



## **Re: Action on HFCs under the Montreal Protocol**

Dear Minister,

25 years ago, the nations of the world came together to address an impending global catastrophe: the destruction of the ozone layer, which shields all life on Earth from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. The result of this united action was the establishment of the Montreal Protocol, a multilateral environmental agreement that has achieved universal ratification and reduced consumption of ozone-depleting substances by 98% over its short history. These achievements inspired former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to call it "Perhaps the single most successful international agreement to date".

Today, the international community is faced with a more catastrophic threat than that which spurred leaders into action a quarter-century ago. As recent events have demonstrated, the devastating impacts of global climate change are already affecting communities worldwide, causing untold environmental and economic losses. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that the decisiveness and resolve which existed at the birth of the Montreal Protocol are sorely lacking today.

As documented in multiple recent studies, the time for limiting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to levels that will prevent irreversible climate change is almost gone. Since COP 17 in Durban, the pre-2020 gap between GHG emissions and reduction commitments has increased dramatically. Unless the countries of the world make more ambitious and binding commitments to reduce their GHG emissions, we will exceed concentrations that will keep the world below a 2 degree Celsius rise in temperature.

The current impasse on action on hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) dramatically illustrates the dangers posed if we fail to act on climate change. Currently, HFCs represent about 1% of all global GHG emissions but they are growing at the fastest rate of all GHG emissions. Unless immediate action is taken, global HFC emissions could soar to one-fifth of all global warming by 2050 as they are commercialized as alternatives to ozone depleting substances.

At the Rio+20 Conference earlier this year, the nations of the world agreed that: "*We support a gradual phase-down in the consumption and production of hydrofluorocarbons.*" Nevertheless, initiatives to phase down production and use of HFCs under the auspices of the Montreal Protocol have been blocked, chiefly on the basis that HFCs are greenhouse gases under ambit of the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol.

The Montreal Protocol is uniquely positioned to adopt and implement an immediate phase-out of the production and use of HFCs. It has the technical, scientific and financial institutions in place, with a proven track record of phasing-out ozone depleting substances from the exact same industrial sectors that are increasingly using HFCs.

The time for action on HFCs is now. Following the unambiguous statement from world leaders at the Rio+20 conference in June, Parties at Doha must send a clear message to the international

community endorsing a global production and use phase-out of HFCs and urging the Montreal Protocol to undertake this phase-out without delay, while recognizing that the UNFCCC will continue to address HFC emissions. Failure to encourage action by the Montreal Protocol on HFCs will result in continued inertia and circular debates, while hundreds of millions of tonnes of HFC emissions are emitted annually.

The history of the Montreal Protocol illustrates that when science identifies a problem of planetary scale, a global response is possible and can be incredibly effective. The Montreal Protocol stands ready and waiting to address HFCs; we urge you before you leave Doha to grasp this opportunity and begin the phase-out of HFCs without delay.

Yours sincerely,

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