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AFRICA

1- Punitive Measures Await Illegal Technicians, As NTGL Strives to Protect Environment

The NEWS (Monrovia): **The Government of Liberia through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in collaboration with the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) has put into place mechanisms aimed at enforcing the environmental protection laws in the country.** The EPA and GTZ have begun a 5-day training of trainer's program at the Monrovia Vocational Training Center for refrigeration technicians in the country in order to prevent the mismanagement of refrigerant gas, which has been tested and proven harmful to the environment. Speaking at the opening of the program, the Chief Officer of the National Ozone Unit at the EPA, John Brandy, said **the initiative is also geared toward eliminating those substances that could cause damage to the Ozone layer.** He admonished refrigeration technicians in the country to take advantage of the training program, as those technicians who will not form part of the training will be barred from practicing as such. At the same time, a National Refrigeration Demonstration Center (NRDC) has been officially opened at the Monrovia Vocational Training Center (MVTC) on Somalia Drive, outside Monrovia. The Center, according to Mr. Brandy, will help ensure the smooth operation of refrigeration technicians in Liberia. The Center is being funded by GTZ and the NTGL through the EPA .

Source: AllAfrica, 16 March 2005, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200503160689.html>

[**Note from UNEP:** This project was realised with assistance provided by the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol].

NORTH AMERICA

2- EPA Cites Reilly Industries for Clean- Air Violations

CHICAGO (Mar. 22, 2005) — **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 has cited Reilly Industries Inc. for alleged violations of EPA regulations to protect stratospheric ozone** at the company's chemical manufacturing plant at 1500 S. Tibbs Ave., Indianapolis, Ind.

EPA alleges that Reilly failed to repair refrigeration equipment that leaked excessive amounts of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs. In addition, EPA said the company violated testing, recordkeeping, retrofitting, notification and retirement planning requirements for the equipment.

These are preliminary findings of violations. To resolve them, EPA may issue a compliance order, assess an administrative penalty or bring suit against the company. **Reilly has 30 days from receipt of the notice to meet with EPA to discuss resolving the allegations.**

"EPA's mission is to protect public health and the environment," said Acting Regional Administrator Bharat Mathur. "We will take whatever steps are needed to ensure compliance with the Clean Air Act."

When CFC refrigerants deplete the stratospheric ozone layer, dangerous amounts of cancer-causing ultraviolet rays from the sun strike the earth. Production of some of these chemicals was stopped in 1995, and federal law strictly controls their use and handling.

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Source: US EPA, Press Release-No. 05-

OPA030, <http://www.epa.gov/reg5oopa/news/news05/05030.htm>

SOUTH ASIA

3- India's Air Force Takes its Commitment to Manage Halon to New Heights

Addressing the consumption of ozone depleting substances (ODS) by military organisations (army, navy, air force, coast guard) is one of the remaining challenges under the Montreal Protocol. As part of its provision of direct assistance to countries to support Montreal Protocol compliance targets, UNEP DTIE's OzonAction Programme joined hands with the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP) to convene an expert forum with the high-level representatives of the Indian Air Force on the halon management issue. The meeting, which took place on 28 February 2005 in Delhi, raised awareness about the links between military readiness and the phase out of ODS under the Montreal Protocol, the need to phase out halons in a systematic manner, and the importance of establishing an ODS management programme by the military.

In India, the civil and aviation sectors are critical to both the economy and national security. These fleets and installations are reliant on the continued use of halons. While the country no longer produces halons, it does import the gas for its critical uses. India has also established a successful national Halon Bank to meet critical needs. India reported zero halon consumption in 2003; it had consumed 317 ODP tonnes in 2002 and has a large existing installed base.

Indian military aviation uses three halons: halon-1211, halon-1301 and halon-2402. They are used in aircraft engine nacelles, auxiliary power units, cargo bays, dry bays, cockpits, cabins, laboratories and ground flight line firefighting both in normal and low temperature zones. For most applications, alternatives are now available, however for system like engine nacelles, drop-in and retrofitting alternatives are not yet available. For ground flight lines and crash fire tenders and also many other

areas, portable extinguishers are now developed and commercially available. Aviation users, especially repair and maintenance wings can be educated and trained for such changes.

