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**United Nations  
Environment  
Programme**

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**Global Mercury Partnership  
Partnership Advisory Group, Sixth meeting**  
Bangkok, Thailand, 31 October – 1 November 2014

**Report of the Sixth Meeting of the UNEP Global Mercury  
Partnership Advisory Group**

**1. Opening of the meeting**

1. The sixth meeting of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership Advisory Group (PAG) was held at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok from 31 October to 1 November 2014. The meeting was opened at 10 a.m. on Friday, 31 October, by Mr. Jacob Duer, representative of the secretariat of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership.

2. Mr. Duer welcomed the participants on behalf of UNEP, and noted the importance of the meeting as the first one following the opening for signature of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. He said that currently, there were 128 signatories to the Convention and 7 ratifications and acknowledged that the success in adopting the Convention was largely due to work undertaken by the Partnership, which had initiated science-based work on mercury that had eventually led to legally binding work and the adoption of the Convention.

3. He said there were clear links between the Partnership Areas and the articles of the Convention as noted in the UNEP “Acting Now” publication. Prior to the development of the Convention the Partnership had afforded scientific and technical support to countries. He suggested that now is the time to develop a new role for the Partnership and determine how to best support countries’ ratification and early implementation of the Convention. This would form an important theme of the current meeting.

4. He encouraged the participants to have a discussion on financing issues, some seeds for which were included in the meeting documents, especially the thought starter. There was a need to address how to strengthen the financial base. The resources were out there, he said, but they needed to be identified and accessed in order to best assist countries in need.

5. In conclusion he recalled that the PAG meeting had been organized back to back with the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop a global legally binding instrument on Mercury (INC) for logistical convenience but also to honour their close links. He said that Article 14 of the Convention on capacity

building, technical assistance and technology transfer acknowledged the important role of partnerships, and that side events during INC6 would demonstrate not only what the Partnership had done but what it would be doing. He said it would be important to engage with all stakeholders, stressing the Partnership as a logical choice for implementation, and looked forward to a clear recommendation from the meeting to take forward.

6. Mr. Atle Fretheim (Norway), chair of the meeting, welcomed the participants, acknowledging the broad participation, and reiterating that it was the first PAG meeting following the adoption of the Minamata Convention. The Partnership supported negotiation of the Convention and the time was now ripe to discuss its new role in assisting with ratification and implementation of the Convention.

7. Outlining the topics for current discussion, he said that the meeting would first review the results of the Partnership survey that UNEP had conducted in early 2014, which would provide an idea of what the partners think that the Partnership is doing well, and where it needs to improve. He expected candid discussion on the state of the Partnership and the opportunities that it had to offer, noting that it would feed into later discussions on the future role of the Partnership, especially with respect to the Minamata Convention. The meeting also would review the work of the Partnership during the past year with Partnership area leads presenting one especially relevant project that their area has undertaken.

8. He noted that communication and outreach strategies would be addressed given that for the Partnership to be effective it was important to advertise and sell itself and make its capabilities known to governments and to the INC.

9. He concluded by noting that, with the adoption of the Minamata Convention, the Partnership was at a turning point and fresh ideas and direction were required if the Partnership was going to adapt to its new role supporting ratification and implementation. He proposed that he inform the INC at the beginning of its sixth session of the results of the current meeting.

10. Mr. Duer reported on the well-attended training session on the Principles of Effective Partnering that was held on the afternoon of Thursday, 30 October 2014. The session had identified the core principles of effective partnering as equity, transparency and mutual benefit. The meeting had noted the partnering cycle as scoping and building, managing and maintaining, reviewing and revising, and sustaining outcomes. An exercise in partnership mapping had been undertaken that suggested that of the 130 partners, some were active, some not and some who were active were not on the list. That mapping needed updating. In addition, he said, a more formal and structured evaluation survey should be undertaken, preferably by an external evaluator. Demonstration projects had been identified as a means of providing expertise in terms of capacity building and a discussion had taken place on financial and human resources. He said that many valuable suggestions had been made that could be brought forward to the current meeting for the benefit of recommendations that might be reported to INC. There might also be value in further explaining what it means to be a partner for the seventh meeting of the Partnership Advisory Group.

## **2. Organizational matters**

### **Adoption of the agenda**

11. The meeting agreed to adopt the agenda as set out in document UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/PAG.6/1.

