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Global Mercury Partnership
Partnership Advisory Group
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UNEP Global Mercury Partnership

Draft proposed report to the Executive Director on overall progress January 2009 – June 2010

Note by the Secretariat

The Overarching Framework of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership outlines the responsibility of the Partnership Advisory Group to report on overall progress of the Partnership to the UNEP Executive Director.

The Chemicals Branch of the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics has drafted an overall progress report which is set out in the annex to the present note. The current version reflects input received from the 2009 partnership areas evaluations and outlines a series of questions for consideration of the Partnership Advisory Group in the aim of encouraging the future work of the partnership areas. A separate report on activities undertaken under the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership is available as document UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/PAG.2/2.

The Partnership Advisory Group may wish to discuss and provide input on the proposed overall progress report taking in mind the individual partnership area evaluations as well as the outcome of UNEP Governing Council Decision 25/5 and the first meeting of the mercury Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

Annex I

UNEP Global Mercury Partnership

Draft report on overall progress

January 2009 – June 2010

Introduction

1. The Operational Guidelines of the Overarching Framework of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership specify that one of the responsibilities of the Partnership Advisory Group is to report on overall progress to the Executive Director. Related to this, UNEP is to facilitate reporting on progress to governments, including the UNEP Governing Council or its subsidiary bodies, as appropriate, and the partnership areas are to report biennially to UNEP in accordance with the UNEP reporting format.

2. Reporting is to include tracking of partnership activities and partner contributions as well as assessing effectiveness, and measuring the impact of partnership activities on the achievement of the overall goal. The reports are to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership.

3. This document is a report on overall progress of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership. It reflects input received from the partnership areas within partnership area evaluations and considers the future direction of the Partnership in the context of the mercury Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee process.

4. A separate report on activities undertaken under the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership is available as document UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/PAG.2/2.

Section I: Assessment of overall progress (January 2009 - June 2010)

5. In paragraph 20 of UNEP Governing Council Decision 25/5, the Executive Director of UNEP and members of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership were commended for the progress in developing and implementing the Partnership as a vehicle for immediate action on mercury and the progress made by the Partnership in creating an overarching framework for immediate action in the priority areas identified in decision 24/3 IV was welcomed. The continued involvement of UNEP in the Partnership was also endorsed.

6. Overall interest in the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership is strong. Partners agree that the partnership areas are a good venue to share and exchange relevant information.

7. This section provides an assessment of overall progress of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership in January 2009 – June 2010.

Partner Membership

8. The number of official partners has almost tripled over this time frame:

- On 1 January 2009, there were 23 official partners in the Global Mercury Partnership, including 6 governments, 2 intergovernmental organizations, 7 non-government organizations, and 8 others.
- As of 30 June 2010, there were 70 official partners in the Global Mercury Partnership. The Global Mercury Partnership is currently comprised of 15 governments, 4 intergovernmental organizations, 31 non-government organizations, and 20 others.

- Some of the partners are global industry partners that collaborate and represent a large number of national associations.

9. In addition, there are a number of participating organizations that have yet to submit official support letters to the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership. The Partnership Advisory Group would continue to encourage such participating organizations to signal formal support to the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership through a formal letter of support as specified in the Overarching Framework.

10. The Partnership Advisory Group would recommend that UNEP and the partnership areas continue to encourage new partners to join the partnership.

Endeavouring to secure adequate funds

11. The Executive Director sent a fund-raising letter dated 26 March 2009 to UNEP official focal points drawing attention to decision 25/5 and the need for funding to support the implementation of the decision, including work on partnerships. The United States of America subsequently pledged $ 675,000 to support the work of partnership activities, and the Government of Switzerland pledged $ 49,936 to support the work of partnership activities.

12. A number of strategic activities have been supported:

i) The Government of Norway supported $1,500,000 of activity in three strategic areas from January 2009 through to June 2010, including: the primary mercury mining project in Kyrgyzstan, the mercury storage projects in Asia and South America, and the UNEP mercury waste project. In addition, the Government of Norway recently funded $277,736 of activities related to waste, artisanal and small scale gold mining and vinyl chloride monomer production through overseas development aid.

ii) The European Commission support to the coal project extends over a three year time frame from 2009 – 2011. These funds are supporting a $1,303,000 project aimed at reducing mercury emissions from coal combustion in the energy sector.

iii) The United States of America is supporting $ 520,000 of activities related to mercury in products, information gathering and inventories, artisanal and small scale gold mining as well as the Kyrgyz Republic primary mercury mining project.

iv) The Government of Spain provided $ 100,000 in 2008 for artisanal and small scale gold mining activities in South America, specifically in Colombia and Ecuador. The funds are being used during this reporting cycle.

13. Other partners in the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership have directly supported a number of projects. Other donors have expressed interest.

14. UNEP hired one P-03 level staff to support the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership with funding from the core Environment Fund. The staff member has been engaged under this post since May 2009. Also UNEP has provided on-going support for one P-04 level staff to support mercury interim activities since February 2007.

