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Further development and adoption of a strategic approach to international chemicals management

Paper submitted by the United Nations Environment Programme on mercury partnerships

Note by the secretariat

The Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), through its decision 23/9 IV, requested the Executive Director of UNEP to report on mercury partnership activities at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, which was held in Vienna from 19 to 24 September 2005, and at the International Conference on Chemicals Management, which is planned for 4 to 6 February 2006 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The secretariat has the honour to circulate, in the annex to the present note, the Executive Director's status report on mercury partnerships, which is an update of document SAICM/PREPCOM.3/INF/18, for the information of the Conference. The annex is being circulated as received, and has not been formally edited by the secretariat.

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SAICM/ICCM.1/1.

Annex



United Nations Environment Programme

برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة • 联合国环境规划署
PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT • PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE
ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

Status report on partnerships as one approach to reducing the risks to human health and the environment from the release of mercury and its compounds to the environment

Background

1. Partnerships for sustainable development – voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiatives aimed at implementing sustainable development – were an important complementary outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. At its eleventh session in May 2003, the Commission on Sustainable Development reaffirmed that those partnerships contributed to the implementation of intergovernmental commitments, recognizing that partnerships were a complement to, not a substitute for, intergovernmental commitments.
2. Partnerships, as embodied in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21 and as further developed in the Bahia Declaration on Chemical Safety, are also suggested among the main principles and approaches that will guide the development and implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), including the Global Plan of Action.¹
3. At the twenty-third session of the Governing Council (GC) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), when discussing the need for further measures to address the global adverse impacts of mercury pollution, Governments agreed, in addition to a number of other activities, to the development and implementation of partnerships as one approach to reducing the risks to human health and the environment from the release of mercury and its compounds to the environment.
4. In order to ensure that the partnership activities relevant to mercury pollution are fully consistent with the goals and objectives agreed through the SAICM process, the Governing Council requested UNEP to report on the mercury partnership programme at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the International Conference on Chemicals Management, at which the adoption of SAICM is to be considered. The present note, which is an update of document SAICM/PREPCOM.3/INF/18 developed for PREPCOM.3, responds to this request.

Partnerships as one approach to reducing the risks to human health and the environment from the release of mercury and its compounds to the environment

5. The UNEP Governing Council continued to discuss the need for further measures to address the global adverse impacts of mercury on health and the environment at its twenty-third session in February 2005. With regard to mercury, the Governing Council, through decision 23/9 IV, strengthened the UNEP mercury programme and requested UNEP to develop a report on the supply, trade and demand for mercury on the global market for consideration at the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council. The decision also encourages Governments, the private sector and international organizations to take immediate actions to reduce the risks to human health and the environment posed on a global scale by mercury in products and production processes. Possible actions mentioned include: application of and sharing of information on best available techniques and measures to reduce mercury emissions from point sources, taking action related to mercury in products (such as batteries) and production processes (such as chlor-alkali facilities) through, for example, when warranted, introduction of bans or restrictions of uses, and considering curbing primary production and the introduction into commerce of excess mercury supply. The Governing Council will again consider progress and assess, at the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council in 2007, the need for further action on mercury, considering a

¹ According to the draft overarching policy strategy (document SAICM/ICCM.1/3).

full range of options including the possibility of a legally binding instrument, partnerships and other actions.

6. In addition to the above, Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector were urged to develop and implement partnerships, in a clear, transparent and accountable manner, as one approach to reducing the risks to human health and the environment from the release of mercury and its compounds to the environment and thereby achieving the objectives set forth in the annex to decision 22/4 V, adopted at the twenty-second session of the Governing Council.

7. UNEP was requested to facilitate work between its mercury programme and Governments, other international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and the partnerships, as appropriate, in order to: improve global understanding of international mercury emission sources, fate and transport; promote the development of inventories of mercury uses and releases; promote the development of environmentally sound disposal and remediation practices; and increase awareness of environmentally sound recycling practices.

