UNEP Global Mercury Partnership
Mercury Waste Management Area Meeting 2020 (2nd segment)
Monday 8 March 2021, 12:00-14:30 (CET)
-Summary-

Overview

1. The Mercury Waste Management Area (WMA) of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership (UNEP-GMP) held the second segment of the 2020 annual meeting online on 8 March 2021, from 12:00 to 14:00 (CET). The meeting was organized by the Ministry of the Environment, Japan, one of the co-leads of the WMA with support of the Secretariat of the WMA, EX Research Institute Ltd (hereafter "Secretariat"). The meeting was attended by 37 participants including representatives from governments, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, private sector, and academia.
2. The objectives of the WMA meeting 2020 are to:
   - review ongoing WMA activities and consider future activities;
   - identify technologies and services on mercury waste management that Partners could provide as well as challenges on mercury waste management that countries were facing in order to promote matchmaking; and
   - share the result of questionnaire survey and discuss future WMA activities to develop the WMA Activity Plan.

Opening

3. Dr. Misuzu Asari, Associate Professor of Kyoto University, one of the co-leads of the WMA, opened the meeting with warm welcome to all participants.

Session 1: Identification of needs on mercury waste management technologies and services

4. Following the first segment of the WMA meeting, the Secretariat introduced the results of the questionnaire survey designed to better understand specific challenges and needs related to mercury wastes management and consider potential future activities of the WMA. The questionnaire survey was circulated to all partners of UNEP-GMP, with support of the Secretariat of the UNEP-GMP as well as other relevant networks. In total, 60 cases of challenges were provided by 41 respondents, including representatives from governments, industry/private sector, NGOs, IGOs, academia and others. While the result indicates that majority of the cases is related to challenges and needs in Asia and the Pacific and African region, the Secretariat explained that this result may not represent the actual magnitude of importance among different regions.
5. The questionnaire survey found that the most common category of mercury wastes to be addressed is wastes containing mercury, followed by wastes contaminated with mercury and

wastes consisting of mercury. Among others, measuring devices and lamps containing mercury were found as significant challenges for wastes containing mercury. In addition, the survey revealed the importance of improving all operations and processes for different categories of mercury waste, particularly collection. The Secretariat also noted that the wide range of challenges are present for the environmentally sound management of mercury wastes, including issues related to laws, regulations and guidelines, lack of infrastructure and capacity building.

6. The Secretariat expressed a willingness to welcome further responses to better understand challenges and asked for inputs to strengthen the result of the survey.
7. The Secretariat introduced types of support that the WMA could potentially provide based on the survey result. Generally, types of support included legal structure, tools and guidance, funding, and cooperation with other Partnership Areas. The Secretariat invited participants to provide further views on potential activities of the WMA. Dr. Asari mentioned that the results of the survey should be further analyzed to develop a response list to supports requested through the survey, taking into account currently available resources and activities undertaken in the past.
8. One participant asked for the information on a list of facilities where mercury wastes could be treated, and another participant reported that the importance of such list was also highlighted in the Supply and Storage Area meeting. Some participants introduced relevant resources, including "Good Practices for Management of Mercury Release from Waste (first draft)[1]" and "Catalogue of Technologies and Services on Mercury Waste Management – 2020 version[2]" developed by the WMA and "Global Mercury Waste Assessment Report" developed by UNEP-International Environmental Technology Centre[3]. The Secretariat of the Minamata Convention also informed that a reporting pursuant to Article 21 of the Convention includes a question on facilities for final disposal of waste consisting of mercury and such information is already available[4]. The Secretariat noted that developing a list of facilities for mercury wastes could be a potential future activity of the WMA.
9. A participant from the Supply and Storage Area suggested organizing joint online sessions with a focus on the storage, stabilization and final disposal of wastes consisting of mercury. She also recommended that such online session deal with supply of mercury from non-ferrous metal industry including large-scale gold mining and cleaning processes of natural gas with a view to discontinuing mercury flow into ASGM sector, recognizing that mercury from such sources is, unlike excess mercury from the decommissioning of chlor-alkali facilities, not necessarily subject to mercury wastes which require environmentally sound disposal pursuant to Article 11 of the Convention.

