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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF
THE MULTILATERAL FUND FOR THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL
Ninety-sixth Meeting
Montreal, 26-30 May 2025
Item 6(e) of the provisional agenda¹

**PROGRESS UPDATE BY UNEP OZONACTION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE ROADMAP CONTAINED IN THE FINAL REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF
REGIONAL NETWORKS OF NATIONAL OZONE OFFICERS (DECISION 92/5(e))**

Note by the Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

1. At the 92nd meeting, the Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (SMEO) presented the final report on the evaluation of regional networks of national ozone officers.² Subsequently, the Executive Committee inter alia requested UNEP OzonAction to report to the 96th meeting on the progress made in the implementation of the proposed actions recommended in the evaluation report (decision 92/5(e)).

2. The present note introduces the attached report prepared by UNEP OzonAction to inform the Executive Committee on progress made in implementing actions in the seven areas included in the roadmap identified in paragraph 19 of the evaluation report, to further improve the regional networks' good performance, namely:

- (a) Planning and organizing network meetings;
- (b) Outcomes of the meetings and follow-up on recommendations;
- (c) Cross-fertilization among regions;
- (d) Broadening the group of participants in network meetings;
- (e) Inclusion of Sustainable Development Goals in the agenda;
- (f) Gender mainstreaming;

¹ UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/96/1

² UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/92/6

- (g) Implementing and bilateral agencies' participation in meetings; and
- (h) Continued development of virtual modalities.

3. In line with decision 92/5(f), the SMEO will further report on the implementation of the evaluation recommendations at the 97th meeting, after taking into account the discussion and decision made during the 96th meeting on the report prepared by UNEP OzonAction attached below.

EVALUATION OF REGIONAL NETWORKS – UNEP’S ACTION TO IMPLEMENT THE ROADMAP

REPORT BY UNEP OZONACTION

The following responses are developed based on consultative process with Regional Network Coordinators and the analysis of documents (agendas, concept notes and meeting reports) from 21 Network and Thematic meetings organized in the period June 2023-December 2024.

Action item	Evaluation findings	Response
(a) Planning and organizing network meetings	The OzonAction management could develop a common plan, including clear process milestones and related guidelines for meeting preparation — from agenda-setting to logistics — to improve planning and coordination. Consultation process for agenda-setting should start at an earlier stage to ensure all stakeholders’ views to be addressed and duly integrated in the final agenda;	UNEP developed and adopted a common timeline with milestones for our pre-meeting, in-meeting and post-meeting planning processes. This cradle to grave timeline spans logistics to agenda-setting to reporting and includes milestones that guide meeting preparation. The timeline was developed through a consultative process with the regional team and an examination of their good examples of documents, checklists, meeting organizational processes, memo formats, reports, etc. Meeting planning has many variables, some of which are outside of UNEP’s control, and process timelines are aspirational and sometime require modifications due to specific circumstances. Additionally, Regional CAP teams expressed the need for flexibility to accommodate regional differences. Items related to some key milestones, e.g., internal approval memos to proceed with meeting organization and fund commitment, have been standardized. With regard to the consultation process for agenda-setting, based on the new timelines, we are starting at an earlier stage in the process and actively seeking all stakeholders’ views. Different CAP teams employ different consultation methods to seek suggestions from Network members and partners for agenda topics, but all input is duly considered and reflected in the final document.
(b) Outcomes of the meetings and follow-up on recommendations	The OzonAction management could provide overall guidance to the regional coordinators to facilitate a common format for final reports, which would include the final agenda and a gender-disaggregated list of participants. The report would also inform on progress made in implementing previous meetings’ recommendations and would include the latest recommendations to be	UNEP has developed a template of common elements for the Network meeting reports that includes the final agenda, a gender-disaggregated list of participants, progress made in implementing previous meetings’ recommendations and the latest recommendations to be monitored at the next meeting.