8. Building upon decision 23/9 IV adopted by the UNEP Governing Council at its twenty-third session, which addresses the issue of further measures for addressing the significant global adverse impacts of mercury and its compounds, UNEP was, among other things, requested:

- to invite Governments, particularly of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to identify, in consultation with stakeholders, priority partnership areas as soon as possible, with the goal of identifying a set of pilot partnerships by 1 September 2005, posting that information on the mercury programme web-page and keeping the web site current as additional partnerships are proposed and developed;
- to work with Governments and relevant stakeholders to compile and report needs identified to execute the partnerships and assist in the mobilization of resources in support of the partnerships; and
- to share and disseminate information submitted by partnerships on progress, lessons learned and emerging best practices via the mercury programme web-page and other methods of communication, and report on the results of those partnerships;

9. The Governing Council also requested that, for each partnership established under the present decision, at least the following be identified: the goals of the partnership; the process and timeline according to which the partnership will be developed and implemented; the roles and responsibilities of the partners, including identification of lead countries in particular areas (for example, both a developing and a developed country might share the lead role); and a mechanism to implement effective monitoring and evaluation procedures to assess and report on the progress of the partnership.

10. The Governing Council also encouraged the development of pilot partnerships to demonstrate early success, including by using, as appropriate, existing structures such as regional centres, and fostering collaboration by countries within and between regions.

Identifying pilot partnerships

11. To follow-up on the Governing Council requests, UNEP, through a letter dated 20 May 2005, invited Governments, particularly those of developing countries and countries with economy in transition, and other stakeholders to identify, in consultation with stakeholders, priority partnership areas as soon as possible, with the goal of identifying a set of pilot partnerships by 1 September 2005.

12. In addition, as partnerships on mercury were established and implemented, Governments were encouraged to submit information on progress, lessons learned and emerging best practices, and report on the results obtained through the partnerships on a regular basis.

13. As of 15 January 2005, responses had been received from 18 Governments and one non-governmental organization. New or additional responses since document SAICM/PREPCOM.3/INF/18 was finalized include Bangladesh, India, Mexico, Senegal, United States of America and Health Care Without Harm. The responses can be accessed in full on the UNEP mercury webpage at <http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/partnerships/>. Summaries of these responses are given below, with

emphasis on the priority areas identified and providing information on partnerships that have been initiated or are in the process of being initiated, pursuant to GC decision 23/9 IV:

- **Australia** reported that it is investigating potential areas for mercury partnerships, is currently consulting with stakeholders to determine the most appropriate areas on which to focus attention and resources and will report on progress towards the end of 2005.
- **Bangladesh** reported its interest in forging a partnership to address mercury pollution, however, as the problem is not significant in the country, it is interested in including lead and cadmium pollution. The Government is interested in initiating a baseline study within such a partnership to delineate cost effective management options for the three chemicals.
- **Burkina Faso** emphasized the need for partnerships to: promote reduced use of mercury in the mining sector and especially in artisanal mining; promote the elimination of mercury in products; promote elimination of mercury in waste; and participate in the global efforts to reduce the risks associated with the use of mercury. The Government has engaged in a partnership with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), aiming to assist Burkina Faso in eliminating the adverse impacts of mercury on health and the environment in the country. A representative from this country has attended two meetings on mercury partnerships organized by the US EPA in May and June 2005. Burkina Faso identified a number of needs and objectives for partnerships, such as promoting use of best available techniques and best environmental practices among Governments, strengthening national capacities (education, laboratory equipment, study tours, etc.), developing a national inventory of mercury uses and releases, developing awareness raising materials for the public, decision makers, industry, miners etc. using various communication media, and providing financial and technical assistance for the work to be done. Burkina Faso also suggested it might be a focal point for further promoting such a partnership in other countries of the West African region.
- **Canada** indicated that it has been considering how their current and planned activities could contribute to the partnerships and other initiatives described in GC Decision 23/9 IV. They have discussed possible activities with other countries and were pleased to participate in the partnership discussions on products and chlor-alkali in Portland, as well as the similar meeting on small scale and artisanal gold mining in Washington D.C. Environment Canada, in consultation with other Canadian governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, has identified the following potential partnership areas in which they would be interested to engage:
 - *Coal fired electricity generation:* Environment Canada, Health Canada and the Canadian Collaborative Mercury Research Network (COMERN) will participate in an October 2005 workshop being organized in Beijing, China;
 - *Mercury fate and transport research:* Environment Canada is co-hosting an August 2005 workshop on mercury research in polar regions. Additionally, Environment Canada is exploring the pilot use of the UNEP emission inventory toolkit in India, China and other interested countries and organizations;
 - *Mercury in products:* Environment Canada is working with the United States and Mexican counterparts to organize a workshop in Mexico in February 2006, under the auspices of the North American Commission for Environmental Co-operation; and
 - *Mercury cell chlor-alkali production:* Environment Canada will support activities being organized in Russia.

