

## Backgrounder

### **THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL: an Update**

History was made in Montreal, September 16, 1987 with the signing of an international treaty to control substances which deplete the Earth's protective sunscreen, the ozone layer. It was the first time in history that nations collectively reached a consensus to prevent an environmental problem before it reached the crisis stage. The Montreal Protocol is the first international agreement to protect the atmosphere (and more precisely the ozone layer); it also creates a precedent by setting up a science-driven control strategy.

The Montreal Protocol sets out a schedule, for both the short and the long term, to control all substances that deplete the ozone layer. In the short term, it establishes phase-down requirements to reduce emissions of specified ozone-depleting substances. In the long term, it establishes a flexible mechanism by which control measures can be periodically assessed and adjusted to reflect the latest scientific findings.

The Protocol also includes incentives for all developing countries to prevent them from recreating the problem in the years to come. Finally, the treaty provides for trade sanctions against non-party countries which refuse to sign the agreement or deny their respective share of obligations to protect the global environment for future generations.

The control measures, set out in the Montreal Protocol, currently apply to two groups of ozone-depleting substances: chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) (-11, -12, -113, -114, -115) and HALONS (-1211, -1301, -2402). Whereas HALONS are predominantly used in fire extinguishers, CFCs are used in numerous applications, such as refrigeration, as a propellant in some aerosols, as a foaming agent in the manufacture of hard and soft foam plastics and as a cleaning agent in the electronics industry.

#### **1. Ratification Status:**

The Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, which laid the groundwork for the Montreal Protocol, was adopted on March 22, 1985, and entered into force on September 22, 1988. Thirty-seven states, including the European Economic Community (EEC) ratified this Convention by 9 February 1989.

Canada

