

Annex VII

**RETIREMENT OF DR. OMAR EL-ARINI, CHIEF OFFICER OF THE
MULTILATERAL FUND**

Tributes to Dr. Omar El-Arini

Canada

1. The representative of Canada said that his country was honoured to host the Multilateral Fund Secretariat and he paid tribute to the Fund's successes and achievements under Dr. El-Arini's stewardship. His wisdom, leadership and ability to understand the complex issues had made a major contribution to the Fund's success. He concluded by lightheartedly paying tribute to Dr. El-Arini's fortitude in withstanding 13 Canadian winters.

Bolivia

2. The representative of Bolivia, speaking on behalf of all Article 5 countries, said that the Montreal Protocol owed Dr. El-Arini more appreciation than could be expressed, and that history would surely give him the recognition he deserved for his work for the good of humanity.

3. He said that it was an honour for Article 5 countries to have worked with Dr. El-Arini, who had surpassed expectations in fulfilling his mandate under the Montreal Protocol with a boundless sense of honesty, integrity and responsibility. It was his hard work and success over the past 13 years or so that had made it possible for the Multilateral Fund to grow and mature as a relevant and effective body within the international community. As direct beneficiaries of the work done by the Secretariat under Dr. El-Arini, Article 5 countries were sincerely and permanently grateful for the proactive, humble, respectful, generous and wise attitude toward every task.

4. It was difficult to pinpoint which existing international awards and marks of recognition would suffice to pay tribute to all that Dr. El-Arini had done, but he could be sure of the gratitude of several generations of billions of inhabitants of the planet, and many millions of children who would be able to enjoy the natural environment like those before them. Dr. El-Arini had proved an exemplary human being, teacher and adviser, and after thanking him for having fulfilled his mission so competently, he wished him further success, good health and serenity in the future.

Burundi

5. The representative of Burundi, speaking on behalf of African countries, said that he was proud to have been associated with the remarkable work of the Multilateral Fund. Gratitude was due not only from those who worked to protect the ozone layer, but also from all of humanity. The achievements of the Multilateral Fund were cited as a prime example of successful environmental cooperation. As a mark of appreciation, the African countries had mandated him to invite Dr. El-Arini to attend the Africa network meeting in Mauritius as their guest.

Jordan

6. The representative of Jordan also wished to express his appreciation to Dr. El-Arini, noting that he and all members of his Secretariat had worked indefatigably to implement the Montreal Protocol and to assist developing countries in respecting their commitments to the environment. The efforts that he had deployed over the preceding years had been an incentive to those countries to make extra efforts themselves.

Mauritius

7. The representative of Mauritius recalled with pleasure the many times, both professional and social, that he had spent with Dr. El-Arini, and said that he looked forward to welcoming him personally to Mauritius.

Saint Lucia

8. The representative of Saint Lucia, speaking on behalf of the countries of the English-speaking Caribbean, echoed the sentiments and good wishes of other speakers and suggested that Dr. El-Arini might like to exchange the cold Canadian winters for the warm beaches of the Caribbean.

United States of America

9. The representative of the United States of America, speaking on behalf of the non-Article 5 countries, noted that in the beginning the Montreal Protocol had represented a politically-crafted compromise and a great deal of blank paper, with the hope of the global community that the participants would be able to find a way to make it work. The Multilateral Fund could have had a number of different chief officers and the blank pages could have been filled in many different ways, but today it was acknowledged as one of the most effective parts of the United Nations system, something that was attributable to Dr. El-Arini, his vision and his leadership. An expression of that leadership had been his insistence on standards of excellence, an insistence to which the Secretariat staff had responded fully.

10. It was not enough to express the appreciation of the United States or of the Executive Committee; the whole global community had benefited from Dr. El-Arini's work to restore the ozone layer. He expressed the hope that the Executive Committee would continue to benefit from that wisdom as it tackled difficult issues in the future. He was certain that a telephone call to Dr. El-Arini about a particular problem would bring a reasoned response. It was not a time for saying goodbye but both for celebrating what had been accomplished and for looking forward to a different form of collaboration in the future.

Austria

11. The representative of Austria, speaking on behalf of European countries, thanked Dr. El-Arini for all he had accomplished. He said that it had been a great pleasure and honour to work with him and hoped that he would enjoy life after the Multilateral Fund.

