

## **International Ozone Day celebrations around the globe**

On 16 September 2000, countries around the world demonstrated their concern and commitment to ozone layer protection. This year's celebrations were focused on the theme "Save Our Sky: Protect Yourself and Protect the Ozone Layer". The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) encouraged nations to initiate a continuing Voluntary Pledge programme, on the occasion of Ozone Day, wherein companies still using ODS sign a pledge to protect the ozone layer. Suggestions on how this pledge can be worded and organized were provided by UNEP, with the aim of promoting active participation of the private sector in each country to comply with the commitments established under the Montreal Protocol. UNEP's OzonAction Programme sent out samples of public awareness materials to National Ozone Units including sunglasses and puzzles with ozone protection messages and handouts for children with crossword puzzles and games that would raise their awareness on the ozone problem.

In China and the United Kingdom, pledge-signing ceremonies were organized on Ozone Day, offering industries an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment. In Kenya, UNEP's Ozone Secretariat celebrations included launching of an "United Nations Works for You" poster campaign, an ozone-sounding by the Kenya Meteorological Department and participation of an aerosol company in Nairobi. Jordan inaugurated a factory that recently adopted ozone-friendly alternatives. Lebanon announced having established projects worth US\$6.5 million aimed at introducing ozone-free technologies and ozone-friendly chemicals to local industries and farms that previously relied on ODS.

Finland and Argentina together organized exhibits and conferences highlighting the global risks and the steps initiated to protect the ozone layer. Ten companies in Argentina signed a voluntary agreement to not use ODS; 50 more companies are expected to sign voluntary pledge agreements in the next three months. Nepal organized a large media campaign and also announced a comprehensive draft of regulation/guidelines related to an ODS licensing system

for imports. A workshop on ODS rules and micro-projects was organized in India, apart from a children's painting competition, and a first day special postal cover and stamp were released. Columbia and UNEP jointly produced a CD on ozone layer protection. Niger brought together a diverse array of ecologists, industry members, youth groups as well as the general public, to participate in debates/conferences and video presentations.

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