



Roosevelt
Institute for
American
Studies

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

5-6 June 2025

**Roosevelt Institute for American Studies
Hofplein 16
4331 CK Middelburg**

Program

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, the Montreal Protocol was finalized in 1987, representing a landmark multilateral environmental agreement.

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 policymakers and historians to further reflect on the origins, development, and legacies of a complex international environmental governance system. The questions at the center of this workshop are many. Was the Montreal Protocol an endpoint 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 role did non-state actors and nongovernmental organizations play 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 safeguards 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? Our discussions shed further light on the functioning and limits of global environmental governance.

Thursday, June 5, 2025

12:00-12:30 **Registration**

12:30-13:30 **Welcoming Lunch**

13:30-13:45 **Introduction**

Dario Fazzi (Roosevelt Institute for American Studies)
Frank Gerits (Utrecht University)

13:45-15:00 **Roundtable 1**

**International Environmental Governance Today:
Lessons from the Past and Challenges for the Future**

Speakers

Gersom van der Elst (Senior Policy Officer, Climate Finance, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Rebecca Heuvelmans (Head of Strategy and External Relations, Women Engage for a Common Future)

Chloé Baudry (First Secretary, Political and Economic, Embassy of Canada to the Netherlands)

Moderator

Dario Fazzi (RIAS) & Marnix Vader (RIAS/Erasmus University Rotterdam)

15:00-15:30 **Coffee Break**

15:30-17:30 **Roundtable 2**

National Perspectives and International Environmental Governance

Through this discussion, we aim to explore the interactions between international environmental governance, domestic politics and public debates. The interest generated by and around the safeguarding of the ozone layer exemplifies how public concerns over global environmental regulation have evolved over time and space.

Speakers

Eleanor Griffiths (University of Nottingham)

Media and Marginalization: Environmental Narratives from Appalachia to the Montreal Protocol

Heleen Blommers (Radboud University Nijmegen)
Dutch National Politics of International Environmental Governance during the 1980s

Astrid M. Eckert (Emory University)
How Did the UN Climate Secretariat Get to Bonn?

Moderator

Roberta Biasillo (Utrecht University)

18:00 **Dinner**

Friday, June 6, 2025

09:30-10:00 **Welcome and Coffee**

10:00-12:00 **Roundtable 3**

The Rise of Planetary Technopolitics

This panel examines how the negotiations in Montreal contributed to the transformation of planetary politics, fostering the idea of transboundary protection of natural commons. Experts and scientific data shaped the agenda, setting the stage for the institutionalization of a technocratic approach that is both widely adopted and deeply contested these days.

Speakers

Ingrid Medby (Newcastle University)
Governing the Arctic: Where Environmental Protection and Great Power Politics Meet

Ruth Morgan (Australian National University)
Thin Air: Temporality and Tangibility in Atmospheric Diplomacy

Hayley Brazier (independent environmental historian)
Ultraviolet Radiation and the Deep Sea: The Role of the Montreal Protocol in Marine Conservation

Moderator

Jeroen Oomen (Utrecht University)

12:00-12:30 **Wrap-Up and Publication Plans**
Frank Gerits (Utrecht University)

12:30-14:00 **Farewell Lunch**

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