

PHASE-OUT OF HCFC OZONE-DEPLETING SUBSTANCES, UNDERWAY

As world leaders opened the door in negotiating the elusive agreement to fight climate change through the historic Paris accord, the Philippines marks another milestone by complying with a 10% target reduction in the importation of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), an ozone-depleting substances (ODS), this year.

Speaking for Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Assistant Secretary and concurrent Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) Director Juan Miguel T. Cuna during the closing ceremony of the HCFC-141b Phase-out in the Foam Sector Project in the Philippines, Assistant Director Eva Ocfemia said, “For 27 years, our country has been working very hard to cooperate with international community to implement national programs for phasing out ODS to protect the ozone layer.”

The DENR through the EMB has already completed the ban on five of the six groups of ODS namely: chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), halons, carbon tetrachloride (CTC), methyl chloroform and methyl bromide (non-quarantine pre-shipment or non-QPS).

The remaining group of the ODS to be phased out is hydrochlorofluorocarbons or HCFCs.

HCFC-141b, widely used as a blowing agent, is the first species of HCFCs to be phased out in the country because it has the highest ozone-depleting potential (ODP).

The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (a protocol to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer) is an international treaty designed to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the production of numerous substances that are responsible for ozone depletion.

The Philippines signed the Montreal Protocol on September 14, 1988 and ratified it on March 21, 1991.

The Philippine Ozone Desk (POD) of the DENR-EMB is the national coordinator of programs for the implementation of the Montreal Protocol.

“Though the first phase of the HCFC Phase-Out Management Plan (HPMP) will end this year, the HCFC phase-out activities will span for another 27 years, until we achieve its total ban in 2040,” Ocfemia stated.

The implementation of the HCFC-141b Phase-out in the Foam Sector Project is funded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) with technical assistance from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

The closing ceremony held at the Sulo Riviera Hotel in Quezon City on December 16, 2015 was participated by project beneficiaries including polyurethane foam manufacturers and end-users, non- ODS technology providers, suppliers of chemicals and products for foam application, national government agencies, local government units, and professional groups/associations.

In the course of the project implementation, 18 companies were capacitated to shift their foam production from ODS-based to non-ODS-based technology. Likewise, all project beneficiaries opted for Zero-Ozone Depleting Potential (0-ODP) and Low-Global Warming Potential (low-GWP) alternatives – indeed a noteworthy achievement for the Philippines. ###