

**THEMATIC MEETING ON IMPLEMENTATION OF
HCFC PHASE-OUT MANAGEMENT PLANS (HPMPs) AND ODS ALTERNATIVE
SURVEYS IN CHISHINAU, MOLDOVA, 8-10 NOVEMBER 2016**

MEDIA BRIEFING



Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, 10 November 2016 – Heads of national refrigeration associations and Montreal Protocol focal points from 11 Central Asian and Caucasus countries enhance ozone layer protection and sustainable management of climate gases: The experts shared highlights, challenges and lessons learnt from the implementation of their respective hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) phase-out strategies and from the surveys on ozone-friendly alternatives during the thematic meeting in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, 8-10 November 2016.

Ms. Inga Podoroghin, State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, opened the meeting and reiterated commitments that the Republic of Moldova has under the Montreal Protocol. She highlighted the importance of the recent adoption of the Kigali Amendment, which is expected to prevent 0.5 degree C raise in temperature by the end of the century. Thus, the Protocol will provide a significant contribution to targets of UNFCCC Paris Agreement, which entered into force on 4 November 2016. Also, she encouraged countries of the ECA region to join global efforts and explore the alternatives replacing hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

Ms. Svetlana Bolocan, Montreal Protocol and Vienna Convention Focal Point of the Ministry of Environment, who participated in the negotiations of the Kigali Amendment, emphasized the importance of adequate and enforceable legislation and standards to ensure the sustainable management of ozone-depleting and climate gases.

Mr. Georgi Arzumanyan, Cluster Leader for Energy, Environment and Climate Change of UNDP Moldova, warned that the demonstrated steady growth in consumption and emissions of HFCs - a group of potent climate gases – would jeopardize the international efforts in reducing the impact of climate change not only in the context of the Montreal protocol but also across all climate-related international initiatives. In this line, HFC phase-down is among the priorities.

The meeting focused on the HCFC phase-out strategies and the surveys on ozone-friendly alternatives in the participating countries. The results of the surveys will provide a better understanding of the current use and consumption trends of high global warming HFCs as well as climate friendly HFOs and natural refrigerants by sector and by substance. Such data will be useful for informed policy making and sustainable refrigerant management. The voluntary inclusion of HFCs and possibly other refrigerants in the national import / export licensing system and the informal Prior Informed Consent mechanism might enhance data accuracy. Several participants highlighted the importance to involve the national climate focal points in the surveys, in particular because of their experience of calculation emission inventories.

Several sessions were dedicated to the strengthening of legislation, the adoption safety and performance standards, training and certification of technicians and companies, the promotion of ozone and climate-friendly technologies and the role of RAC associations in implementing the Montreal Protocol. Following the suggestion by the Russian RAC association, the attending RAC associations spontaneously signed a Memorandum expressing their interest in establishing close cooperation, sharing information and providing mutual support with regard to above mentioned topics. Concrete suggestions include the setting up of a steering committee, study tours to demonstration projects and training centers as well as periodic virtual and face-to-face meetings e.g. in the margin of the 13th International Specialized Exhibition Climate World in Moscow, Russia, 28 February – 3 March 2017.

Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Russia expressed interest in the Refrigerant Driving License – an initiative of UN Environment OzonAction in cooperation with the Air-conditioning, Heating, Refrigeration Institute (AHRI) and interested refrigeration & air-conditioning (RAC) associations. The aim of this initiatives is the development of a globally recognized and industry-driven certification scheme for RAC service technicians allowing them to work safely with ozone and climate-friendly refrigerants. Interested RAC associations are invited to participate in the steering committee and countries might participate in the pilot phase in 2017 (subject to regional distribution) or the global launch in 2018. China included the Refrigerant Driving License in its HCFC phase-out strategy and this might also be a viable option for countries without an operational certification system.

Armenia briefed the participants on the status of the regional training center currently being established in Yerevan as a Russian bilateral project with UNIDO as implementing agency. The aim of this “center of excellence” is the promotion of climate-friendly RAC technologies in the developing (Article 5) countries of the ECA network. A lyceum has been selected as the training facility and it is equipped among others with a classroom, a conference room, a computer room, work stations, a library, and a canteen. A website provides more detailed information and the start of the actual training activities is scheduled for beginning of 2017.

Public procurement is increasingly recognized as a strategic tool to promote wider Government policies including environment protection, innovation, job creation and promoting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In average, it accounts for 12% GDP in OECD countries and 14% GDP in European Union countries and thus represents an immense purchasing power. Countries like China and India have included green public procurement in their HCFC phase-out strategies (stage II). This might be a powerful tool to promote ozone and climate-friendly technologies in the RAC sector.

For the first time, the agenda included a session on gender considerations in project implementation. There has been some discussion on how to apply gender analysis and statistics to projects addressing global environmental problems such as ozone layer depletion and global warming. The the future mandate of the Montreal Protocol addressing both ozone depletion and global warming will increasingly require addressing social dimensions and gender issues. This is already an eligibility criteria for several donor including the Green Climate Fund.

The programme included also technical visits of a cold store for fruits and vegetables in Bucobet as well as another cold store and a wine factory in Romanesti. One cold store used refrigerant HFC-404a and the other HCFC-22, which is an ozone-depleting and global warming gas.

At the end of the meeting, the priorities of the UN Environment's Regional Ozone Network for Europe & Central Asia (ECA network) were agreed. Next year's network meeting will take place in Ohrid, Macedonia FYR, in May 2017. It will be held in parallel to the bi-annual congress of the International Institute of Refrigeration focusing on ammonia and carbon dioxide technologies to allow the refrigeration experts of the network countries to participate in selected sessions of the congress. Albania and Georgia agreed to host thematic meetings in autumn 2017.

The meeting has been organized by UN Environment OzonAction in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova and UNDP Chisinau, as part of the work programme of the ECA network and funded by the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol.

Participants included Montreal Protocol focal points and refrigeration experts Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan as well as representatives of the implementing agencies UNDP, UN Environment and UNIDO and additional resource persons from Russia and the USA.

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