Canada also expressed interest in working to advance partnership activities with other countries that have prioritized similar areas. Canada will also be reviewing posted submissions on the mercury website to see if there are additional areas of mutual interest that could be pursued on a bilateral or regional basis.

- **Czech Republic** considered the issue of sound management of chemicals including mercury as one of the most important at the national, regional and global levels. The

experts of the Czech Republic are actively involved in elaboration and development of the SAICM and also in the development of the European Union Mercury Strategy. The Czech Republic has already provided or is providing official development assistance to some countries to reduce negative impacts of mining activities on the environment (e.g. Zambia, Namibia, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia and Montenegro), although the activities are not specifically oriented towards reducing mercury pollution from production and consumption of mercury. The Czech Republic is not planning any specific bilateral partnership on mercury with developing countries or countries with economy in transition. However, the Czech Republic, as an EU member state, is open for participation in EU multilateral partnership initiatives and will support such activities through the allocation and approval of necessary financial and technical resources at the EU level.

- **Guatemala** summarised its priorities with regard to reducing its mercury uses and releases. Although no systematic documentation is available and it is not known whether it is being processed locally, liquid mercury is being traded in certain poorer regions of the country with a mostly indigenous population. Also, mercury based artisanal gold mining activities are known to take place in other regions, with substantial mercury exposures for the workers involved. The populations involved in these two activities may correspond to up to 10 and 5% of the total population of the country, respectively. In order to effectively address mercury pollution issues in the country, Guatemala expressed interest in cooperation, through partnerships or other activities, with regard to:
 - i) Elaboration of a national inventory for quantification of uses, releases and disposal of mercury;
 - ii) Identification of mercury sources and reservoirs;
 - iii) Identification of exposed populations;
 - v) Elaboration of a national action plan for the sound management of mercury;
 - vii) Development of technical standards for the environmentally sound use of mercury;
 - viii) Development of educational and awareness-raising programmes to promote sound management of mercury;
 - ix) Promotion of technical alternatives, substitution of products and best environmental practices in relation to mercury;
 - x) Provision of technical and financial assistance for related projects; and
 - xi) Promotion of regional information exchange.
- **India** expresses interest in developing partnerships in the following areas pertaining to mercury:
 - i) Training in estimation of mercury in different components of environment (biotic and abiotic) including speciation of mercury; and
 - ii) Developing emission factors for mercury for different industries/sources.
- **Iraq** reported on problems with mercury releases from two industrial facilities in the country (a chlorine factory and a paper plant) and the need for assistance to rehabilitate these facilities, using cleaner production methods and alternative technologies.
- **Japan** placed considerable importance on the ongoing international co-operation to address mercury pollution. Being aware of the proposals from the United States about their partnership initiatives in five areas, Japan considers that its first priority is the commitment to the *fate and transport research initiative*. Japan is willing to contribute with activities on emission inventory and numerical modeling. Japan will be able to provide its national emission inventory, including coal combustion and use and disposal of products. Subject to the budget for the fiscal year 2006, Japan will be able to consider pursuing national research initiatives within the partnership framework and to contribute to other partnership areas.

With regard to health effects caused by mercury emissions from the chlor-alkali industry and coal mining, Japan has carried out and will continue a number of projects involving field surveys by researchers at the National Institute for Minamata Disease (NIMD), technology

transfer on environmental monitoring, co-operative research and international workshops. Japan is also planning an international forum meeting on health effects of low-level methyl mercury pollution and a Japan-Korea environmental health conference. Based on its experience and expertise especially in environmental and health monitoring, NIMD will be able to contribute to the partnership projects. Also, other institutes such as the National Institute for Environmental Studies will be able to contribute to the initiative with their experience in emission control and monitoring, including in coal combustion and disposal of mercury-containing products, through the participation of experts in workshops or other events.

