

It was an effective interaction between science and politics that led to the international efforts to protect the ozone layer. Today, there are 184 Parties to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer; for comparison, the United Nations have 189 member states. The basic goal of the Convention is elimination of production and use of the chemicals that deplete the ozone layer. In the political process set up to achieve this, science has been given a well-recognised position. Three panels regularly advise the Parties on the available knowledge relevant to the process. Once every four years, the panels make completely new assessments; 2002 is such a year.

The assessment presented in this journal deals with environmental effects of ozone depletion, this time with special attention to the consequences of interactions between ozone

depletion and climate change. It is produced in the first instance as a limited edition for governments, *via* the United Nations Environment Programme. The report is now made more readily available to the scientific community by publication in the scientific literature. It was written by members of the panel, reviewed by scientists from a number of countries, and is based on the research work by many more colleagues.

The assessment is presented here in full. We hope that publication in this scientific journal will give it a much wider readership. As editors and panel members, we also hope that it will help keep scientists aware of their involvement in the protection of the environment for all forms of life on Earth.

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