### **Organization of work**

12. The meeting agreed to conduct its business from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday, 31 October 2014 and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, 1 November 2014.

### **3. Discussion on the findings of the survey of the Partnership**

13. The representative of the secretariat introduced the summary of survey results as set out in document UNEP(DTIE)Hg/PAG.6/3 and referred to the INF document containing the more detailed results on the individual partnership areas - UNEP(DTIE)Hg/PAG.6/INF.1. He said the survey had been conducted to take stock of how well the Partnership has performed since the previous review undertaken in 2012. The document provided a compilation of results as well as proposals to address the observed challenges and opportunities.

14. The main thematic areas of the survey were: information clearing house mechanism; representation within partnership areas, sufficient partner to partner and partnership area involvement and cooperation; finances and transparency; communication and outreach; and role in implementation of the Minamata Convention. He said all partners had received the questionnaire and 15 had been interviewed to supplement the responses which had been received from 48 partners out of the 131 contacted.

15. The responses showed that the key challenges were as follows: lack of representation of stakeholders, and in particular a desire for more government participation was mentioned. Members are organisations, but when the active individual move, quite often the organization becomes a passive member; a need for improved communication among partners and within the partnership; poor website accessibility and with relevant information often being “hidden” in reports and/or meeting documents; low satisfaction with resource use efficiency and transparency; and a need for increased visibility through public outreach. At the same time the survey showed that the key strengths of the partnership was the excellent quality and relevance of publications, their availability free online, and the key role of the Partnership could play in implementation of the Minamata Convention in the future.

16. In terms of solutions it was suggested that the Partnership be restructured to more clearly define the roles and expectations of UNEP, the leads and the partners; differentiate between partners and members; and possible merging some Partnership areas. Improved representation could be obtained through advertising in targeted journals, improving connections to the Minamata Convention and having focal points for each sector. Improving communications and outreach would require a dedicated staff member to focus on this, an improved website, and perhaps the creation of an online forum for Partners. With regard to making financing more inclusive and transparent it was suggested that partners be informed before fund allocation, there be increased communication concerning activities and a breakdown of how resources had been used.

17. In the ensuing discussion many participants emphasized the importance of having co-leads to lighten the burden of the leads of the Partnership areas. All who spoke noted that funds available were allocated to projects and activities and that the Partnership leads were providing their time voluntarily and absorbing costs. It was suggested that resources could perhaps be identified to alleviate some administrative costs currently borne by Partnership leads.

18. Many participants stressed the need for additional partners, especially from governments. To this end it was important to publicize the benefits of being a partner and the simplicity of joining. Some Partnerships benefit from a strong participation of industry that have solutions to control issues, such as in the Partnership area on coal, but lack of governments in the Partnership means that countries are not contacting Partnership areas to identify areas of need and are not informed about possible options for control of releases. The need for improved contact with governments, and provision

of information on the Partnerships was stressed. It was suggested that clear instruction on how to become a partner be given to the INC.

19. Information dissemination on the work of the Partnerships was key. Although the Minamata Convention supported partnerships as indicated both within the text of the Convention and in the Final Act, many countries were not aware of the relationship between the Partnership and the Convention and what the Partnership could provide in terms of assistance. Donor countries, too, would benefit from consulting the Partnership to better target resources.

20. Many participants noted the benefits of publicizing the past and current work of the Partnerships that would demonstrate how the Convention had been built on the scientific and technical work of the Partnership and its importance as a tool for implementation. To that end a clear vision on how the Partnerships could cooperate with the Convention was essential and the INC could provide information for that purpose. There is a need to reinforce the relationship between the Partnership activities and implementation of the Minamata Convention. One participant suggested that establishing regional focal points for dissemination and outreach would be useful. Additionally, the need to improve the website was stressed. One suggestion was to create a web portal where partners could create and update a profile of their interests and contributions.

21. One participant, supported by others, suggested the need for a review of the entire Partnership priorities and development of a Partnership wide plan to address those priorities. An assessment of the Partnership areas might suggest which ones were effective and serving the Convention and which might be merged or work together. It was suggested that the interconnections between different partnerships be further examined for mutual benefits. Additionally cooperation with other multilateral environmental agreements might serve to harmonize the work of the partnerships.

