

Ozone layer on track to recover over next five decades, Ban says on International Day



Implementing cost-effective measures would help reduce black carbon, methane and ozone emissions

16 September 2012 – [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon has hailed the efforts of the international community in protecting the atmosphere, noting that with the global phase-out of 98 per cent of ozone-depleting gases, the ozone layer is now on track to recover over the next five decades.

“I urge Governments and all partners to apply the same spirit to the other great environment and development challenges of our times. Together, we can achieve the future we want,” Mr. Ban said in his [message](#) on the [International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer](#), observed annually on 16 September.

The date commemorates the date of the signing, in 1987, of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, which aims to protect the ozone layer by taking measures to control total global production and consumption of substances that deplete it, with the ultimate objective of their elimination.

The ozone layer, a fragile shield of gas, protects the Earth from the harmful portion of the rays of the sun, thus helping preserve life on the planet. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Protocol, and Mr. Ban congratulated all who have made the treaty such an “outstanding example” of international cooperation.

The Protocol, he said, “is not merely a success in meeting its immediate objectives, it offers substantive lessons and inspiration in addressing other global challenges and turning them into opportunities for common progress.”

Millions of cases of skin cancer and eye cataracts, as well as the harmful effects of ultraviolet radiation on the environment, have already been avoided, he noted. The Protocol has also catalyzed considerable innovation in the chemical and equipment manufacturing industry, resulting in more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly refrigeration systems.

He said action under the Protocol has also had significant climate benefits. Many of these substances have been phased out, such as chlorofluorocarbons once used in products such as hairsprays, which are significant greenhouse gases.

“Nonetheless, the challenges are not over,” said Mr. Ban. “Governments must maintain their commitment to finish the job and avert additional problems. The use of hydrofluorocarbons – ozone-friendly chemicals that are also powerful greenhouse gases – is growing rapidly to replace ozone-depleting substances.

“The Montreal Protocol has demonstrated that fundamental principles – such as science-based policy making, the precautionary approach, common but differentiated responsibilities and equity within and between generations – can benefit all nations.”

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