

International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, 16 September 2011

1. Since 1995, on 16 September each year, the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer is celebrated all over the world. This date has been designated by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1994 to commemorate the signing of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.
2. The ozone layer is crucial for life on earth because it acts as a filter absorbing certain wavelength of ultraviolet light from the sun namely the UVC and most of the UVB which are very dangerous for our health and allowing only the UVA rays to enter the troposphere.
3. The main consequence of the ozone hole is the fact that more UV-rays, especially those that are dangerous (UVB) reach the earth's surface. UV-rays can cause sunburn and skin cancer, damage the eyes causing eye cataract and reduce the effectiveness of the immune system to hereby reducing our ability to fight diseases. UV-rays not only affect our health, but they also have a negative impact on our physical environment. They can decrease agricultural production, leading to reduce crop yield and affect fish population
4. By reducing the production and import of ozone-depleting substances (mainly CFCs) by over 98 per cent, the countries have put the ozone layer firmly on the path to recovery and helped to ensure that present and future generations will reap the benefits of these bold actions. ([Key Achievements of the international agreement to preserve the Ozone Layer \(Montreal Protocol\) to Date](#))
5. Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) have lower ozone depleting potential than CFCs. They were introduced as interim refrigerants by Mauritius and other countries in replacement to chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) pending development of ozone friendly refrigerants. Moreover, HCFCs are also greenhouse gases and they have global warming potential 2,000 times more than carbon dioxide.
6. Due to the increased concentration of HCFCs in the atmosphere and now that more environment friendly (ozone friendly and climate friendly) refrigerants are available, countries which has signed the Montreal Protocol, agreed in 2007, to accelerate the phase-out of production and consumption of. HCFCs
7. While the international community through the agreement (Montreal Protocol) has made great efforts to protect the ozone layer, the task is far from complete. ([Many elements of the Montreal Protocol have contributed to its success to date](#))
8. There are challenges that countries including Mauritius still need to address before we can all rest assured that the ozone layer will continue to be safe for this and future generations ([Continuing and future challenges facing the ozone layer protection effort](#))

9. **“HCFC phase-out: a unique opportunity”** is the theme of this Year’s International Day for Preservation of the Ozone Layer.
10. On this year International Ozone Day, the HCFC phase-out presents countries with a unique opportunity to select appropriate technologies that eliminate these ozone-depleting substances. While reducing national energy costs and maximizing climate benefits through these environment friendly technologies, substantial contributions to climate protection can also be achieved.
11. Ammonia, carbon dioxide and hydrocarbon refrigerants are considered as environmentally friendly refrigerants, though each of them have their specific limitations like material’s incompatibility, cost and the safety aspect. These technologies are applicable in Mauritius particularly in indirect systems. Government is finalizing an HCFC Management Plan to provide a mechanism to promote the use of these refrigerants. ([Local actions to protect the Ozone Layer since 1992](#))
12. For more information, please refer the Ozone Secretariat’s website (<http://ozone.unep.org> or <http://montreal-protocol.org>) for your information and wide dissemination.