

Country Statement – Sri Lanka

Hon. Maithreepala Sirisena, Minister of Environment

Please allow me to convey to you my heartiest congratulations for electing as the chairman of the 18th Meeting of Parties of the Montreal Protocol. I also take this opportunity to thank the Government of India, UNEP and Ozone Secretariat for their excellent arrangements in this spectacular city where all communities living in harmony. Please accept the greetings and best wishes from the President, the Prime Minister, and the people of Sri Lanka for the success in the deliberation of this unique gathering.

At the outset, I would like to state that Sri Lanka has a long-standing history of living in harmony with nature. Therefore it is a duty and a responsibility of us to preserve the global environment for its future generation. Sri Lanka as a nation has a genuine concern on drastic deterioration of the environment due to human activities. Depletion of the Ozone Layer, which protects the earth from the dangerously high levels of UV rays of the Sun, has been a major environmental issue that has arisen as a consequence of global technical, agricultural and industrial development.

As you all are well aware, Sri Lanka became a signatory to the Montreal Protocol and the Vienna convention in 1989 and thereby joined hands with the other nations to protect the Ozone Layer. Our commitment in preserving the environment was further conveyed by ratifying the London, Montreal, Copenhagen and Beijing amendments to the Montreal Protocol.

We find that although Sri Lanka is not producing Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) within the country, it is consuming a significant amount of them mainly in Air conditioning and Refrigerator service sector, Agricultural sector, activated carbon sector and quarantine & pre-shipment sector. I am pleased to mention that we have taken several important measures in implementing the Montreal Protocol. Import of ODSs and used equipment working with ODSs has been controlled by bringing them under Import Control Licensing system. In 1994 Sri Lanka had three refrigerator factories manufacturing about 30,000 units of domestic refrigerators and freezers consuming nearly 20 tones of ODS annually. All these factories were converted to use HFC 134a. Sri Lanka also obtained assistance to change propellant from CFC to Hydrocarbon in the cosmetic industry and, thereby Sri Lanka took action to reduce ODS usage.

According to a policy decision taken by the Government of Sri Lanka it is expected to phase out CFC consumption by the end of year 2007. Based on reported consumption data of year 2005, Sri Lanka has already achieved more than 65% reduction of CFC. Consumption of all other ODSs are in compliance with the Montreal Protocol provisions.

Methyl Bromide was extensively used in Tea nursery soils to eradicate nematodes and after implementation of a successful project, Ozone Friendly alternatives were introduced. Alternatives for MeBr uses other than the tea sector and QPS applications were investigated. Methyl Bromide alternatives will be popularized among the users as the final components of these programmes.

Refrigerant Management Plan (RMP) for Sri Lanka was initiated in 2001 with the idea of assisting the trade and industry to comply with the expedite phase out schedule of ODS and providing lasting improvements in the maintenance and servicing procedures currently being

employed in the country. As a component of RMP, the Train the trainers and training refrigerant service technicians already completed and 50 trainers were trained and their expertise was used in training more than 1000 Technicians island wide. Under the Customs Officers Training Programme, 23 trainers trained and the country hand book was prepared to facilitate the training. Identifiers were distributed among all custom entry points and a ODS Task Force was established for speedy implementation of the Montreal Protocol. More than 500 Officers were trained. After the programme, several successive seizures of illegal CFC imports were carried out by the Officers of Sri Lanka Customs. With the introduced regulations to control imports of ODS and ODS equipment, increasing illegal imports of ODS could be expected. To tackle this problem an online database to contain information on illegal ODS trade was developed as a pilot project.

Government of Japan selected Sri Lanka for a UNEP/Japanese bilateral pilot project to prepare “National Compliance Action Plan (NCAP) to phase out ODS” and approved by the 43rd Excom in 2004. Technicians Training Programme and Customs Officers training programme are in progress. New CFC recovery and recycling centers will be established around the country to strengthen the CFC recovery & recycling endeavor. MAC systems of two hundred government vehicles will be retrofitted to CFC free technology. Halon banking management project is in progress. Please accept my sincere gratitude to UNDP, UNEP and Government of Japan as implementing agencies for assisting us in successful implementation of above programmes in Sri Lanka.

According to our understanding the Montreal Protocol is achieving its’ targets efficiently and effectively. However we feel that some other treaties especially like Kyoto Protocol has to be addressed critically since developing countries face severe impacts of climate change issues. We hope UNEP will take a leading role in implementing this very important environmental treaty.

Finally, I am proud to mention that as a nation, we have given our fullest cooperation and maximum contribution towards implementation of the Montreal Protocol activities in every aspect. I am sure we will be able to completely phase out ODS usage in this country.

I thank you.