15. In July 2009, UNEP provided $115,000 in funds to support activities from the core Environment Fund. These additional activities included: translating into French and Spanish as well as printing copies of the mercury awareness raising package ‘Mercury – A Priority for Action’; development of the synopsis document ‘Mercury Knowledge & Gaps in the African Region’; support to expand the ‘Mercury Watch Database’; and development of ‘Squeezing Gold from a Stone’, an advocacy document on artisanal and small scale gold mining.

16. UNEP has also taken other steps to secure funding, such as through the establishment of the Mercury Small Grants Programme and through raising limited funds through the Strategic Approach’s Quick Start Programme (in particular for activities relating to artisanal and small-scale gold mining).

17. Although the partnership donor base has expanded, overall funding levels have decreased in this reporting cycle. Significant levels of chemicals related funding have been directed towards supporting the process of developing the global legally binding instrument on mercury.

18. A common weakness identified in the partnership area evaluations includes the lack of funding for partnership area activities. Additional funding is required to implement activities under the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership in line with priority actions established in the partnership area business plans.

Status and scope of the partnership areas

19. Business plans have been drafted for the following partnership areas: artisanal and small-scale gold mining; mercury cell chlor-alkali production; mercury air transport and fate research; mercury in products; mercury releases from coal combustion; and mercury waste management. The business plans provide clarity and accountability for partnership area efforts and timelines. The current business plans are available as meeting document UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/PAG.2/3 - Partnership area business plans.

20. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) are acting as co-leads in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining partnership area. NRDC took up co-leadership of this partnership area in April 2009. The objective of this partnership area is the continued reduction and elimination of mercury uses and releases in artisanal and small-scale gold mining. The partnership area has set a target of a 50 per cent reduction in mercury demand in artisanal and small-scale gold mining by the year 2017.

21. The United States of America is acting as lead of the mercury cell chlor-alkali production partnership area. The objective of this partnership area is to minimize significantly and, where feasible, eliminate global mercury releases to air, water and land that may occur from chlor-alkali production facilities. The partnership area has set a target of 29 per cent reduction in mercury demand by the year 2015.

22. Italy is acting as lead of the mercury air transport and fate research partnership area. The objective of this partnership area is to increase global understanding of international mercury emissions sources, fate and transport by accelerating the development of sound scientific information to address uncertainties and data gaps in global mercury cycling and its patterns (e.g., air concentrations and deposition rates, source-receptor relationships, hemispheric and global air transport and transformation and emission sources), by enhancing information sharing among scientists and between them and policymakers and by providing technical assistance and training, where possible, to support the development of critical information.

23. The United States of America is acting as lead of the mercury-containing products partnership area. The partnership area objective is to phase out and eventually eliminate mercury in products and to eliminate releases during manufacturing and other industrial processes via environmentally sound production, transportation, storage, and disposal processes. Numeric reduction targets have been established for the various product categories.

24. The International Energy Agency (IEA) Clean Coal Centre is acting as lead of the mercury releases from coal combustion partnership area. The objective of this partnership area is the continued minimization and elimination of mercury releases from coal combustion where possible. At this stage, no numerical targets are established for this partnership area.

25. The Government of Japan is acting as lead in the mercury waste management partnership area, which was initiated in early 2008 by the Government of Japan. The objective of the partnership area is to minimize and, where feasible, eliminate unintentional mercury releases to air, water, and land from waste containing mercury and mercury compounds by following a life cycle management approach.

26. The Zero Mercury Working Group is acting as interim lead for the mercury supply and storage partnership area which was established in April 2009. A government lead or co-lead continues to be sought for this partnership area. Governments in a position to lead or co-lead this partnership area are encouraged to identify themselves to UNEP. Specifically, the supply and storage partnership area will aim to reduce the global supply of mercury by 50% by 2013, when compared to the supply available in 2005 as documented in the most recent UNEP trade report.

Assessing effectiveness of the partnership areas

27. The partnership areas have identified objectives that are meant to reflect desired outcomes of the partnership area. The objectives are outlined above in the section that outlines the status and scope of partnership areas.

28. The partnership areas business plans should also outline indicators of progress which are intended to assist in tracking progress in partnership area reporting to UNEP (as per Annex II Business Plan Template, Section VI. Evaluation of the Overarching Framework for the Global Mercury Partnership).

29. For the artisanal and small-scale gold mining partnership area there are three indicators of progress identified:

i) Mercury purchased and used in the communities and target countries where technical activities are carried out (baseline is the 2005 data from the 2006 UNEP Trade Report);

ii) Mercury release reductions from ASGM; and

iii) Where available and where feasible, number of kilogram of gold produced by ASM for one kilogram of mercury used in the sector.

30. There is currently limited data for the first two measures. However, some mercury release reductions have been and can be documented on a project basis, such as the EPA Mercury Capture System work in gold shops.

31. The third indicator is also very difficult to assess. It can be documented on a project basis, where a particular technology reduces the use of mercury at a given site per unit of gold produced.

32. It is recommended that in addition to these indicators which are more appropriate at a project level, additional indicators be created at a global level.

