Friday aimed at making it easier for businesses to recycle halon, a gas hard to replace as a fire retardant that also contributes to global warming.

The on-line Halon Trader, a virtual marketplace found @: http://www.halontrader.org is intended to promote the resale of halon already in use and thereby reduce demand for newly produced halon.

The gas is being phased out worldwide because it attacks the Earth's protective ozone layer when released into the atmosphere, warming the Earth and increasing the risk of skin cancers.

But it is still permitted for essential uses under the Montreal Protocol, a global 1989 environmental accord. While industrial nations no longer make halon, the protocol gave poorer nations until 2010 to end their production.

Through the free Internet service put in place by the U.N. Environment Program (UNEP), companies that need halon can post their needs, to be matched up with companies or halon banks with recycled halon in their possession.

Full Text @: http://www.planetark.org/dailynewsstory.cfm?newsid=10143

Source: Planet Ark / REUTERS NEWS SERVICE, 19 March 2001

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