Action item	Evaluation findings	Response
	monitored at the next meeting. It could be posted within a month after the completion of the activity on the OzonAction Portal. Such a harmonized approach would facilitate the identification of common issues of interest for all Article 5 countries which could be given priority by the OzonAction teams in developing further targeted support based on the outcomes of the meetings;	The timeline includes the requirement that the meeting report is posted on the OzonAction Meeting Portal within one month of the conclusion of the meeting.
(c) Cross-fertilization among regions	The OzonAction could further promote inter-regional exchanges, beyond geographical location, based on thematic issues of common interest for experience-sharing (e.g., illegal trade). Inter-regional collaboration could include, inter alia, the creation of a common pool of expert resources from all regions and the possibility of remote participation in meetings from distant regions. On exceptional basis, the organization of a global event may be considered, when duly justified, noting that it may mobilize a large amount of resources and efforts;	UNEP has continued to promote inter-regional exchanges through the Networks on thematic issues of common interest to promote experience-sharing beyond regional borders. In the reporting period, CAP organized six joint network or thematic meetings covering different regions and/or topics: - Joint ECA-WA Network Meeting, Jordan 2023; - Joint Network Meeting SA-SEA and Thematic Workshop to Enhance Awareness and Communication under the Montreal Protocol, Thailand 2023; - Joint Thematic Meeting for High Ambient Temperature and Group 2 Countries (HAT) / Group 2 Countries WA-SA, UAE 2024; - Joint Network Meeting for Ozone Officers SA-SEA, China 2024; - Joint Network Meeting for Ozone Officers SA-WA, India 2024; - Joint Thematic Workshop on National Inventory of Banks of ODS/ HFC and Strategy for Management of Unwanted Controlled Substances SEA-PIC, Philippines, 2024. All of them allowed for experience sharing between countries of different regional networks. Some of them focused on specific topics such as specificities of HAT/Group 2 countries in the context of preparation and implementation of HPMPs and KIPs or implementation of certain types of projects (such as national inventories of banks). Additionally, there is further information sharing that is facilitated by translation of resources produced by regional teams into different UN languages. In several cases, CAP staff members from one region participated in the network meetings of another region to allow for internal experience sharing and streamlining of processes for meeting preparation and delivery.

Action item	Evaluation findings	Response
		There were also cases of NOO participation at the meetings of different networks.
(d) Broadening the group of participants in network meetings	The OzonAction may wish to explore ways to ensure the participation of relevant stakeholders for addressing the new challenges ahead for completing HCFC phase-out while addressing HFCs phase-down, with the support of the NOOs in identifying the key partners with whom they would be working at national level for achieving the scheduled compliance with the Montreal Protocol;	UNEP has to the extent possible, within the existing resource availability, widened the involvement of relevant national stakeholders that have been identified by Ozone Officers as critical for addressing the new HCFC and HFC challenges. The following are examples of where UNEP has invited different stakeholders' groups to the Network and thematic meetings: - Representatives of RACHP associations (ECA KIP Implementation OZONE2CLIMATE meeting, 2024). - Customs Officers / Montreal Protocol Customs Focal Points (Twinning National Ozone Officers - Customs Workshop on ODS/HFC Trade Control and Reporting in PICs, 2023; Customs Twinning workshop & border dialogues for countries of the SADC region - Africa Anglophone network, 2023; ECA Network and Enforcement Meeting, 2024; Customs Border Dialogue for South and West Asia countries, 2024; Customs Twinning Workshop and Border Dialogues for countries of Western and Northern Africa region, 2024). - RAC industry representatives (Thematic Workshop on Establishment and Implementation of Competency-based Certification in PICs, 2024; Thematic Network Meeting back-to-back with the Grenada Sustainable Cooling Exhibition, 2025 (upcoming)). - Environmental inspectors (Joint ECA and West Asia Network Meeting with Montreal Protocol Officers and Environmental Inspector, 2025 (upcoming)). - Energy efficiency policymakers and financial mechanism officials (Twinning of ozone officers and national energy-efficiency policymakers to support Kigali Amendment objectives, Phase I).
(e) Inclusion of SDGs in the agenda	SDGs should continue to be addressed in the agenda, but limited to the issues deemed which are a priority for NOOs. The CAP programme has already mapped the SDGs related to the Montreal Protocol and they could further contribute to capacity building on these areas at the demand of NOOs;	UNEP continues to maintain the visibility of SDGs as overarching goals of the international community and their linkage to the work of Article 5 countries and the Montreal Protocol family of institutions. Activities under the Montreal Protocol contribute to many SDGs, including e.g., SDG 1, SDG 5, and SDG 13. UNEP defers to the interest of the Ozone Officers as to whether it is a priority to discuss SDGs at a given meeting. In the past, it has not been a high priority for the Ozone Officers.

Action item	Evaluation findings	Response
(f) Gender mainstreaming	The meetings should continue to include gender as a regular agenda item, strengthening the operationalization of gender mainstreaming in the work of the NOOs and include recommendations for ensuring progress in implementation at national level, in empowering women in Montreal Protocol-related sectors;	UNEP remains firmly committed to implementing the Fund's gender mainstreaming policy to enable women and men to have equal opportunities in Montreal Protocol-related sectors. Network meetings continue to include gender as a regular agenda item, but UNEP defers to the Ozone Officers as to whether this topic should be discussed at any given meeting, when there is something meaningful and/or new to discuss. Most of the meetings organized since the Network evaluation report was issued had a session on gender mainstreaming that covered several related topics: - Gender mainstreaming in Multilateral Fund projects and any updates on the implementation of the Multilateral Fund Gender Policy; - Promotion of resources for gender mainstreaming produced by OzonAction, that are available on the OzonAction website; - Case studies from the countries about their activities related to gender mainstreaming in their Montreal Protocol activities. Some Network meetings have specific recommendations related to gender mainstreaming (e.g., from the Joint ECA-WA Network Meeting 2023: NOOs/MPOs to consider establishing contacts with national gender focal points; UNEP to arrange regional webinar to exchange experience between gender focal points and NOOs/MPOs). UNEP organized several thematic meetings/workshops that had a more prominent gender aspect, such as the regional workshop for female technicians, Trinidad and Tobago 2023, and the Youth in the RAC sector workshop, Belize 2024, that looked specifically into gender-based barriers for young people to join the RAC sector. UNEP CAP's Gender Core Team, in cooperation with UNEP's Gender and Safeguards Unit, prepared a Guidance on Gender Assessment in Montreal Protocol projects that will be introduced and discussed during CAP network/thematic meetings in 2025.

