

MEDIA RELEASE

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Pollution control in Bangladesh

Bangladesh on target to meet Montreal agreement thanks to private-public partnership

DHAKA, 12 August 2002: Over the past decade industry in Bangladesh has grown steadily but despite this, the country has successfully reduced the production of ozone depleting gases and is now one of the few nations on course to meet targets set out under the Montreal Protocol.

A major breakthrough was achieved recently under a joint Government and UNDP initiative that would have been impossible without strong support from the private sector. More than 60 percent of the ozone-depleting chemicals, known as Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), produced in Bangladesh were eliminated with the dismantling of the biggest and oldest aerosol factory in the country. The factory belonged to *Advanced Chemical Industries (ACI)*, the country's largest producer of mosquito sprays and pesticides.

"We knew that CFCs would be banned, but we were in the dark about how to make the change to CFC-free technology, so when UNDP and the Government approached us we were very keen to work with them," the Executive Director of ACI, Mr. F. H. Ansarey said.

Seeing the benefits to their industry, ACI agreed to cover half the cost of converting to the new technology, while the *Montreal Multilateral Fund* covered the balance. The company is now producing more environmentally friendly aerosols, consumers in Bangladesh have the option of purchasing locally manufactured aerosols that are CFC-free, and the nation is one of the few on target to meet goals set out under the Montreal Protocol.

The Protocol was drawn-up in 1987 to reduce ozone-depleting substances. Bangladesh signed in 1995, agreeing to rid the nation of all CFCs by 2010.

"Our main target was converting aerosol production and now we will focus on eliminating the other 40 percent of CFCs, which is mainly in use locally in refrigerants and cold storage," the Director of the Department of Environment, Mr. Md. Abdus Sobhan said.

Already, with support from UNDP, the Government has drawn-up plans to train technicians in service shops that deal with refrigerants on how to recover and recycle harmful ozone-depleting substances. In the lead-up to the final ban in 2010, importers will be given tax breaks to encourage them to start supplying CFC-free refrigerants and customs officials will be trained to recognize refrigerants containing these substances.

While most Governments have ratified the Montreal Protocol, their efforts to implement the stricter elements of the agreement have lagged behind schedule. But, despite this lackluster performance the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) claims there have been achievements and the Protocol is crucial. Had the Protocol not been drawn-up, by the year 2050 radiation reaching earth from the sun would have doubled in some parts of the world and the amount of ozone-depleting chemicals in the atmosphere would have been five time greater, says UNEP.

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Photo Captions:

Photo 1: Factory workers test the new CFC-free technology at ACI's converted production plant.

Photo 2: Government and UNDP officials visited the dismantled ACI plant recently.

PHOTO CREDIT: Nigel Garvey