Air Chief Marshal SP Tyagi, Chief of Air Staff, inaugurated the workshop and stressed the need for setting up of halon management system and adopting environmentally friendly technologies for next generation aircraft and ground based fire fighting equipment, as use of halons cannot be replaced overnight. He also urged the military aviation industry to develop its own halon phase-out strategy. Air Marshal AK Singh AOC in C. Western Air Command, coordinated the workshop, and senior officers of various units of Western Air Command participated in the brainstorming session in terms of halon recycling. Key speakers included Mr Tom Morehouse of TEAP, and Mr Rajendra Shende of UNEP. Other participants in the meeting included representatives of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO)/Defense Institute of Fire Research (DIFR)/ Centre For Fire, Environment & Explosive Safety (CFEES), and UNEP ROAP CAP.

Mr Shende concluded the discussions by identifying **three main points that require follow up:**

Conduct an inventory of halons and other ODS in the Air Force.

Identify the location and quantity of halons that have adequate purity, and resolve the issue related to measurement of purity.

Establish a task force and focal point in the Air Force for coordination of the halon issue within the Defence sector.

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Source: UNEP DTIE, OzonAction Programme, <http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/>

EUROPE

4- Countries of Eastern Europe Launch Effort to Totally Eliminate Ozone Depleting Pesticide by End 2005

Warsaw, 31 March 2005. National agricultural experts and government officials from Poland, together with representatives of key UN agencies, are meeting here today to begin the final phase of Poland's efforts to eliminate the use of methyl bromide by the end of 2005. The requirement is mandated by the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

This Decision Maker's Workshop for the Post Harvest Sector also marks the first in-country activity of an ambitious regional project to phase out the use of methyl bromide by 31 December 2005 in five countries: Bulgaria, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland. Under this project, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will jointly deliver training and investment services to assist the countries in meeting this deadline. Support for this project is provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Methyl bromide is an ozone-depleting chemical used worldwide for fumigating soil and controlling pests. Its consumption and production controlled under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that

Deplete the Ozone Layer, and it is being phased out according to a rigid timetable. Developed countries, such as Poland and the other countries under the regional project, have agreed to reduce methyl bromide by 25% by 1999 (compared to 1991 levels), 50% by 2001, 70% by 2003 and 100% by 1 January 2005. For developing countries, the schedule started with a 2002 freeze (at average 1995-98 levels) and continues with reductions of 20% by 2005 and 100% by 2015. The five countries will eliminate a combined total of about 167 metric tonnes of methyl bromide under this project. The majority of this use is in the post-harvest (storage of commodities) and soil fumigation sectors.

Poland, like the majority of the other participating countries under the regional project, is newly-acceded to the European Union. The country is thus striving to meet not only the phase out targets of the Montreal Protocol, but also the more stringent requirements contained in EU regulations.

The GEF support will provide Poland and the other project countries with the latest technology for methyl bromide alternatives, in some cases before the technology has been adopted by other EU members. This includes chemical and non-chemical alternatives such as phosphine, heat and sanitation techniques, and Integrated Commodities Management (ICM) in the post-harvest sector, as well as the use of metam sodium, Dazomet, soil amendments, substrates, grafting techniques and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in the soil sector. In addition, UNDP will be securing some of the latest equipment to assist in the applications of alternatives. This project follows on the first of its kind, a GEF Medium-Sized Project that initiated early phase out of methyl bromide in countries with economies in transition (CEITs) through awareness raising, policy development and demonstration/training activities, implemented by the UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme.

This regional project comes at a time when interest in methyl bromide phase out is high. Several developed countries are currently submitting Critical Use Exemptions (CUEs) for the consideration of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parties to be held this July. They are essentially seeking waivers on the phase out for certain non-QPS uses of methyl bromide. The Montreal Protocol allows governments to apply for exemptions from the Protocol's total phase-out requirements for certain controlled substances, provided criteria agreed by the Parties are met. In the case of methyl bromide, exemptions are intended to give users additional time to identify and adopt technically and economically feasible alternatives for eliminating pests in a range of crops. Poland currently has been approved CUEs for 2005 for strawberry nursery plants, medicinal herbs and dried mushrooms.

Through this first Decision-Maker's Workshop, Poland's country stakeholders and the media will have the opportunity to learn about the project components and cooperation planned between agencies and countries, as efforts begin to achieve the final total sector phase out of methyl bromide across the countries.

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Source: UNEP DTIE, OzonAction Programme, <http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/>

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