UNIDO

12. The representative of UNIDO wished to express the sincere appreciation of the implementing agencies to Dr. El-Arini for his cooperation and guidance over the past dozen years. When the Multilateral Fund had been set up in 1990, it was the first financial mechanism of its kind. Dr. El-Arini had guided its development, ensuring a copious flow of information and finding solutions acceptable to all interested parties in often difficult negotiations. Through the lessons and learning experiences gained, the work of the Multilateral Fund was regarded as an environmental success story. Dr. El-Arini had contributed significantly to that success and would be sorely missed.

Multilateral Fund Secretariat

13. Speaking on behalf of the Secretariat, Mr. Richard Abrokwa-Ampadu noted that Dr. El-Arini had always striven for work of excellent quality and that, as a man of principle, he had always courageously defended both his convictions and those of his staff. Not only had he been loyal to the cause of the Executive Committee which he had been appointed to serve, but he had also been loyal to the staff of the Secretariat, and had always been ready to share his ideas, his vision and his innermost feelings with them.

14. Mr. Abrokwa-Ampadu said that the activities of the Secretariat had been facilitated by the strong sense of objectivity and adherence to the principle of impartiality instilled by Dr. El-Arini in his staff, and their work. It was the strong sense of mission, diligence and commitment to duty shown by Dr. El-Arini that had inspired everyone, without exception, to commit themselves to long hours of hard work in order to give their best. Many would remember him as an unsurpassed role model, a man always ready to praise, commend or reward a good effort.

15. Mr. Abrokwa-Ampadu recalled that all good things must come to an end one day, and that Dr. El-Arini could not be begrudged his well-deserved rest. He noted however that to simply say that Dr. El-Arini would be greatly missed would be the greatest of understatements. He said it remained to simply, and in all sincerity, state on behalf of all the members of the Secretariat, as well as all temporary staff, how proud and honoured they had been to have had the opportunity to work with Dr. El-Arini over the years, and to have been called his friend. In conclusion, he wished both Dr. El-Arini and his wife continued success in their future endeavours and assured Dr. El-Arini that they could both always count on the friendship of the staff of the Secretariat.

Statement by Dr. Omar El-Arini

16. Dr. Omar El-Arini thanked the members of the Executive Committee, the implementing agencies and the Secretariat for their kind words. He also recalled with appreciation many people who were not in the room, including former Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Executive Committee, Chairs of the Sub-Committees, heads of working groups, and past members of staff. In particular, he would like to thank the Government of Canada for its hospitality, which had made Montreal a home from home for the Secretariat staff. He thanked all the staff and

management of the implementing agencies, noting that they had been very responsive to the needs of the Multilateral Fund, and also the members of the Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP) for their guidance and innovation. The staff of the GEF Secretariat and the Ozone Secretariat also deserved thanks for their strong support, together with non-governmental organizations for their contributions. He also wished to pay a special tribute to Mr. Sarma, former Executive Secretary of the Ozone Secretariat, and Mr. Marco Gonzalez, the current Executive Secretary, without forgetting Mr. Theodor Kapiga, who had long represented the Treasurer of the Fund. Thanks were also due to ICAO and to UNEP as co-hosts of the Fund Secretariat. He paid tribute to all who supported the Executive Committee's meetings: interpreters, report-writers, and conference room attendants.

17. Above all, he wished to thank his colleagues in the Multilateral Fund Secretariat for their perseverance and dedication in furthering the goal of the Montreal Protocol. Noting that there would soon be a different voice speaking from the Chief Officer's chair, he expressed his confidence that the Secretariat would remain professional and neutral in the execution of its duties to the full satisfaction of the Executive Committee.

18. He concluded by referring to his predilection for Middle Eastern culture, poetry and literature and in parting wished to cite some words that expressed his feelings:

“How shall I go in peace and without sorrow?

No, not without a wound in the spirit shall I leave your company.

Too many fragments of my spirit have I scattered in documents, corridors, aeroplanes, offices, and conference rooms; and I cannot withdraw from them without a burden and an ache.

It is not a garment I cast off this day but a skin that I tear with my own hands.

Nor is it a thought I leave behind me, but a heart made bigger with toil, sweat and hope.

Let it be said that my day of parting is the day of coming together, and let it be said that my eve amongst you is in truth a dawn for a new day and glorious future for the Multilateral Fund.”

19. You are the guardian of this Fund and I am sure with your wisdom you will maintain its future and its independence.

20. Do not give it up for adoption nor commit it to an old people's home; you will find a middle way for it to fulfil your dreams that conceived it and nurtured it.

21. God bless you all.
