Montréal Protocol Encyclopedia Article

Montréal Protocol

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Following the discovery of the Antarctic ozone hole in late 1985, various governments recognized the need for stronger measures to reduce the production and consumption of a number of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). CFCs, which are human-made chemicals widely used in manufacturing, have been found to deplete the ozone layer that shields the surface of Earth from harmful forms of solar radiation. During the mid-1980s negotiations began on the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer—a framework treaty focused on cooperation in research, information exchange, and scientific assessment of the atmospheric ozone (O_3) problem—government representatives discussed drafting a **protocol** controlling the use of CFCs, human-made chemicals widely used in manufacturing that deplete the ozone layer. However, no consensus could be reached. The Executive Director of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) established a working group to begin drafting such a protocol. The final agreement, which was concluded on September 16, 1987, reflects the contentious nature of the negotiations. For example, by Article V, developing countries with low consumption rates (e.g., Brazil, India, and Vietnam) that feared the protocol would hinder their economic development are allowed a ten-year delay in required **compliance** with targets and timetables for reducing ozone emissions.

However, countries have generally been aggressive and effective in implementing the protocol. By the time it came into effect on January 1, 1989, countries were already contemplating the protocol's modification and strengthening. Amendments and adjustments were agreed to in London (1990), Copenhagen (1992), Vienna (1995), Montréal (1997), and Beijing (1999). These modifications shortened the timetables for phasing out consumption of listed chemicals, added and funded the Montréal Protocol Fund, established the Implementation Committee, developed noncompliance procedures, and expanded the Technology and Economic Assessment Panels. These panels have addressed new issues as they have arisen, such as recycling and international smuggling of CFCs.

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Internet Resource

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