HFC consumption rapidly increasing according to UNDP surveys

Dubai, 4 November 2015: According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) the use of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) is rapidly increasing in important industry sectors such as air-conditioning, refrigeration, solvents, foam blowing and aerosols – where they are used as replacements for ozone-depleting substances controlled by the Montreal Protocol. In the Chile and Colombia, the overall average growth in HFC consumption was approximately 80% in from 2008 to 2012.

This observation was made by UNDP from inventories of HFC consumption in 6 developing countries - Bangladesh, Chile, Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia and Nigeria – and presented in Dubai at a side event titled “Experience and Preliminary Results of Early HFC Surveys funded by the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (CCAC)”. The event took place on the margins of the 27th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

“Action on climate change cannot be comprehensive without decisive action to limit HFC emissions. The first step in this direction is to establish current HFC consumption levels and make informed projections of its growth and the resulting impact on emissions estimates,” said Mr. Jacques Van Engel, Director of the UNDP Montreal Protocol Unit.

The surveys also suggested that there were major differences in the types of HFCs that had the highest consumption in the last few years. For example, HFC-134a constituted approximately 38% of HFC consumption from 2008 to 2012 in Chile, while 2013 data from Bangladesh showed that HFC-134a accounted for 93% of the country’s HFC consumption. Meanwhile, in Ghana, 57% in HFC-134a consumption was recorded in 2014.

In addition to the inventory of HFC consumption, UNDP is also estimating HFC emissions at country level based on data gathered, and the results in Chile were also presented in the meeting. Under a business-as-usual scenario it is estimated that Chile’s HFC emissions would be approximately 4.7 million tons CO₂ equivalent by 2020. Initial results show that emissions from refrigeration and air conditioning sources dominate the estimates. The emissions calculations for the other 5 countries are ongoing.

The CCAC approved funding for the first six inventories implemented by the UNDP in 2012, and later for an additional 8 developing countries, namely the Bahamas,
Cambodia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, the Maldives, Mongolia, South Africa and Vietnam, which are being implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and the World Bank. These inventories aim to record current and projected future use of HFCs, as well as opportunities to avoid growth in high-GWP HFCs through policies and other measures.

All the implementing agencies also stressed the importance of the governments, particularly the National Ozone Units, as the focal point for conducting the survey, as they are the most effective institutions for carrying them out. HFC surveys have built on the expertise developed through CFC and HCFC national surveys, combining top down and bottom up approaches. It was also noted that the survey of HFCs need to be well-planned and assessments have to be made through a combination of multiple approaches as these substances are not controlled through national regulations.

Promoting HFC alternative technologies and policies is one of eleven initiatives the CCAC is undertaking to catalyse concrete and substantial action to reduce short-lived climate pollutants

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