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Environmental group calls for accelerated phase-out of HCFCs

PTI

NEW YORK: A leading environmental group has called on governments around the world to accelerate the phase-out of gases that damage the ozone in the wake of findings that action under the ozone layer treaty could do more to combat global warming than the Kyoto protocol.

The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) pointed out that a new study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences showed climate protection already achieved by the Montreal Protocol is far greater than the reduction target of the Kyoto Protocol.

The study also said that additional climate benefits of a similar magnitude could be achieved through an earlier phase-out of a category of gases called hydrochloroflourocarbons (HCFCs), which damage the ozone layer.

"This study is a call to action. By agreeing to stop producing HCFCs, we have the potential to reduce the effects of global warming in an unprecedented way," said Alexander von Bismarck, Campaigns Director of EIA.

EIA's own estimates indicate that accelerating the phase-out of HCFCs has the potential to prevent the production of 27.5 billion carbon dioxide-equivalent tons of HCFCs, more than the total annual global emissions of carbon dioxide from the burning and flaring of fossil fuels.

HCFCs have been promoted by the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer as ozone layer-friendly alternatives to CFCs for refrigeration and air conditioning.

Under the Montreal Protocol, developed countries are to phase out the production and consumption of HCFCs in 2015, while developing countries need only freeze production levels in 2015 with a complete phase-out in 2040.