

World Ozone Day Celebration, Bhutan

The Department of Revenue & Customs, Ministry of Finance, Bhutan observed the World Ozone Day on 18th September 2018

Theme: “KEEP COOL and CARRY ON...”

Bhutan acceded to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of Ozone Layer in 2004 and ratified the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete Ozone Layer in the same year. Since then, the mission to phase out ODS started and is still in progress with support from National Environment Commission of Bhutan, UN Environment, UNDP and Multilateral Fund Secretariat.

The UN General Assembly proclaimed September 16 each year as the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, commemorating the date of signing of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Rest of the communities in the world celebrated the day on September 16, 2018 with the theme, “Keep Cool and Carry on... Protecting our Ozone Layer and Climate on the World Ozone Day”. However, with the ongoing election of the Government in Bhutan, the celebration had to be deferred by two days and marked the day on September 18, 2018 with the above theme.



Each year Customs has been actively participating in the celebration of World Ozone Day. This year too, the day was observed in six regional offices which are directly involved in regulating import and export of ODS.

The following celebrations were undertaken in the following regional offices under the Department of revenue & Customs:

Paro International Airport, Regional Revenue & Customs Office, Paro

To mark the day, the representatives from the various stakeholders like industrialist, hoteliers, security officials, officials from Department of Air Transport, officials from Royal Bhutan Police, officials from both the airline companies and the Dzongkhag Environment Officer were invited to witness the day. The ODS Focal Person comprehensively explained to the participants on the importance of protecting ozone layer and the harmful effect, if it is depleted.



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In addition to above, the Customs officials were briefed on their roles as an enforcement official and their responsibility in identifying ODS and examining documents related to it at every entry points.

The Customs officials and the other participants were also informed on the recent amendment in Montreal Protocol called the Kigali Amendment held in Kigali, Capital of Rwanda in December 2016, where the parties agreed to phase out the production and consumption of HFCs which is most commonly used substitute for HCFCs.

The participants were also made aware on the “Regulation on Control of Ozone Depleting Substances, 2008. Further, the licensing system on the import and export of ODS and penalties for illegal import were also briefed to the participants.

Regional Revenue & Customs Office (RRCO), Gelephu

The program included awareness workshop covering key issues like importance of the protection of the ozone layer, negative effect of the ozone layer depletion on humans, animals and the environment. The participants were invited from Bhutan Food Regulatory Authority, Department of Forest, Royal Bhutan Police, Immigration, Customs Brokers and Customs Officials.



In the awareness programme, the participants were briefed on following issues.

- i. Ozone Layer and its importance
- ii. Effect of depleting ozone layer to human health, plants & trees, environment, aquatic organisms, chemical, biological, and microbial process, materials and on the ground level smog
- iii. What are the Ozone Depleting Substances and its common uses?
- iv. Role and responsibilities of Customs Officials
- v. Regulation on the Control of Ozone Depleting Substances 2008
- vi. Licensing requirement for import of ODS
- vii. Country's annual consumption quota



As a part of the program, the team from customs also distributed the ODS awareness pamphlets to the hoteliers and automobile workshops.

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Regional Revenue & Customs Office, Phuntsholing

Regional Revenue & Customs Office (RRCO) Phuntsholing celebrated the World Ozone Day along with the clearing agents and private sectors under the Phuntsholing region. There were 60 participants present including Customs Officials. The Customs Clearing & Forwarding Agents were also included as they are found to be the key stakeholders directly dealing with either regulating, using or trading the Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) or ODS substitutes (Non-Ozone Depleting Substances).



There were series of presentation made by the customs official on the following issues:

- i. Ozone Layer and its importance
- ii. Identification of ODS
- iii. The ODS regulation 2008
- iv. The licensing requirement for import
- v. Annual consumption quota of the country



As the part of the program pamphlets were distributed to the commuters and other stakeholders who are dealing with R22 gas.

Regional Revenue & Customs Office, Samdrup Jongkhar

The Regional Revenue and Customs Office, Samdrup Jongkhar celebrated the day by giving awareness programs to customs officials, who are placed in frontline at the border. The industrialist and hoteliers from Samdrup Jongkhar Municipality were also invited as their cooperation were equally required in order to fulfill the obligations of the International Conventions that Bhutan is party to.



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In the awareness programme, the participants were briefed on following issues.

- Ozone Layer and its importance
- Effect of depleting ozone layer to human health, plants & trees, environment, aquatic organisms, chemical, biological, and microbial process, materials and on the ground level smog
- What are the Ozone Depleting Substances and its common uses?
- Role and responsibilities of Customs Officials
- List of banned ODS in Bhutan
- Labeling and packing materials
- Cooperation with other stakeholders in monitoring of ODS trade
- Regulation on the Control of ozone depleting substances 2008
- Licensing requirement for import of ODS



Regional Revenue & Customs Office, Samtse



The Customs and Excise Section RRCO Samtse, conducted the World Ozone Day sensitization by visiting major importers of ODS targeting the Industrialist/Hoteliers and Automobile Workshops by sharing pamphlets and visiting their respective factories/office/hotels etc. and guiding them on impact of Ozone Depletion.

The pamphlet depicts the information regarding; *“Importance of Ozone Layer, How the ODS depletes the Ozone Layer, impact of Ozone Depletion and what can we do to protect our Ozone Layer”* along with the list of substitutes of ODS.

The visit schedule began from 7:30 am and concluded at 11.30 am. The day was ended by conducting in-house workshop to RRCO officials and the Clearing Agents (about 30 participants) by making presentations on the ODS issues and emerging challenges.

The following Industries, Hotels and the Automobile Workshops in two areas; proper Samtse and Gomtu (Pendenling) were identified for creating awareness:

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Samtse	Gomtu
Ice Beverages Pvt. Ltd	PCAL, Cement Factory
Bhutan Fruit Pvt. Ltd	Kuenden Hotel
Lhazey Preforms	5 Star Machineries
Army Welfare Project Limited	Meat shops
Samtse Lodge Hotel	
Thuenphel Hotel	
Zing Automobiles	

The main reason for targeting these importers is because they are considered as the major importers of Air Conditioners, Chillers, and Refrigerating Equipments etc.... in the region.

The procurement sections of the targeted importers were sensitized on the ODS issues and the annual consumption quota. The key message passed to them was to import those ozone friendly equipments as listed in the substitute schedule of the pamphlets.



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Regional Revenue & Customs Office, Thimphu

The day was observed in Regional Revenue and Customs Office, Thimphu by inviting hoteliers in addition to officials of the office. The participants attended were sensitized on the following:

- i. Different kinds and impact of ODS on human and environment
- ii. Use and Identification of ODS
- iii. Role of NEC and customs &
- iv. Quiz on ODS was also initiated



The outcome of the World Ozone Day was worth a million as all the participants could learn and take back something important in order to protect the ozone layer. It was also stressed on sharing the knowledge with the colleagues at work and family members at home.

The Department of Revenue & Customs, Ministry of Finance would like to acknowledge the financial support received from UNDP, UNEP Multilateral Fund Secretariat and National Environment Commission of Bhutan for making Ozone Day more significant among the customs officials and the stakeholders through various awareness programmes. It is hoped that the stakeholders would cooperate with us to comply with the existing regulation and enable Bhutan achieve the objective in phasing out ODS as per the schedule.

We wish every country a success in achieving the common goal of phasing out ODS as per the respective country's obligations.