22. It was suggested that there be a meeting convened between leads, co-leads and the secretariat to consider, for example, the current structure and role of the Partnership, identifying links between Partnership areas and priorities across Partnerships. It was also suggested that there should be an external evaluation of the Partnership which may serve to highlight priority issues, how to engage stakeholders and where there could be maximum benefit for all partnerships.

23. It was proposed that the results of the survey and suggestions for solutions should be brought to the attention of the INC as it was clear that the Partnership is a vital tool in the implementation of the Convention.

#### **4. Review of the overall progress and activities of the Partnership**

24. Turning to agenda item 4, the Chair invited Partnership area leads to make presentations on a selected successful project in their area, including lessons learned, that could be replicated by other Partnership areas, and underlining which aspects of the projects worked well and which had faced challenges.

25. Presentations were made by the following participants: Ms. Susan Keane (Natural Resource Defense Council) and Mr. Ludovic Bernaudat (UNIDO) on Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining; Mr. Vagner Maringolo (European Cement Association) for the Cement Sustainability Initiative of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development; Mr. Nicola Pirrone (National Research Council of Italy – Institute of Atmospheric Pollution Research) on Fate and Transport; Ms. Ana Garcia (Spain) and Ms. Judith Torres (Uruguay) on Supply and Storage; Mr. Masaru Tanaka (Japan) on Waste Management; Ms. Karissa Kovner (USEPA) on Products; Ms. Marianne Bailey (US Environmental Protection Agency) on Chlor-Alkali; and Ms. Lesley Sloss (International Energy Agency, Clean Coal Centre ) on Coal Combustion.

26. Ms. Keane and Mr. Bernaudat presented the ASGM Partnership area and recalled article 7 of the Minamata Convention on artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) and the requirement for all countries with a more than insignificant level of ASGM to prepare and implement a national action plan (NAP) in accordance with Annex C to the Convention. They described how the Partnership had contributed to the elaboration of the guidance for the development of the national action plans and what those plans aimed to achieve as called for in the Final Act of the Convention. The guidance has been structured in two parts: procedural recommendations for developing a NAP, and technical information on the required elements of annex C. Interagency coordination was noted to be a challenging aspect of creating NAPs. The guidance also provides information on creating an enabling policy framework, which includes included setting national objectives and reduction targets for mercury, facilitating formalization and/or regulation, managing trade and preventing diversion of mercury, involving all stakeholders in plan development and providing information to miners and affected communities.

27. The second part of the guidance provides information on more technical topics, such as approaches to eliminate worst practices and to collect baseline data. The guidance presents information on ways to reduce mercury use and emissions in the short term – through elimination of worst practices and mercury exposure; and to transition to mercury free techniques in the long term – for example through gravity and other concentration processes or chemicals leaching processes. Finally, the NAP guidance references WHO efforts to provide separate guidance on protecting vulnerable populations and developing a public health strategy.

28. It was noted that the Partnership created this draft guidance based on an existing document that was created as part of a project funded by the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) on strategic plans to reduce and where feasible eliminate mercury in ASGM in Cambodia and the Philippines.

29. In the ensuing discussion it was noted that GEF had allocated funding for the development of the ASGM national action plans. One participant highlighted the importance of identifying contaminated sites subsequent to cessation of activities. In response it was noted that, with GEF assistance for a new project, 3 sites covering chloralkali plants, VCM and ASGM would be identified to collect background data on contaminated sites for monitoring purposes.

30. Mr. Nicola Pirrone presented the fate and transport Partnership area and noted it had contributed to the development of the Global Mercury Assessment on sources, emissions, releases and environmental transport. He said that the overall goal was the development of a global monitoring network to produce comparable monitoring data to assess the effectiveness of the Convention as elaborated in Article 22.

31. The European Commission had provided assistance to develop a ground-based observational network by which background measures were taken from over 40 monitoring sites with strong cooperation with on-going regional programmes that ensured the involvement of countries in the Global Mercury Observation System (GMOS). Additionally, an oceanographic campaign to understand the mercury cycle between the ocean and the atmosphere had been carried out; knowledge gaps on mercury distribution in the troposphere and lower stratosphere was being filled through intercontinental and regional aircraft campaigns; a task force on regional and global scale modeling was established involving major modeling groups worldwide to validate different scenarios of emission reduction strategies and a centralized repository archive and advanced web service was developed to ensure timely and up-to-date sharing of information on mercury in the environment including humans. The work undertaken under these different activities was relevant to Articles 14, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 22 of the Convention.

