



LEVERAGING EXPERTISE OF CIVIL SOCIETY in Developing Countries



Communication Programme on Methyl Bromide

Synthesis Report 2004



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FOREWORD:

“NGOs are no longer seen only as dissemination of information, but as shapers of policy and indispensable bridges between the general public and the intergovernmental process”.

- Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, 53rd session of the UN General Assembly – 1998

Non-Governmental Organization's play a unique and pivotal role in the realm of the Montreal Protocol. They initially popularized the Molina – Rowland scientific hypothesis about the cause of ozone depletion and moved on to demand action from government in the 1970s. NGOs then crossed this usual traditional boundaries by becoming directly involved in industry decisions on uses of hydrocarbons and natural refrigerants in 1990s. NGOs are an essential and inspiring component of the global solution to ozone depletion.

UNEP DTIE's OzonAction Programme adopted a core strategy to leverage this NGO expertise and to team with them to address the ground-level issues. This strategy produced a very positive result that helps engage civil society in resolving a number of difficult and sometimes unexpected issues related to implementation of the Montreal Protocol.

The partnership that the Programme developed with NGOs testifies to the potential of their reach and expertise. UNEP teamed with Greenpeace to produce the video “Back to the Future”, which contributed to the understanding of safety issues in several developing countries in the manufacture and use of domestic refrigerators and aerosols using hydrocarbon propellants. OzonAction joined with Pesticide Action Network and the result was an international inventory of experts, initiatives and assistance available to phase out methyl bromide in the agricultural sector.

Methyl bromide, a soil fumigant, was included as a controlled substance under the Montreal Protocol in 1997 when for the first time that the agricultural community became engaged in implementation of the Montreal Protocol. At this turning point in the history of Montreal Protocol, OzonAction developed an innovative mechanism to engage NGOs in developing countries that had hands-on experience in sustainable agriculture. Under the Multilateral Fund, OzonAction provided financial assistance and technical guidance to 13 NGOs from as many countries to spark actions to eliminate methyl bromide. This publication presents the saga of the unique efforts of these NGOs from developing countries.

One dimension of the impact of their activities is not sufficiently highlighted in this publication. It is: UNEP learned a lot from these NGOs. One of the lessons we learned was that NGOs make a positive difference, broaden environmental dialogue, channel information back from the ‘persons in the farms’ to the negotiations at the international level and, more importantly, transfer “advocacy to actions”.

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