- **Madagascar** expressed interest in participating in the establishment of partnerships as one approach to reducing the risks to human health and the environment. Madagascar proposed a number of elements that should be included in the establishment of such partnerships. Within this perspective, Madagascar has foreseen the creation of a national committee, the elaboration of a national inventory of mercury uses and releases and exposed populations, and the organization of information and awareness-raising campaigns for six provinces throughout the country. Madagascar has also elaborated, from a developing country perspective, on possible objectives of such partnerships, roles and responsibilities of the partners, the mechanism to implement effective monitoring and evaluation procedures, and the need for technical and financial resources.
- **Mexico**, through its secretariat for the environment and natural resources (SEMARNAT), emphasized the need to take into consideration the following issues in relation to partnerships:
 - i) Promote the exchange of experience and creation of local capacity building, including technical and human resources;
 - ii) Organize awareness raising workshops aiming to inform and educate decision makers, industry and the general public;
 - iii) Concentrate efforts in three country priority areas i.e. chlor-alkali sector, automobile switches and fluorescent lamps.

Mexico, together with other governments and stakeholders that participated in the informal consultation meeting on the "Global partnership for mercury reductions in products" held in Portland, Maine, May 25, 2005, drew attention to the importance of consolidating and incorporating developing country needs into the partnerships, especially by identifying appropriate partners, focussing on needs and requirements and by creating working groups within the framework of these partnerships. During the consultation meeting participants, including Mexico, also expressed the need for further guidance in relation to availability of financial resources and further involvement of developing countries and countries with economy in transition. In the case of Mexico, it is working within the framework of the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) and at bilateral level with the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

- **Palestine** considered the issue of dealing with and management of chemical materials, including mercury and its compounds, as an important issue on its environmental agenda. Palestine identified in its response the following priority areas:
 - i) Developing an inventory and data base on sources of mercury, lead, cadmium and other heavy metals in Palestine;
 - ii) Participating in workshops, seminars and training courses held under the umbrella of UNEP;
 - iii) Promoting development of environmentally sound disposal of and remediation practices for mercury; and
 - iv) Increasing public awareness about the risk of these heavy metals and the introduction of alternative technologies and substituting products and chemicals.

The Palestinian Association for Chemical Science (PACS) also considers the issue of sound mercury management as an important issue on its agenda. The organization has prepared a plan to monitor and improve the environmental situation in Palestine, in co-operation and coordination with local, national and international governments, NGOs, universities and stakeholders. PACS, aware that mercury has been used and is still in use in numerous products, is looking forward to contributing to the international efforts to prevent the unnecessary use of

mercury and its compounds, and exchanging experience, ideas and information and providing technical assistance with the international community in order to prevent and reduce mercury use.

- **Republic of Moldova** considered the issues of heavy metals such as mercury, cadmium, lead and others of high priority and as one of the most important issues at the national, regional and global level. The Republic of Moldova identifies the following priority partnership areas to reduce mercury and its compounds emissions:
 - a) Mercury in products;
 - b) Mercury containing wastes;
 - c) Mercury releases into the environment;
 - d) Capacity building on sustainable management of mercury and its compounds ;
 - e) Development and strengthening of national research and monitoring laboratory capacity, including promotion of standard sampling and analysis procedures for the validation of inventories;
 - f) Development, implementation and enforcement of regulatory controls and incentives for the sound management of mercury and its compounds as well as of other heavy metals;
 - g) Development and promotion of awareness-raising and information-dissemination programmes;
 - h) Identification and promotion of best available techniques and best environmental practices; and
 - i) Training for decision makers, managers and personnel who are responsible for issues related to mercury and its management.
- **Senegal** expressed interest in participating in the establishment of partnerships as one approach to reducing the risks to human health and the environment and identifies four areas of priority for the country as follows:
 - i) promotion of BAT/BEP for industrial processes using mercury and alternatives to mercury containing products;
 - ii) artisanal and industrial extraction of gold using mercury;
 - iii) hospital waste and domestic waste containing mercury;
 - iv) mercury levels in seafood, especially in fish.
- **Syrian Arab Republic** expressed concern about the results of an environmental survey on a chlor-alkali facility in the country using mercury cell technology and identified mercury cell chlor-alkali production as a priority area for partnership development.
- **Trinidad and Tobago** recommended the following projects for consideration amongst all stakeholders:
 - i) Comprehensive inventory on sources, uses and releases;
 - ii) Synoptic study on persistent bio-accumulative toxic substances in environmental samples, foodstuff and human biomarkers with a view to establish baseline data and identify populations at risk;
 - iii) Demonstration projects involving pollution prevention opportunities e.g. alternatives to dental amalgam, mercury seals for trickling filter plants, mercury vapour lamps, fluorescent lamps, etc.;
 - iv) Public awareness campaign on the use of mercury-free products, technologies and processes as well as environmentally sound recycling practices; and
 - v) Development of best environmental practices and best available techniques for disposal and remediation of stockpiles.
- **United Republic of Tanzania** summarised its priority areas as follows:
 - i) Elaboration of an inventory of all possible mercury sources, including extensive artisanal gold mining and large scale mining, coal production and coal-fired power plants, factories engaged in the production of chlorine and caustic soda still using mercury cell technologies, discarded equipment containing mercury either previously deposited in landfills or in waste/tailing piles, hot spring points, cement production industry, etc;

