

Global Ozone Observing System that includes ground-based stations and specialized satellites (*e.g.* NASA–TOMS/Meteor and NOAA–TOVS), it is now well-known that, since the late 1970s, every September–October a reduction of stratospheric ozone is observed over the Antarctic which accelerates during September and reaches the lowest ozone values in the first part of October, thus generating the so-called ‘ozone hole’ in the stratosphere. Thorough analysis of observed data, complemented by laboratory and modelling studies, indicates that the cause of this ozone ‘hole’ is the chlorine and bromine released by Man-made chemical compounds such as the chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons.

The presence of these chemicals, combined with ideal conditions that are unique to the Antarctic Austral Spring — the closed atmospheric circulation vortex isolated from major south–north meridional exchanges, the extremely low stratospheric temperatures (below -80°C), and the existence of aerosols — create a situation which is conducive to rapid ozone destruction. For five of the past six years, the ozone at altitudes between 14 and 20 kilometres has been almost totally annihilated during late September and into October. Besides the hazards to human health, continued depletion of the ozone shield could have some negative effects on crop yields and aquatic life as well as in changing the radiative regime of the Earth’s atmosphere. However, in accordance with decisions agreed to under the Montreal Protocol coordinated by UNEP, measures are being taken to eliminate production and use of substances which cause ozone depletion.

During the last Antarctic Austral Spring season (1992) the ozone ‘hole’ appeared in the second half of August, reached its greatest-size-ever of approximately 25 million square kilometres, and in October recorded the lowest

ozone values ever of about 110 m atm cm compared with 330 m atm cm averages for the same month in the years prior to ozone-hole detection.

1993 Showing

This year from the beginning of August total ozone over the Antarctic has already fallen by 110 units or about 35% below that of the pre-ozone-hole-detection average. Ozone soundings from the German station Neumayer (70°S), at altitudes of 16 to 20 km where temperatures are below -85°C , indicate ozone loss of over 50% in that layer. This is corroborated by ozone soundings at Marambio (64°S) and Syowa (69°S). Around 10–12 August, ozone values measured over the Palmer Peninsula were lower than 180 m atm cm, and during the third 10 days’ period of the month, in both the NW and the NE sectors, reports were of similar low values. Over the ocean sector of the middle latitudes, between the Antarctic coast and Southern Africa–Australia–New Zealand in a crescent-shaped region, relatively high ozone dominates, with a maximum of about 400 m atm cm, which values are only 5 to 10% below what was formerly normal.

Dr Bojkov concluded that all these data indicate that not only is the ozone depletion in progress, but also that in this Antarctic Austral Spring, if the stratospheric circulation keeps the vortex intact and very cold temperatures persist, we could expect, in September–October, extremely low ozone values similar to those of last year.

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ProMED Mission Statement: The Federation of American Scientists’ Programme for Monitoring Emerging Diseases

Numerous recent episodes of emerging and re-emerging infections — including AIDS, the continuing spread of dengue viruses, multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis and other antibiotic-resistant Bacteria, cholera in Africa and South America, and the resurgence of measles in US cities — attest to Humans’ continuing vulnerability to infectious diseases throughout the world. Many experts, both within and outside government, have warned of the need to improve capabilities for dealing with emerging infectious diseases. A recent report from the Institute of Medicine of the US National Academy of Sciences declared:

‘Disease-causing microbes have threatened human health for centuries. ... [The Committee] believes that this threat will continue and may even intensify during the coming years. ... Infectious diseases remain the major cause of death worldwide. ...the next major infectious agent to emerge as a threat to health in the United States may, like HIV, be a pathogen that has not been previously recognized. ...The key to recognizing new or emerging infectious diseases, and to tracking the prevalence of more established ones, is surveillance.’

The need to monitor and control the global spread of infectious diseases has become critical as new diseases, or formerly obscure or geographically isolated diseases,

spread rapidly across the globe. These diseases often appear first in tropical countries and areas of civil conflict from which, if not recognized and contained, they may spread globally, aided by large-scale population movements or environmental destruction. During the last two decades, more than a dozen new viral diseases and drug-resistant pathogens affecting humans have been identified, yet during this same period of time, money for research, disease surveillance, and reporting systems, has been cut.