32. The Partnership on Fate and Transport recognized the need for a coordinated Global Mercury Monitoring Network that provides accountability to all stakeholders to track the success and gaps of mercury control measures, establishes bilateral agreements with relevant existing regional and national atmospheric mercury monitoring stations and includes data to determine standard biotic endpoints.

33. Mr. Pirrone described a GEF-funded UNEP project to develop a plan for global monitoring of human exposure to and environmental concentrations of mercury that aimed to harmonize approaches and strengthen analytical capacity for accurate monitoring of mercury concentrations at the global level. The project would build on an existing European project of WHO, in collaboration with the Consortium to Perform Human biomonitoring on a European Scale to develop a standard protocol for human biomonitoring surveys in maternities in order to monitor prenatal exposures to mercury and other metals. WHO would further develop standardized protocols to conduct five pilot surveys in selected developing countries.

34. In the future the Fate and Transport Partnership planned to support the Minamata Convention's technical needs, continue to develop the GMOS with strong effort in developing advanced sensors for mercury monitoring, contribute to develop a unified emission inventory point-by-point sources – for which cooperation with other partnerships was essential, and continue work of the GMOS task force on modeling. The Partnership revised its Business Plan by expanding its focus and goals to include mercury transport and fate in biota, with added emphasis on collecting information within contaminated sites. The Partnership would also continue its information dissemination activities. He concluded by noting that monitoring programmes were complex and that easy and affordable technology was needed.

35. Ms. Ana Garcia Gonzalez presented the supply and storage Partnership area, highlighting that the Partnership needed to work with many stakeholders as it was not linked to one specific sector. She noted the two objectives of the Partnership as: the minimization and where feasible, elimination of mercury supply taking into account the hierarchy of sources, and the transfer of mercury from the market to environmentally sound management; the reduction of the amount of mercury available in the environment.

36. The priorities of the Partnership were: working with governments and relevant stakeholders to reduce or eliminate mercury product and export, to develop national inventories and to assess potential illegal sources of mercury supply; working with the chlor-alkali, non-ferrous, ASGM and oil/gas sectors to compile knowledge on how much mercury will enter the commodity market and when and to understand industry sector plans; and assess solutions for environmentally sound management and storage looking at national infrastructures and methodologies.

37. She focused her presentation on a national workshop held in Montevideo, Uruguay, in October 2014 on stabilization technologies for mercury containing waste, funded by Switzerland and carried out through the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) to support the early ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention. There had been a characterization of mercury wastes generated by a plant during the past 20 years and the development of a pilot project for the treatment and stabilization of 2 types of mercury wastes. High mercury content waste would require stabilization and micro-encapsulation in a sulphur polymeric matrix and low mercury content waste would require stabilization with sulphur micro-cements. The project involved one Chlor-alkali facility of Uruguay, the Basel Convention Coordinating Center for the LAC region, the National Technological Centre for Mercury Decontamination and the Cement International Technologies (Spain), the waste treatment sector and Academia. The project results would provide input to the development of the roadmap for early implementation of the Convention in Uruguay.

38. She said the lessons learned showed the value of involving all relevant stakeholders. She added that collaboration between partners, including the perspective of the BRS regional centres could facilitate the exchange of information and

methodologies. She noted that pilot projects in the field could provide solutions to real problems related to mercury and could easily be replicated in the region and elsewhere. She said the Partnership was exploring options to have additional workshops in the future. As a final comment she mentioned that export bans from the European Union and the United States had resulted in an increase in the price of mercury often leading to illegal traffic.

39. Ms. Lesley Sloss presented the coal Partnership area and highlighted the work undertaken thus far in that the Partnership had produced a Process optimisation guidance document (POG), an online tool for optimising mercury control (iPOG), the US EPA monitoring toolkit, a global agreement on measurement methodologies (ISO/CEN) (in progress), country studies helping with inventory work in China, India, Russia and South Africa, demonstration projects in Russia and South Africa with new projects planned in Asia, and undertaken outreach through papers published and presented in various journals and at numerous international meetings. In addition the partnership area had held the Mercury Emissions from Coal (MEC) experts workshop every 2 years.

