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## UN helps Iran phase out asthma treatments based on ozone-depleting substances



Phasing out ozone-depleting substances is also helping to reduce climate change

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With support from the United Nations, Iran today became the first country in the Asia-Pacific region to phase out metered dose inhalers – used to treat asthma and other pulmonary ailments – and based on chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), which contribute to the depletion of the ozone layer.

“This event highlights the importance of protecting both the environment and the health of the Iranian people,” said Vahid Dastjerdi, Iran's Minister of Health and Medical Education, at a ceremony organized in Tehran by the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) and the country's Department of Environment.

Participants, including medical practitioners, representatives of pharmaceutical companies, the Government, international organizations and the media, also marked the closing of the Sina Darou Laboratories' manufacturing plant of CFC-based metered dose inhalers and considered ways to further promote ozone-friendly alternatives.

CFCs have a wide variety of use, including as propellant in metered dose inhalers used by patients with asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. It is estimated that there are over 300 million people with asthma worldwide and a similar number of others with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which need inhalers to control.

In 2007, the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, approved funding for the conversion of CFC-based based metered dose inhalers to alternative technologies manufactured by Iran's Sina Darou Laboratories.

“The support of the industry that manufactures metered dose inhalers is a crucial part of the Government's effort to eliminate CFCs. It is important for us to recognize Sina Darou for their leadership in phasing out CFCs and for being a cheering example for other companies that still depend on ozone-depleting substances,” said Mohammadi Zadeh, the vice president and head of the Department of Environment.

UNEP Ozone Secretariat's Executive Secretary, Marco González, who presented an award to the environment minister in recognition of Iran's successful elimination of CFCs said: “This important milestone highlights both the proactive role of the Government and that of the Montreal Protocol as a prime example of successful international cooperation. This commemoration also sets your country as a prime example in the region.”

Sidi Si Ahmed, the Director of UNIDO's Montreal Protocol branch noted that “a transition from CFC to non-CFC inhalers is extremely challenging for all actors as the supply of medication has to be maintained at a level which guarantees patients' health, but at the same time, new products have to be prepared for the market in order to ensure a smooth transition without any market distortion.”

In March 2008, 21 countries from South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific and CFC-based metered dose inhalers manufacturers agreed on the Langkawi Declaration on public-private partnership on phasing-out CFC-metered dose inhalers. The declaration was the first of its kind and strengthened industry-government cooperation in the smooth transition to CFC-free inhalers in Iran and the Asia-Pacific region.

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