33. For the mercury cell chlor-alkali production partnership area, indicators include:

i) Percent reduction in mercury use per metric ton of chlorine production, percent reduction in Hg emissions per metric ton of Cl production,

ii) Percent reduction in mercury use by the chlor-alkali industry, percent reduction in Hg emissions and use by the chlor-alkali industry, and

iii) Number of chlor-alkali units with mecury-cell technology decommissioned.

34. Under this partnership area, the World Chlorine Council (WCC), which represents about 85% of global mercury-based chlorine production, has provided a regionally-based report on mercury consumption and emissions showing declines in mercury emissions from about 23.3 metric tons per year in 2002 to 6.4 metric tons per year in 2009 (7.4 metric tons for 2008, 8.6 metric tons for 20007). The regions covered are USA/Canada, Europe, Russia, India, Uruguay and Brazil/Argentina. The number of MCCA plants in these regions has dropped to 58 in 2009 (85 in 2002, 70 in 2007, 60 in 2008).

35. For the mercury air transport and fate research partnership area, indicators of progress are under development. The following indicators are under consideration:

i) Mercury emissions to the atmosphere from anthropogenic sources by region and emission-source category;

ii) Mercury emissions to the atmosphere from natural sources by region and emission-source category;

iii) Regional and global emissions for each mercury-species;

iv) Maps of atmosphere mercury depositions by region, mercury-species and emission scenario;

v) Update on mercury emissions, transport and depositions on different spatial and temporal scales.

36. For the mercury-containing products partnership area, there are currently no quantifiable indicators of progress identified; however, percentage mercury reduction objectives are set forth in the business plan per product sector as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Possible mercury demand baseline data

Mercury containing products	Demand 2005 (tonnes)	Demand Projection 2015 (tonnes)	Partnership target (tonnes)
Batteries	300-600	200	50 (Hg demand by 2015)
Lamps	100-150	125	100 (Hg demand by 2015)
dental amalgam	240-300	270	230 (Hg demand by 2015)
measuring and control devices	150-350	125	50 (Hg demand by 2015)
electrical and electronic devices	150-350	110	50 (Hg demand by 2015)
others such as cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and traditional and ritual uses	30-60	40	30 (Hg demand by 2015)

37. Additional possible indicators include: mercury demand for manufacturing of products containing mercury; quantity of mercury used in products consumed by consumers; release reductions achieved; availability of non-mercury alternatives; and number of dental practitioners using amalgam.

38. Current sector reduction goals are based upon figures generated in the 2007 UNEP Trade Report. Such figures are a good general starting point; however, progress toward product sector reduction goals is difficult to measure because of a lack of national baselines. The growing body of information being collected by all partnership area projects is helping to create such a baseline.

39. For the mercury releases from coal combustion partnership area, two specific indicators are currently identified in the business plan, including:

i) availability of guidance tools to assist countries in achieving emission reductions;

ii) emission reductions achieved.

40. For the first indicator, the process optimization guidance has been developed and has been tested in 3 countries. Plans are underway to test it in other countries and to develop the current guidance into an interactive on-line tool.

41. For the second indicator, estimates for mercury emissions from coal combustion are known to be somewhat inaccurate and difficult to quantify, and it was deemed inappropriate to use actual emission estimates and reductions therein as a target at this stage. Rather, the initial results from the regional projects could be used to provide more accurate emissions for smaller target areas in the future.

42. For the mercury waste management partnership area, there are a number of identified indicators, including:

i) Estimated amount of mercury diverted from waste stream by the implementation of the projects under the Partnership
ii) Number of partners
iii) Available information on identification and characterization of mercury contained in waste streams
iv) Number of national projects on ESM of mercury waste implemented
v) Number of countries that prepared national inventory of mercury waste
vi) Number of projects to promote awareness and education

43. In terms of estimated amount of mercury diverted from waste stream by the implementation of the projects under the Partnership from waste projects, 635,000 mercury switches from vehicles were diverted through activities in the USA, 3 tonnes of batteries collected Grupo Prques Nacionales Panama (GPNP), 5 kg diverted through the Costa Rica Hospital Assessment Project, 54 kg diverted through the Chile Hospital Assessment Project and 22 kg diverted through the China Hospitals Project (indicator i).

44. The number of partners has increased to 33 in March 2010 from 14 in December 2008 (indicator ii).

45. In terms of available information on identification and characterization of mercury contained in waste streams, UNIDO identified that mercury-containing tailings easily become methylated and bio-accumulable and thus stresses that action at production level is essential in this area (indicator iii).

46. The number of national projects on ESM of mercury waste implemented is 11. This includes the Basel Convention Capacity Building Programme in the Latin America and Caribbean Region (Uruguay, Costa Rica, Argentina), UNEP Mercury Waste Management Project (Cambodia, Philippines, Burkina Faso, Chile, Pakistan), UNIDO Project on end-of-life Compact Fluorescent Lamps (Uruguay), Japan's research on long-term storage of collected mercury, Panama's battery collection project (indicator iv).