

MACHHAPUCHHRE PROVIDES SETTING FOR ASIA-PACIFIC COUNTRIES' SUMMIT ON OZONE AND CLIMATE ISSUES

Miruzza Mohamed

Pokhara, 17 October 2011 – Government officers from over 25 Asia-Pacific countries have participated in the Joint Network Meeting of South Asia and Southeast Asia and the Pacific Ozone Officers from 17th-19th October 2011. This meeting, organized by the United Nations Environment Programme – Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UNEP-ROAP) under its Compliance Assistance Programme, provides a platform where ozone officers from Asia-Pacific governments discuss policy, strategy, and progress of action plans to enable countries in the region comply with obligations phase out ozone-depleting substances (ODS) following an agreed timetable under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

Machhapuchhre, a mountain located in north central Nepal and part of the Himalayan range, aptly provides the backdrop for the meeting as it symbolizes the need for immediate and collective action to phase out HCFCs to protect the ozone layer and mitigate climate change.

“The melting of permafrost in the Himalayan Mountains is three times that of the melting in the Arctic Circle caused by global warming. Through HCFC phase out under the Montreal Protocol, we can significantly cut greenhouse gas emissions and put a stop to the melting in the Himalayas,” stated Mr. Shambhu Koirala, Chief District Officer of Kaski District and Chief Guest of the event.

“The theme of this year's Joint Network Meeting of Asia-Pacific countries is HCFC Phase-out for an Energy Efficient Future to stress ozone layer and climate change linkage and the huge energy efficiency opportunities in HCFC phase out,” said Mr. Atul Bagai, UNEP Senior Regional Coordinator. “Through information exchange among governments, implementing agencies, donor agencies and other Montreal Protocol institutions, we aim to enable governments to inform and assist their industries and citizens in general in shifting to alternatives that will give them maximum benefits from

continued on page 6

In 2007, the 196 member-countries to the Montreal Protocol have agreed to accelerate the phase out of production and consumption of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), ODS commonly used in the foam-blowing and refrigeration and air-conditioning sectors.

“The networking activities such as Network Meetings organized by UNEP have contributed in ensuring the Montreal Protocol compliance of countries and resulted in improved implementation including, for example, data reporting of ODS production and consumption,” shared Ms. Megumi Seki, Senior Scientific Affairs Officer, Ozone Secretariat.

The first regional network for ozone officers was established in the Southeast Asia and the Pacific region in 1992. The networking activity is on a regional basis and applying the principle of “collective learning by sharing while doing,” builds the Ozone Officers' skills for implementing and managing their national ODS phase-out activities. Other notable outcomes of the regional networks include accelerated ratification of the Montreal Protocol and its Amendments; earlier development of national ODS legislation and other policy measures; more regular data reporting and improved compliance with the ODS phase-out schedules.