40. She said the experience and skills gained through the project work would be valuable to assist in the implementation of the Minamata Convention and she highlighted the work done to develop the best available techniques/best environmental practices (BAT/BEP) guidance with the BAT/BEP working group established under the Convention. She said the text of the BAT/BEP guidance document was largely based on the POG document produced by the Partnership and was being completed by the leads and members of the coal partnership area. The Partnership members were providing case studies in support of the document and would form a steering review committee to review the case studies. She said there was a need for a list of volunteers from the coal partnership area to act on the steering committee and a list of proposed case studies and a plan for a case study matrix that must be populated with appropriate studies.

41. The future vision for the coal partnership area was that it would continue to be an invaluable resource to the Convention in terms of knowledge and experience, that it would continue to provide information and outreach and, where possible, project work in target regions and that funding and support would be provided to the Partnership in order to ensure that the level of commitment and quality of output can be maintained.

42. In response to a request for clarification she said that it was difficult to replicate projects undertaken in other countries due to differing local situations and that it was very source specific. Noting the gap between the demonstration projects and policy she said reduction in emissions and increase in efficiency in a cost-effect way would require the Partnership area to go to each country to state what was best in each case.

43. Mr. Tanaka presented the waste management partnership area noting there had been some joint projects and some individual ones. He said there were 4 effective tools for promoting activities: face-to-face meetings, good practice documents, a resource persons list, and information integrated into the business plan. He recalled the third Waste Management Area Meeting of December 2013 that had discussed ways to support countries towards early ratification and implementation of the Convention, collaboration possibilities with other Partnership areas, local authorities and private-sectors, updating/developing relevant documents (e.g. Good Practice Document, Basel Convention Technical Guidelines, UNEP's Sourcebook on Mercury Waste Storage and Disposal), and taking action on implementing the Partnership's future projects. The meeting had agreed that priorities included support to updating or developing the above-mentioned resource materials, and increasing public awareness, at the local regional and global level, on mercury and mercury added products and wastes and their impact on human health and the environment.

44. He highlighted the need for coordination between partnership areas by noting the lead person on the supply and storage partnership area had been invited to assist in the development the Good Practice Document. Partners in other partnership areas would be approached to provide additional input following the sixth session of the INC. The document, entitled Good Practice for Management of Mercury Releases from Waste, would be updated and would form a compilation of information of practices/technologies related to mercury waste management. To that would be added a description on preconditions to replicate the practices and suggestions to enhance environmentally sound management of mercury wastes for each practice/technology as well as to provide readers with further information.

45. He noted the importance of face-to-face meetings and the need to secure funds to maintain a network. Although 31 persons were currently on the resource persons list that could provide technical advice on the Partnership and activities to reduce mercury releases from waste management, only 5 had been approached, which emphasized the need for more public awareness. He stated that additional resource persons were welcome.

46. With regard to the business plan, he said there were 42 projects listed as of July 2014. He urged a life-cycle approach to managing mercury recalling the public health problems created by mixed collection and disposal and open dumping and burning that lead to both air and water pollution. He said disposal was insufficient and that an end-of-pipe approach was necessary. For that to be successful, contaminants had to be reduced and a move made from individual chemical management to an integrated approach thereby improving total waste management.

47. In the ensuing discussion, one participant suggested, and the Partnership agreed, to take on the issue of environmentally sound management of waste containing mercury in small-island developing states as a priority issue. Another participant highlighted the cost involved with environmentally sound management of wastes that took many years and stressed the value of working in cooperation with the Basel Convention that, he added, might crosscut with several partnership areas. Mr. Tanaka added that while the costs of environmentally sound management of waste might increase as laws became stricter, the quantity of waste would simultaneously decrease.

48. Ms. Kovner presented the products partnership area whose overall objectives were to phase-out and eventually eliminate mercury in products and to eliminate releases during manufacturing and other industrial processes through environmentally sound production, transportation, storage, and disposal procedures; identify and implement successful approaches for reducing or eliminating mercury in products where there are effective substitutes; and foster a partner-driven forum for discussing strategies for achieving goals and objectives.

49. She said the project areas covered health care facilities and schools; the development of inventories and risk management, retirement, collection and

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