- ii) Development of capacity building and awareness raising programmes at the respective regional mining offices, particularly in areas where there are small scale and artisanal gold mining;
 - iii) Strengthening the existing technical infrastructure in institutions engaged in research and development, technological transfer and monitoring of mercury levels in the environment;
 - iv) Introduction of alternative technologies; and
 - v) Development of guidelines on the management of products containing mercury, contaminated wastes and the remediation of contaminated sites.
- **United States of America (US)** - Building on the strong foundation established by the UNEP Mercury programme and the strong actions already taken in the US, the US is working with international collaborators and other stakeholders to develop and implement a range of pilot partnership and collaborative activities in five key sectors that can achieve important reductions. These key partnership areas are described in more detail below. To date, three of the areas, products, chlor-alkali, and artisanal gold mining, have held open invitation meetings and have had discussion papers posted on the UNEP website. Additionally, the US continues to contribute to global work on emissions and use inventories, data collection on mercury trade flows, and international efforts to improve risk assessment and communication. In an effort to provide the impetus to these partnerships, the US has currently pledged almost \$2 million to support partnerships and the UNEP Mercury programme. Additionally, the US is pleased to contribute technical assistance to these partnerships and looks forward to working with UNEP and other stakeholders around the globe to implement mercury efforts that take the partnership approach endorsed by governments at the Governing Council to an active and effective level of engagement.
 - i) *Mercury Reduction in the Chlor-alkali Sector* – This partnership of interested governments and the chlor-alkali industry is exploring the entire range of mercury management options – from implementing best practices for existing mercury cells to replacing mercury cells. The US estimates that there are about 175 mercury cell plants in the world. Some facilities may elect to stop using mercury cell technology, and the partnership can facilitate such shifts; however, other plants will continue to rely on mercury cells for the foreseeable future. For those plants which are not converting to mercury-free technology in the near-term, significant mercury use and emissions reductions can be readily achieved. The US and its partners will facilitate implementation of best environmental practices and best available technologies to achieve reduction of consumption and emissions at selected chlor-alkali facilities. Additionally, the US anticipates a global launch of the partnership with a workshop in late 2005, followed by subsequent workshops and industry-to-industry technical cooperation in select partner countries.

Currently, activities are ongoing/under planning in India, Mexico and the Russian Federation. The Mexican environment ministry and Mexican industry are working through the partnership to develop a possible workshop and demonstration project and global industry representatives, through the World Chlorine Council, are also engaged in planning this activity. A workshop is being planned for early 2006.

A partnership project has also been established with Ruschlor, the Russian chlor-alkali industry association, to achieve mercury reductions in this sector. Global industry representatives, through the World Chlorine Council, are also engaged in planning this activity. Other partners to this project include Environment Canada, Norwegian Pollution Control Authority and the US EPA providing financial resources and working under the Arctic Council Action Plan (ACAP) Programme. Facilities will receive cleaner production training in early 2006, aimed at identifying potential cost savings to the companies and potential to achieve mercury reductions. Proposals for cleaner production demonstration projects will be developed by Russian industry. A panel of government and industry experts will evaluate the proposals for potential funding. Russian facility managers will visit facilities in Western Europe for a technical

exchange in late January, 2006. Demonstration projects are scheduled to begin in May 2006 and some will be completed by December 2006.

