



Roosevelt
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Studies



Utrecht
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CALL FOR PAPERS

Deadline: 15 December 2024

**The Montreal Moment
Ozone Depletion and the Rise of
International Environmental Governance**

**Roosevelt Institute for American Studies
Middelburg, The Netherlands**

5-6 June 2025

In the 1970s, scientists discovered that chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) – chemical compounds that were widely used as refrigerant gases and as propellants in aerosol sprays – were damaging the ozone layer, a vital region of the Earth’s atmosphere that absorbs most of the Sun’s ultraviolet radiation. The popularization of expressions like “ozone depletion” and “ozone hole” was instrumental in mobilizing public opinion and politicians alike around the catastrophic consequences of man-made climate change. The US Congress held a series of hearings on the matter, and environmentalist groups worldwide multiplied their efforts to educate, lobby, organize, and share scientifically sound information. This, in turn, generated the response of the industry, which through groups like the Alliance for Responsible CFC Policy, tried to downsize the threat arguing that the science was still uncertain. After years of campaigning and confrontation, in 1985 twenty countries signed the Vienna Convention, which established a framework for international regulations on ozone-depleting substances and paved the way for the Montreal Protocol. Finalized in 1987, this document represented a landmark multilateral environmental agreement, regulating the production and consumption of dangerous compounds and setting standards in international environmental governance that are still regarded as paramount.

The ways in which the Montreal Protocol was achieved, the discussions and negotiations it unleashed and entailed, the questions and issues it raised on multiple scales invite historians to further reflect on its origins and legacies vis-à-vis the contemporary rise and consolidation

of a complex international environmental governance system. Was the Montreal Protocol an end point of a longer history of international efforts at managing the environment? Or was it the harbinger of new forms of multilateral cooperation? What does its trajectory reveal about similar attempts to regulate global environmental problems like climate change, soil erosion, or pollution? What was the role that non-state actors and nongovernmental organizations played in getting it signed? By converse, how did corporations react to its development and against its provisions? And how did governments position themselves in the broader debates around international environmental safeguard that the Montreal Protocol embodied? How was scientific evidence understood, conveyed, interpreted, and managed in this context? And finally, how did systemic and external variables such as economic volatility and industrial development impact on the international environmental politics of the 1970s and 1980s?

We invite proposals that address (some of) these questions and that put the Montreal Protocol within the broader framework of environmental internationalism in the 1970s and 1980s. Local, national, regional, and transnational perspectives are mostly welcomed, as well as contributions that shed further light on the politics and diplomacy of the agreement. We look for interpretations that add to the ongoing historiographical debate, help expand the historical reflection on the agency of international environmental history, and challenge traditional approaches through innovative and interdisciplinary methodologies.

Possible topics for contributions include, but are not limited to:

- Forms of contemporary international environmental governance and diplomacy;
- The interactions between national and international environmental politics and political cultures;
- The influence of cultural ideas (neoliberalism, ecocriticism, post-modernism, techno-optimism, etc.) in the shaping of international environmental governance;
- The implications of the Global North/South divide in the establishment of an international environmental governance;
- Economic crises and their interaction with environmental crises and governance;
- Environmental (counter-)activism and the role of environmental non-state actors, including nongovernmental organizations and private corporations;
- Emerging – both locally and globally – discourses and practices of environmental justice and their integration in international environmental governance;
- The development of control and enforcement mechanisms of international environmental governance.
- Policy recommendations and institutional analyses of state and non-state bureaucracies designed to combat environmental decay.

This symposium will be held in coincidence with the Roosevelt Institute for American Studies 2025 Policy Workshop on International Environmental Governance. For this reason, we strongly encourage co-written and interdisciplinary papers from historians and other academics from other disciplines as well as contributions from the policy-field. To support a culture of inclusion, we strongly encourage proposals that reflect the diversity of our field in terms of gender, ethnicity, and disability.

To apply, please send an abstract of no more than 300 words and a short bio to info@roosevelt.nl by **15 December 2024**. Submissions will be reviewed by the organizing committee and successful applicants will be notified by January 2025. Full papers (6,000-7,000 words, including footnotes) are due by **30 April 2025**.

The best papers will be considered for publication. Authors are invited to participate in one of two publication projects. First, we aim to put together a special issue on international environmental governance. Second, we also aim to set up a co-authored book on the history of international environmentalism aimed towards a wider audience. This book will focus on the prehistory, origins, details, the effects, and the wider impact of the "Montreal Moment" at the end of the 1980s.

The symposium, which is co-organized with the Political Environment Research Collective at Utrecht University, will be held in person at the Roosevelt Institute for American Studies in Middelburg, The Netherlands. Presenters will be provided with accommodation, and a limited travel grant program will be available to facilitate the participation of PhD researchers and early-career, non-tenured scholars.

Organizing committee:

Dario Fazzi, Leiden University / Roosevelt Institute for American Studies
Frank Gerits, Utrecht University