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[1] https://web.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/good-practices-management-mercury-releases-waste-first-draft
[2] https://web.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/catalogue-technologies-and-services-mercury-waste-management-2020-version
[3] https://www.unep.org/ietc/ja/node/59?%2Fresources%2Fpublication%2Fglobal-mercury-waste-assessment-report-review-current-national-measures=
[4] http://www.mercuryconvention.org/Countries/Parties/Reporting/Firstnationalshortreport2019/tabid/8635/language/en-US/Default.aspx

10. Importance of collaboration among different Partnership Areas was also highlighted by others.
11. Mindful of the results of the survey, one participant introduced an initiative within the International Solid Waste Association to develop a fact-sheet which intends to compile the information on classification, collection, packaging and labelling, transportation, storage, and disposal for certain types of mercury wastes. He informed that his organization would discuss details of the fact-sheet in the end of June and welcomed collaboration with the WMA on this effort.
12. In considering future activities, one participant emphasized the need of both "supply-driven" and "demand-driven" approaches. As for providing specific solutions in response to actual challenges that stakeholders face with, communications on solution exchange among partners might be effective.
13. One participant stressed that the awareness raising for policymakers is needed to promote phasing-out of mercury-added products and collection of wastes containing mercury. Dr. Asari suggested organizing online sessions for knowledge sharing and invited him to participate in or jointly organize such sessions. Another participant further mentioned that trainings should be provided in local languages, and networks of regional centres of the United Nations could be useful in reaching out different sectors in the country.
14. One participant introduced his efforts to teach local miners how to collect gold from tailings without using mercury. The Secretariat of the Minamata Convention recommended consulting with leads of the ASGM Area if the WMA intends to undertake some activities related to ASGM since the ASGM Area is working with the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention in improving the guidance on the preparation of national action plans for ASGM regarding management of tailings as decided by COP3.
15. Referring to the results of the survey with respect to wastes containing mercury, one participant expressed his view that activities to address measuring devices should be prioritized over lamps due to their higher volume of mercury content. He also commented the establishment of collection and treatment system of measuring devices should be advanced.
16. In closing of session 1, Dr. Asari requested the Secretariat to give due consideration to issues raised by participants in developing the WMA activity plan.

Session 2: Development of the WMA activity plan

17. The Secretariat explained rationale for development of the WMA activity plan and its draft structure. The Secretariat invited participants to provide ideas on elements to be considered in developing the WMA activity plan, including its timeframe, relevant global events to be considered for planning and opportunities for financial resources.
18. One participant suggested the timeline of the WMA activity plan should not be too long, possibly

three years to comprehend its outcomes well. He also expressed his willingness to hold the WMA meeting back-to-back with the International Solid Waste Association World Congress as organized in Bilbao, Spain in October 2019. Dr. Asari shared her view that the long-term vision may be necessary, but the activity plans should lay out the middle-term activities with a review every year.

19. Another participant suggested designing the WMA activity plan to evaluate its progress to report at the Partnership Advisory Group (PAG) meeting. He also suggested discussing substantial activities first before considering financial resources to avoid focused discussion on the resource mobilization strategy.
20. One participant suggested organizing regional events, particularly in developing countries such as Asian and Pacific region or African region where scientists share data and information related to mercury waste management.

Session 3: Any other business

21. The Secretariat asked submission of information related to technologies and services on mercury management that could be reflected into the "Catalogue of Technologies and Services on Mercury Waste Management".
22. One participant requested the implementation of pilot projects related to the sound management of mercury wastes in developing countries.

Closing

23. Dr. Asari summarized the meeting and expressed her wish to substantially discuss potential activities in the form of break-out groups at the next WMA meeting, taking into account activities and works undertaken by other Partnership Areas, COP, and UNEP. She also shared her view that the WMA activity plan should lay out the middle-term activities and be updated annually.
24. In closing the meeting, Ms. Kato, Ministry of the Environment, Japan, mentioned that further discussion is desirable before finalizing the WMA activity plan.