

PRESS RELEASE

CEEW: India Should Engage on Phasing Down Climate-Warming HFCs and Ensure that Agreement Reflects Its Needs, as Prime Minister Singh Agreed

New Delhi, 23 October 2013: Indian negotiators at this week's Montreal Protocol meetings in Bangkok should open dialogue to address the phase-down of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) or risk countering the agreement between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Barack Obama in September. The Indian delegation on Monday and Tuesday has sought to bar consideration of proposed amendments to phase down production and consumption of HFCs under the Montreal Protocol. This is in sharp contrast to high-level leaders' statements in recent weeks calling for using the Montreal Protocol to phase down production and consumption of HFCs – statements to which India has been a signatory. These include the G-20 summit declaration and the bilateral agreement between Prime Minister Singh and President Obama.

The Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) calls on the Government of India to support a phase-down of HFCs, as Prime Minister Singh recently committed. "The Indian delegation should embrace efforts under the Montreal Protocol by ensuring that its legitimate concerns are included in any HFC phase-down amendment, Dr Arunabha Ghosh, CEO of CEEW, said. "India should ensure that an agreement delivers replacements for HFCs that are technologically safe, commercially available and viable, and contains adequate financial support to make the transition to those alternatives."

At both the G-20 summit in St. Petersburg and his Washington summit with U.S. President Barack Obama, Prime Minister Singh agreed to move forward with phasing down the production and consumption of HFCs under the Montreal Protocol, while continuing to report HFC emissions under the climate change treaties.

Here is the text of the G-20 declaration, agreed by Prime Minister Singh on 6 September 2013:

We also support complementary initiatives, through multilateral approaches that include using the expertise and the institutions of the Montreal Protocol to phase down the production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), based on the examination of economically viable and technically feasible alternatives. We will continue to include HFCs within the scope of UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol for accounting and reporting of emissions.

The 27 September statement by Prime Minister Singh and President Obama includes the following:

The two leaders agreed to immediately convene the India-U.S. Task Force on hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) to discuss, inter alia, multilateral approaches that include using the expertise and the institutions of the Montreal Protocol to phase down the consumption and production of HFCs, based on economically-viable and

technically feasible alternatives, and include HFCs within the scope of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol for accounting and reporting of emissions.

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This week, on Monday, the Indian delegation objected to opening negotiations on Montreal Protocol amendments by seeking to remove Item 10, “Proposed amendments to the Montreal Protocol,” from the agenda of this week’s treaty negotiations. The item has remained on the agenda. On Tuesday, India opposed formation of a “contact group” to address the HFC issues. A contact group is the normal procedure for considering an issue and working out differences. The Indian delegation insisted that a bilateral Indian-U.S. task force must complete its work before countries could consider multilateral engagement.

“Discussing HFCs with the U.S. bilaterally and negotiating a multilateral roadmap to phase down HFCs in both developed and developing countries are not mutually exclusive exercises,” said Dr Arunabha Ghosh, CEO of CEEW. “HFCs, which are hundreds to thousands of times more potent global warming compounds than carbon dioxide, deserve attention alongside CO₂. By participating in Montreal Protocol discussions, India can ensure that developed countries act on HFCs now and fast, and that developing countries have access to technologically and commercially feasible alternatives with financial support from the Montreal Protocol’s Multilateral Fund,” Dr Ghosh said.

In a recent report – *Cooling India with Less Warming*¹ – CEEW, NRDC, TERI, and IGSD² documented the business case for Indian companies to help make the transition to air conditioner coolants that have less impact on climate change. The report documented the availability of alternatives within India and the steps that some companies operating in India are already taking to make the transition.

The **Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW)** is an independent, not-for-profit policy research institution. Ranked as India’s top climate-related think-tank, CEEW addresses pressing global challenges through an integrated and internationally focused approach. It does so through high-quality research, partnerships with public and private institutions, and engagement with and outreach to the wider public. For more information, visit www.ceew.in. For press queries, contact: prachi.gupta@ceew.in; +919818701046.

¹ Available at: <http://ceew.in/pdf/CEEW-IGSD-NRDC-TERI-Cooling-India-With-Less-Warming-Jun13.pdf>

² Council on Energy, Environment, and Water (CEEW); Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development (IGSD); Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC); and The Energy Resources Institute (TERI).