

16 September 2002

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Jan Kavan,
President of the 57th Session of the General Assembly,
on the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer**

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. It also marks the 15th anniversary of the Montreal Protocol where States committed themselves to preserving the ozone layer. In the years since these milestone events, we have had some success in saving the ozone layer which shields life on Earth from dangerous radiation and its damaging consequences to human health.

Fifteen years ago, States collectively took measures to protect life and the environment from adverse effects on the ozone layer caused by human activity. Since then the Montreal Protocol has been amended and improved several times. About 100 ozone-damaging chemicals have been banned or are being phased out. US\$1.3 billion has been contributed by donors to the Multilateral Fund to help developing countries with implementation of the Protocol. Further resources will be allocated for the next triennium.

During the past few years the ozone layer has stabilized. This success, in halting the negative trend, was possible because of the collaboration of all nations and people who care about preserving the global environment. However, these efforts will have to be maintained if we are to restore the ozone layer to its original levels. Because of the long-lasting impact of ozone depleting substances, we know that the recovery process may take 50 years.

Therefore, for the foreseeable future, the international community must vigorously tackle all possible threats to the ozone layer. Let me emphasize, in this connection, the need to deal particularly with new substances that have a high potential to deplete the ozone layer and illegal trade with these substances.

The experience of the past decade has shown that the international community has been able to allocate substantial resources to help industry adopt cleaner production methods. It has also been very encouraging to see, in many countries, the political will for the phasing-out of ozone depleting chemicals. In the coming years, it is essential to continue this process and adhere to the schedules and timetables in accordance with provisions of the Montreal Protocol.

In conclusion, I should like to thank the Multilateral Fund of the Convention together with the donor countries, the Global Environment Facility, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, the World Bank and others for their valuable and important activities in the fight for the protection of the ozone layer.