Action item	Evaluation findings	Response
(g) Implementing and bilateral agencies	The participation of implementing and bilateral agencies is an intrinsic part of the value of the regional networks, which provide the technical environment where agencies and NOOs can interact and address their common projects. The meeting agendas could provide more space for interactive working sessions which contribute to the sharing of experiences among countries in a region and help learning from each other;	Implementing and bilateral agencies are regularly invited to meetings and given agenda time. UNEP gives the agencies visibility and prominent roles in the meetings and will continue to do so in the future. Based on a review of Network meeting reports since the issuance of the Network evaluation report, about half of the agendas indicated sessions involving the other Implementing and bilateral agencies for specific topics (e.g., Overview of project implementation in the region – Lessons learnt and insights of Implementing Agencies and Bilateral Partners in Africa (UNDP, UNIDO, GIZ, UNEP); Possible approaches to establishing HFC quota system (UNEP, UNDP, UNIDO); Implementing Agency experience in preparing and submitting KIPs (UNEP, UNDP, UNIDO) or Panel Discussion: Innovative Ideas in the MAC Sector (UNEP, WB, UNDP, UNIDO). Bilateral meetings with some countries are organized on the margins to discuss specific issues or projects. In some meetings, there is a specific agenda time allocated for bilateral/project discussions. The majority of the meetings have had interactive working sessions which allow for sharing of experiences and information between countries. The most-used formats are as follows: - Breakout sessions on different thematic topics to allow for in-depth discussions (e.g., a breakout session into two groups to discuss strengthening NOU and customs collaboration for monitoring, reporting, verification, and enforcement of the ODS licensing system). <i>Group 1:</i> Data Monitoring and Reporting, focused on licensing/quota data-sharing, import/export tracking, customs data reconciliation, and enforcement at different stages, including pre-clearance, clearance, and post-clearance audits. <i>Group 2:</i> Integrated Approach/Standard Operating Guidelines explored streamlining enforcement through structured collaboration, standardized procedures, and sustaining long-term compliance efforts. - Brainstorming sessions (e.g., brainstorming on sustaining the HCFC Phaseout and preparing for the HFC phase down, covering the following points: 1) Policy framework; 2) Technical solutions; 3) Challenges and opportunities; 4) Good practices and lessons learned). - Panel discussions (e.g., industry perspectives on timelines, product cycles, harmonization, technology neutrality; Quality of import data and challenge of countries in collecting, reconciling and reporting HFC trade data; Data Collection for Development of KIP Stage I).

Action item	Evaluation findings	Response
		- Parallel group exercises (e.g., one group for compliance and enforcement officers, the other group for NOOs). - Practical sessions (e.g., Management of HFC Quota Allocation and Monitoring using Excel Spreadsheet). - Communication sessions (e.g., highlighting examples from the Asia Pacific region's pilot social media projects and providing participants with a new way to look at messaging). - Working group sessions (e.g., three groups to discuss how the NOU and customs can collaborate to strengthen monitoring, reporting, verification and enforcement of ODS/licensing system Group 1: Data Monitoring and Reporting; Group 2: Integrated Approach; Group 3: Capacity building of Customs Officers; or Group discussion on Effectively mobilizing the National RAC associations' support within the context of HPMPs and KIPs). - Site visits (e.g., site visit at Customs port in Durres with the x-ray station for trucks; site visit at Midea exhibition center in Guangzhou and its HC-290 production line; site visit to the Daikin Air-conditioning India Pvt Ltd manufacturing facility in Sri City, Andhra Pradesh).
(h) Continued development of virtual modalities	A final note to highlight how reactive and adaptive the networks have been in facing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their work. The regional networks' teams transformed the crisis into an opportunity, by leapfrogging from the previous status quo to an advanced use of communication technologies, thus ensuring the delivery of the programme. The regional networks should keep developing the virtual modalities and tools as a cost-effective complement to the regular in-person meeting modalities.	UNEP has permanently adopted virtual means as a complementary option to deliver its meetings. UNEP continues to offer physical meetings, online meetings, and hybrid meetings. The option of which approach to use depends on several factors, including country preferences, bandwidth limitations, and technology considerations. Virtual modalities are useful, but also have downsides (time difference, focus and participation, safety).