- ii) *Mercury Reduction in Products* - Work under this partnership will identify and implement successful approaches to reduce human exposure to mercury by looking at and prioritizing appropriate efforts to reduce or eliminate mercury in products through exchanging information and expertise, transferring and applying best management practices, developing and improving mercury use and emission inventories, providing technical assistance, raising public awareness, better characterizing the amount of mercury used in products nationally and globally, and developing pilot projects. The partnership anticipates an initial focus will include work to reduce or eliminate mercury in waste at health care facilities where such activities will reduce human exposures to mercury. Additionally, a mercury products workshop is being planned for early 2006, leveraging work already underway between the Governments of the US, Canada, and Mexico, the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation, and UNEP. As an important element, the US plans to work with its partners to achieve appropriate reductions in mercury use to reduce human exposure to mercury.

- iii) *Mercury Management in Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining* – This activity is a globally significant source of mercury releases. UNIDO estimates that 1,000 tons of mercury are released into the environment each year from this source. Better practices for safe mercury capture and reuse can reduce occupational exposures and risk in mining communities while also achieving significant reduction in mercury on a global scale. Working closely with existing successful efforts to reduce mercury pollution from artisanal gold mining, in particular the UNIDO Global Mercury Project, the US is coordinating with the World Bank's Communities and Small Scale Mining (CASM) program to identify areas for field work and to improve access to sector-related mercury information, including best-practice information targeted towards community-based organizations working in the sector, via mercury web pages, a list-serve function, and other media. The US also plans to work in conjunction with established community-based organizations to facilitate the introduction of, training on, and adoption of best practices and appropriate technologies to achieve measurable reductions of mercury consumption and emissions at artisanal mining sites.

Funding has been secured for pilot projects to encourage adoption by mining communities of appropriate technologies and techniques for mercury use, emissions and exposure reduction. A component of the pilots will be enhanced measurement and analysis capability in order to quantify pre- and post-project mercury levels as well as speciated emissions with a view to improving understanding of global magnitude of this source. Pilots will be funded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) with technical cooperation from Global Environment Facility (GEF)/United Nations Development Program (UNDP)/United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), in-country partners, and non-governmental organizations.

Work is also on-going to engage fair-trade mining groups and non-governmental organizations to achieve widespread recognition and promotion of the concept of sound-mercury-managed gold, thereby raising awareness of the problem and creating an economic incentive for the adoption of sound mercury techniques.

- iv) *Mercury Control from Coal Combustion* - Work under this partnership would allow for an increased understanding of the emission inventory and impact of mercury emissions from the power sector, an increased understanding of existing multi-pollutant approaches to reducing mercury emissions, their cost and effectiveness, and sharing of information on the applicability, effectiveness, and cost of newly emerging mercury specific and multi-pollutant control technologies. The US, working with China, Japan and Canada, held a workshop in Beijing, China from 31 October through 2 November 2005, to address the issue of mercury control from coal fired utilities in China. A number of

countries that expressed interest in this workshop also attended. While the workshop focussed on China's needs and circumstances in addressing the control of mercury from utilities, the information presented and issues addressed will have a broader applicability. It was anticipated that the goals, objectives and structure of a proposed partnership in this area will be discussed at a planned side-meeting involving countries and other interested stakeholders.

- v) *Mercury Air Transport and Fate Research* - Work under this partnership would facilitate information sharing and a better understanding of the global cycling of mercury among scientists and policymakers helping to increase the effectiveness of global mercury control strategies. The current level of uncertainty in this area, together with a limited number of country-specific release inventories and a lack of standardization of measurement methods, limits the accuracy of modelling predictions and, therefore, the ability to describe the impacts of emission reductions as a function of various risk management actions including use reductions. The US is currently working with China and Italy to develop collaborative activities that can lead to a project under this partnership. As a first step, a team of US and Italian scientists have visited China to initiate a dialogue and begin development of a draft plan for collaborative mercury monitoring and training.

