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Harvard University recognizes Refrigerants, Naturally! with prestigious award

Roy Family Award 2011 celebrates power of collaboration in tackling climate change

The John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University announced Refrigerants, Naturally! as the recipient of the prestigious 2011 Roy Family Environmental Award. The award will be presented to the recipients at a Harvard Kennedy School event on May 4th 2011. The partnership was selected from a group of highly qualified projects from around the world. Reviewers praised *Refrigerants, Naturally!*'s impact on an important and often overlooked problem – persistent fluorinated gases (so called F-gases such as CFCs, HCFCs and HFCs) in our atmosphere – and held it up as a pragmatic and effective example of corporations and environmental organizations working together to reduce severe threats to the global environment.

F-gases are highly potent greenhouse gases that are used in most refrigeration and cooling technologies. Recent scientific studies indicate their increasing piece of the global warming pie – up to 9 – 19% of global greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. *Refrigerants, Naturally!* aims to skip over their deployment in developing countries as the next billion people get their refrigeration and cooling. This will prove to be a major wedge in preventing further global warming.

Refrigerants, Naturally! brings together four high-profile private companies – The Coca-Cola Company, McDonald's, Unilever, and PepsiCo – which are committed to combat climate change and ozone layer depletion by eliminating F-gases and substituting them with natural refrigerants (e.g. ammonia, carbon dioxide, and hydrocarbons). Greenpeace and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) have been supporters of this partnership from the beginning, by providing advice, information and linkages to their own activities.

“*Refrigerants, Naturally!* demonstrates that meaningful reductions in greenhouse gas emissions are possible if business and NGOs are creative and are prepared to work together”, said Henry Lee, director of the Environment and Natural Resources Program at Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, in announcing the 2011 award winner.

Since 2004, *Refrigerants, Naturally!* has focused its efforts on overcoming barriers to the use of natural refrigerants including worldwide availability, maintenance, technical challenges and regulation. The companies have come a long way. They actively promote a shift in point-of-sale cooling technology toward safe, reliable, energy-efficient and cost-effective natural refrigerants with low or zero global warming potential and zero ozone depleting potential. The initiative provides a platform and a critical mass in communicating with the refrigeration technology supply chain, with other large companies using similar refrigeration and air conditioning equipment, governments and civil society.

Refrigerants, Naturally! is taking action to combat global warming and climate change by replacing F-gases in refrigeration equipment with climate-friendly natural refrigerants and is successfully promoting the technology amongst other companies around the world.



"*Refrigerants, Naturally!* has played an important role in raising the profile of this important issue and demonstrating what can be achieved through shared vision and commitment", said Thomas Lingard, Global External Affairs Director Unilever and Chair of *Refrigerants, Naturally!*.

In 2010, *Refrigerants, Naturally!*'s achieved one of its primary goals. The group's leadership catalyzed the entire retailing and consumer goods sector to commit to change its cooling technologies starting in 2015. The Consumer Goods Forum, a CEO-led organization of 400 global consumer goods manufacturers and retailers with \$3 trillion of revenue, pledged to begin phasing out HFC refrigerants as of 2015 and replace them with natural refrigerants (Press release: http://www.ciesnet.com/pfiles/press_release/Press_Release_2010/2010-11-29-ClimateProtection.pdf).

"*Refrigerants, Naturally!* strives to eliminate an entire class of dangerous greenhouses gases from a large industrial sector. As the group has now catalyzed a commitment to eliminate HFCs from the Consumer Goods Forum's 400 companies, we have a real shot at the kind of fundamental transformation we need. For this reason, Greenpeace is honored to be working with these corporations on this issue", said Amy Larkin, Director Greenpeace Solutions.

"Public-Private Partnerships such as *Refrigerants, Naturally!* are vital tools for implementing Agenda 21. UNEP is proud to continue helping inspire and guide this partnership of responsible private sector companies, which is contributing in a tangible way to achieving the UN's Millennium Development Goal of environmental sustainability", said Rajendra Shende, head of UNEP's Ozone Action branch.

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About the Roy Family Award

The Roy Family Award celebrates an outstanding public-private partnership project that enhances environmental quality through the use of novel and creative approaches. By drawing attention to an exceptional partnership, the award aims to inspire others to replicate or expand upon the success. More info on http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/project/43/environment_and_natural_resources.html?page_id=16

Scientific background

In 1987, F-gases such as CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons) and later also HCFCs (hydrochlorofluorocarbons) were controlled under the Montreal Protocol due to their negative impact on the stratospheric ozone layer. Unfortunately, many of them were replaced with another generation of F-gases known as HFCs (hydrofluorocarbons). HFCs, which have a direct global warming impact more than a thousand times worse than the reference gas carbon dioxide (CO₂), are currently used in much of the world's commercial refrigeration. Refrigeration is critical in food and beverage production, processing, storage, transportation and point-of-sale (e.g. supermarket



cabinets, beverage coolers, ice cream freezers). Commercial refrigerants represent 41% of total refrigerant emissions.¹

The consequences of the rapid growth in HFC emissions are sobering. Because they are persistent in the atmosphere, HFCs will be responsible for between 9% and 19% of CO₂ equivalent emissions by 2050 even if we do not act to reduce CO₂ emissions. If the reduction of CO₂ remains the focus of climate change initiatives and nothing is done about HFCs, they will be responsible for between 28% and 45% of CO₂ equivalent emissions by 2050.²

A UNEP report released at the Cancun climate negotiations last year highlighted that even if countries fully implemented the pledges and intentions associated with the Copenhagen Accord, in the best case scenario they could cut emissions to around 49 gigatonnes of CO₂ equivalent by 2020. This leaves a gap of around 5 gigatonnes of CO₂ equivalent that needs to be bridged over the coming decade - an amount equal to the emissions of all the world's cars, buses and trucks in 2005.³ Cutting “non-CO₂ gases” including avoiding HFCs and improving energy efficiency of refrigeration equipment – as is being done voluntarily by the Refrigerants, Naturally! Partners - contributes to quickly close this gap.

Note to the editors

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¹ U.S. EPA 2004, “Determination of comparative HCFC and HFC emission profiles for the Foam and Refrigeration sectors until 2015,” http://www.epa.gov/ozone/snap/emissions/downloads/FoamEmissionProfiles_Part1.pdf

² Velders et al 2009, “The large contribution of projected HFC emissions to future climate forcing,” <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2009/06/19/0902817106.abstract>

³ Emissions Gap Report, <http://www.unep.org/publications/ebooks/emissionsgapreport>



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