The development of a global infectious-disease surveillance system has been the primary recommendation of expert analyses, including the Institute of Medicine report. A programme to identify and quickly respond to unusual outbreaks of infectious diseases, to prevent their spread, would be highly beneficial — not only to the region of origin, but to the rest of the world as well. Unfortunately, existing international structures to monitor and contain infectious disease outbreaks are poorly coordinated and understaffed. International structures are also inadequate for the containment and monitoring of animal and plant diseases, which could threaten food supplies and, in some cases, could infect humans.

The value of a cooperative international health project as an incentive for a strengthened Biological Weapons

Convention has also been recognized by the parties to the Convention, which bans the development, production, and stockpiling, of biological weapons. The Final Declaration adopted by the third Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference, held in 1991, urged greater cooperation in international public health and disease control, the provision of training programmes to developing countries, the coordination of international and regional programmes, and the pooling of information from national epidemiological surveillance and data-reporting systems 'with a view to improvements in the identification and timely reporting of significant outbreaks of human and animal diseases.' However, no mechanisms were set up for achieving these lofty goals, and precedents indicate that they will, in all likelihood, be

ignored. The consensus declaration also noted that existing international means are inadequate and must be developed further in order to promote international cooperation in medicine, public health, and agriculture.

The timely conjunction of public health and arms-control needs makes this an opportune time to mount a coordinated initiative. This initiative will bring together international experts to develop a plan and encourage the implementation of a fully-effective global programme for infectious-disease surveillance and response.

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The Active Futures Network

The Active Futures Network, or AFN, is a multinational, multidisciplinary coalition of Futures-oriented research institutes and organizations, the main purposes of which are the encouragement of information exchange and project development collaboration. We would also like to see the further development of Futures Studies as a recognized and relevant research discipline.

AFN will be coordinated by the International Division of the Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies, the undersigned Director of which will act as Secretary to the network. The Secretary will keep members of the network generally informed about ongoing individual or collaborative projects, and arrange for voting at project-development meetings around the network.

There is no charge to members for joining AFN. Institutes wishing to join will be required to file a current annual report, and appoint a contact person, who will then be the liaison officer between AFN and the member organization. The total of liaison officers will form the AFN Board of Trustees.

It is envisaged that meetings between liaison officers will take place at various times, but there will be no requirement to hold such meetings. What meetings do occur will be held on a rotating basis between institute locations, and will be self-financing. Larger conferences and symposia will be held in sites offering adequate sponsorship. Fund-raising for these events will originate with the Institute's Secretariat, but members are welcome to participate in the process.

AFN will function as a catalyst for project development and collaborative research. It will also act as a clearing-house for information on a diverse range of futures-relevant research.

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New Director-General of WWF

The World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) recently announced its election of Dr Claude Martin to succeed the present Director-General, Mr Charles de Haes. Dr Martin, currently Deputy Director-General, took up his new duties after the WWF Annual Conference in Vienna, Austria, in October 1993.

'Claude Martin has a wealth of conservation credentials and his work with WWF-Switzerland, and more recently at [WWF's world headquarters in] Gland, has demonstrated that he also has the administrative skills for his new appointment,' said HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, WWF International President. 'I am confident that under Claude's leadership, WWF will continue to grow and fulfil its mission,' said Mr Charles de Haes, WWF-International's Director-General, who last November announced his intention to retire after 17 years in the post. During his leadership, he had directed the growth of WWF into 'the world's largest conservation organization', with an estimated more than 5 million regular supporters and conservation activities in more than 90 countries.

WWF-International's Board of Trustees selected Dr Martin at a meeting on 22 June in London, following a seven-months' search and screening of candidates. Dr Martin, a Swiss, became the third Director-General of WWF, after Dr Frits Vollmar and Charles de Haes. In

accepting the post, he said that a combination of new and traditional approaches are needed in order to win the fight to conserve the world's natural heritage. 'The conservation problems facing Humankind are serious, but WWF's solution-oriented approach — based on field experience and policy expertise — will enable us to meet the future with confidence,' he said.

Dr Martin, 47, has been Deputy Director-General of WWF-International since 1990, overseeing WWF's field, policy, education, and communications, activities. He served as Director and Chief Executive of WWF-Switzerland from 1980-90, during which time he also played a key role in WWF-International programmes. In the 1970s, he carried out ecological studies while living in Central India, and later served as a National Park Director in West Africa. He has carried out numerous conservation missions around the world and has, in particular, initiated forest conservation programmes in Africa and Asia. Dr Martin received a doctorate in biology from the University of Zürich, Switzerland. He is Author of the book, *The Rainforests of West Africa* (1991), and of numerous other publications.

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