- **Health Care Without Harm (HCWH)** is an international coalition of more than 400 organizations in 52 countries working to transform the health care industry so it is no longer a source of harm to people and the environment. HCWH has been working since the mid-1990's to promote the reduction and phase-out of sources of mercury pollution from the healthcare sector. HCWH work on mercury began in the United States with mercury thermometer exchange campaigns and related efforts to foster local and state legislation. Building on this work, HCWH developed relationships with major medical device manufacturers; and entered into a formal collaboration with the American Hospitals Association, the American Nurses Association and the US Environmental Protection Agency. This diversity of efforts has significantly influenced the American health sector and helped create an emerging national consensus on the part doctors and nurses' associations, pharmacies, major hospital chains, and hospital group purchasing organizations to promote reliable and affordable alternatives to mercury-containing medical devices, and to work for their substitution. Already, more than 4,000 health care facilities in the U.S. have pledged to become mercury free. HCWH is pursuing similar work in the European Union, and is now increasing its efforts in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. HCWH has invited UNEP and others to join in a partnership with HCWH to promote alternatives to mercury in the health care sector in developing countries. The partnership includes organizing four regional workshops in 2006 aiming to raise awareness and promote change, facilitating the formation of national and/or regional working groups to build capacity and develop strategies to substantially reduce and ultimately eliminate mercury use from the health care sector, encouraging the launch of mercury-free health care pledges for specific hospitals and clinics and producing and publishing a final report based on these activities, to facilitate future replication of successful approaches. The first workshop, the Southeast Asia Conference on Alternatives to Mercury in Health Care, took place in Quezon City, the Philippines on 25 and 26 January 2006.

14. Further progress gained by Governments and other stakeholders in implementing partnership activities towards the twenty-fourth session of the UNEP Governing Council can be followed through a dedicated web-page at <http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/partnerships/>.

Funding for pilot partnerships

15. The UNEP Governing Council decision 23/9 IV also recognized the importance of technical and financial resources to support successful implementation of the partnerships established as a result of the Governing Council decision.

16. Governments and stakeholders, especially in developed countries, and relevant international organizations within their respective mandates, were encouraged to mobilize technical and financial resources to work towards successful partnerships, which assistance could include, among other things,

identification of best practices and transfer of appropriate technology. UNEP was requested to work with Governments and relevant stakeholders to compile and report needs identified to execute the partnerships and assist in the mobilization of resources in support of the partnerships. At the same time, Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector were encouraged to form a partnership to assist UNEP in the mobilization of resources.

17. In order to respond to the Governing Council's request, UNEP invited interested donor countries and stakeholders to an informal meeting in Vienna on 17 September 2005, taking advantage of the presence of Governments/organizations in Vienna for the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Development of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM PREPCOM3) from 18 to 24 September, regional meetings included. The aim of the meeting was to discuss and identify possible technical and financial support mechanisms that could help ensure effective implementation of pilot partnerships. The full report of the meeting is available at <http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/partnerships/Final-report-website.pdf>.

18. Among the outcomes of the meeting was the suggestion that, as considerable progress can be obtained in many areas with relatively small resources, UNEP should consider establishing a "small grants" programme where countries and other stakeholders could obtain grants of up to USD 50,000 without too much paperwork. UNEP agreed to develop a short paper (expected to be available by mid-2006) setting out a possible mechanism for mercury-related activities, with suggestions on structure, criteria, etc. UNEP will follow-up further with interested donor countries and stakeholders with regard to the mobilization of technical and financial resources to work towards successful partnership implementation.

19. It was also suggested that in order to learn from experience gained in mobilizing funds within the various partnerships, it would be useful to request the various initiated partnerships to report on the fund raising aspects of their activities, in order to develop a "taking stock"/case-study paper that might be of use in identifying successful approaches for the future. Some of the aspects that should be reported include how commitment was attracted, whether pledged funds were actually delivered, who was involved in providing funding, etc. In preparation for further discussions by the Governing Council at its twenty-fourth session in 2007, UNEP will, in mid-2006, circulate a specific request for information in order to facilitate preparation of the report on the progress of implementation of the partnerships. The suggested "taking-stock" paper would provide useful input for this progress report, and UNEP will keep this in mind when preparing the request.

Further developments

20. UNEP will continue to facilitate, as far as possible and within available resources, the partnership initiatives established as a result of the Governing Council decision, and to disseminate information on progress, lessons learned and emerging best practices that result from partnership implementation.

21. UNEP will also prepare, as part of the meeting documentation for the twenty-fourth session of the UNEP Governing Council in 2007, a report on progress in implementation of the pilot partnerships, in preparation for the further consideration by the Governing Council of the need for further action on mercury, considering a full range of options, including the possibility of a legally binding instrument, partnerships and other actions, as mandated by GC decision 23/9 IV.

18 January 2006