

REMARKS FOR MINISTER PICKERSGILL
OPENING CEREMONY OF THE MAIN MEETING OF LATIN AMERICAN AND
CARIBBEAN OZONE OFFICERS
JAMAICA PEGASUS HOTEL, LEGACY SUITE
TUESDAY 1 OCTOBER 2013 AT 9:00AM

- Mr. Gilbert Bankobeza, Chief of Legal Affairs and Compliance, Ozone Secretariat
- Ms. Cecilia Mercado, Senior Programme Management Officer, Multilateral Fund Secretariat
- Ms. Mirian Vega, Regional Ozonation Networks Co-ordinator
- Mr. Peter Knight, Chief Executive Officer, National Environment and Planning Agency
- Representatives from the implementing agencies of the Montreal Protocol namely the United Nations Environment Programme (Local and Regional Offices), United Nations Development Programme (Local and Regional Offices), United Nations Industrial Development Organisation and Environment Canada; Ozone Officers
- Ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

It is indeed a pleasure for me to welcome you to the main meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean ozone officers. Let me say a very special welcome to our beautiful island, Jamaica, particularly for first time visitors to our country.

This meeting is being hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean in collaboration with the Government of Jamaica through the National Environment and Planning Agency.

I want to commend and thank UNEP and indeed, all our local, regional and international partners who have provided invaluable support to us over the years, as we strive to achieve the balance between economic development and the protection and conservation of our natural resources

There is a quotation from the late American Astrophysicist Carl Sagan, about the depletion of the Ozone Layer. He said, and I quote..."**The hole in the ozone layer is a kind of skywriting. At first it seemed to spell out our continuing complacency before a witch's brew of deadly perils. But perhaps it really tells of a newfound talent to work together to protect the global environment**"..endquote.

Ladies and gentlemen, the depletion of the Ozone Layer is but one of the environmental challenges we are facing on a global level, which require dialogue, collaboration and co-operation from every country and every nation in examining the solutions.

In this regard, there have been several agreements and accords, however, **the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer** has been described as one of the most successful multilateral environmental agreements. The Protocol not only protects the ozone layer but significantly contributes to climate change mitigation which is another global challenge that countries around the globe are facing.

Just recently, a report from the 195 member country Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said that scientists have moved the margin of certainty that human activity is the dominant cause of global warming from 90 percent to 95 percent. **According to the report, this latest development has prompted further calls for global action to control the emissions of Carbon Dioxide and other greenhouse gases..**

Ladies and gentlemen, the signs cannot be ignored and we all need to be on board to preserve our planet for future generations.

The report quoted United States Secretary of State John Kerry as saying..."**If this isn't an alarm bell, then I don't know what one is. If ever there were an issue that demanded greater cooperation, partnership, and committed diplomacy, this is it**"...endquote.

In 2007 the Parties to the Montreal Protocol took the decision to significantly accelerate the phase-out of Hydrofluorocarbons (HCFCs).

Therefore, HCFC phase-out through the introduction of alternatives with lower Global Warming Potential can make significant contributions to climate change mitigation. Replacing HCFCs with the right alternatives in developing countries has the potential to reduce 14 to 18 billion tonnes of Carbon Dioxide-equivalent emissions over the next 20 to 30 years.

Jamaica became a party to the Montreal Protocol in 1993 and I am pleased to say that to date, we have taken aggressive steps and have met all the phase-out targets under the Protocol.

Our National Ozone Unit was established in 1997 and is under the direct oversight of the National Environment and Planning Agency. This unit coordinates the implementation of all projects geared towards the phase-out of ozone depleting substances.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to say that Jamaica phased out Chloroflourocarbons (CFCs) as at January 1, 2006. This was an impressive achievement indeed, as we did so four years ahead of the Montreal Protocol's 2010 phase out date for CFCs.

In recognition of its achievement in phasing out CFCs, Jamaica was awarded the '*Exemplary Project Recognition*' for the '*Jamaica Refrigerant Management Plan*' and the '*Terminal Phase out Plan*' at the 20th anniversary of the Montreal Protocol in 2007.

Jamaica is not only committed to phasing out ozone depleting substances to protect the global climate but also other green-house gases such as Carbon Dioxide gases through the Environmental Management Division of my ministry, the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change.

The Division co-ordinated the process for the development of Jamaica's draft National Climate Change Policy which has been approved by Cabinet. The Division also conducts Public awareness and education activities in partnership with other government agencies and non- governmental entities.

In 2012, Jamaica began the execution of the first tranche of the Hydro-Chlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) Phase Out Management Plan Implementation Project. This Project is being implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) at a cost of US\$237,450. The HCFC import quota for companies was also established last year.

Activities undertaken included the training of Customs Officers and other Enforcement Officers on the Montreal Protocol and phase-out targets for HCFCs.

Funds were also used to purchase equipment for technical support during training. Additionally, public awareness activities were undertaken, which highlighted the phase out targets for the HCFCs as well as alternatives.

As at January one this year, Jamaica implemented a freeze on the importation of the HCFCs at the average import levels of 2009 and 2010 in accordance with the Montreal Protocol.

I am pleased to say that later this month Customs Officers here will be trained in the use of refrigerant identifiers. This will assist Customs in their efforts to prevent the illegal trade in ozone depleting substances. During this month there will also be a five day Training of Trainers workshop on alternatives to HCFCs and good refrigeration practices.

In July this year, the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol approved the second tranche of funds for the Hydrofluorocarbons Phase-out Management Plan (HPMP) implementation project at a cost of US\$118,000. These funds will support the islandwide training of technicians in the refrigeration industry.

Ladies and gentlemen, Jamaica will continue to work to phase out ozone depleting substances, through the execution of projects funded by the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, as well as with technical support from implementing agencies like the UNDP and the UNEP.

It is my belief that a conference such as this, will enhance our efforts to reduce and eventually rid the environment of ozone depleting substances through the sharing of experiences, policies and best practices. This will, no doubt, assist us in achieving our Vision 2030 National Development Goal of making “**Jamaica the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business.**” I wish for you all, a successful conference, and hope that all objectives will be met..

Thank you.