Consultation Meeting on Mercury Waste and Storage
23 September 2010
International Environment House II

CONCEPT NOTE AND AGENDA

I. A. Background and Mandate:

- GC 25/5 mandated UNEP, concurrently with the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop a legally-binding instrument, to continue and enhance as part of international action on mercury the existing work, including enhancing capacity for storage of elemental mercury as well as to provide information on the environmentally sound management (ESM) of mercury containing waste.

- Presently, there are several activities underway on storage of elemental mercury and on the ESM of mercury waste. These include two projects coordinated by UNEP Chemicals with support provided by the Zero Mercury Working Group, and funded by the Norwegian government and one programme coordinated by the Secretariat of the Basel Convention. The Basel Convention programme is currently funded by the USEPA.

- The UNEP Chemicals project on mercury waste management resulted in waste management plans in five countries. The plans constitute an initial step for national action identified as priorities through stakeholder consultations and underlined through analysis of relevant samples for total mercury content. Typically, countries have identified three priorities for mercury waste management that warrant further action. Most plans include components that a country can resolve at national level, others need international support. In general, governments are faced with the assessment of all steps in the mercury life-cycle from source identification and quantification to final disposal and storage whereby the options and criteria for the long-term safe management for waste consisting of elemental mercury, waste containing or contaminated with mercury need to be defined. Further information is available at http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/Mercury/InterimActivities/Partnerships/WasteManagement/WasteManagementProject/tabid/3538/language/en-US/Default.aspx

- The work of UNEP Chemicals on mercury storage draws on the 2009 Assessment/Trade Reports which project excess elemental mercury coming from decommissioned chlor alkali plants, byproduct mercury from non ferrous metals mining and natural gas. This excess mercury will by far exceed mercury demand after equilibrium will have been reached in 2017 for Asia, and 2013 for Latin America. There is need to store excess elemental mercury in order to prevent its reentry to the global marketplace as a commodity. Governments will be faced with the technological, legal, regulatory and economic challenges of storing elemental mercury.

- To assist governments find environmentally sound storage solutions , UNEP Chemicals with support from the Zero Mercury Working Group coordinated 2 regional mercury storage projects, one in Asia and one in Latin America in 2009-2010. More information on the storage projects, the assessment reports and options analysis studies are available at http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/Mercury/InterimActivities/Partnerships/SupplyandStorage/AsiaPacificMercuryStorageProject/tabid/3552/language/en-US/Default.aspx

  http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/Mercury/InterimActivities/Partnerships/SupplyandStorage/LACMercuryStorageProject/tabid/3554/language/en-US/Default.aspx

- Based on requests from parties, the Secretariat of the Basel Convention (SBC) has a set of draft (5th version) technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management (ESM) of waste consisting of elemental mercury and wastes containing or contaminated with mercury (technical guidelines on the ESM of mercury waste). The set of technical guidelines are based on the principles of ESM of hazardous waste. This includes principles of waste prevention and minimization, identification and inventory, handling, collection, interim storage, transportation, treatment, recycling, and recovery, long term storage, land filling, and remediation of contaminated sites. An intersessional working group led by the Government of Japan has been created to work on the draft technical guidelines. Output of the group will be presented at the next Basel COP in October 2011. The draft Basel guidelines are available at http://www.basel.int/techmatters/mercury/guidelines/5th-13May2010.doc

- The SBC received a mandate by the Parties to develop a capacity building programme on mercury containing wastes (COP IX/31) on the basis of the draft technical guidelines on the ESM of mercury waste. According to this mandate, a capacity building programme is being implemented in the Latin American and Caribbean Region currently involving Costa Rica, Argentina and Uruguay.

B. Status of Projects:

- For the mercury waste projects coordinated by UNEP Chemicals, a results workshop took place in June 2010 where national mercury waste management plans were presented. Participating countries included Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, Pakistan and the Philippines. These countries identified and prioritized mercury-waste related issues at national level by using the Draft ESM Guidelines and the Mercury Toolkit.

- The Basel Convention Technical Guidelines on the ESM of mercury waste and the UNEP Mercury Toolkit for developing mercury inventories are the two major guidance documents that are applied in the project. In addition, the project delivered enhanced capacities for countries in laboratory testing of human hair and environmental waste samples.

- In the framework of the SBC coordinated programme, a national inception workshop took place in each of the three participating countries. Uruguay and Argentina initiated the development of inventories of mercury containing wastes in both the health and the industrial sectors. Costa Rica will develop the inventory in the health sector. Project activities also include awareness raising workshops, drafting of national waste ESM management plans in the three participating countries, and the purchasing of an in-situ interim storage facility in at least one country. The programme, that is scheduled to be completed during the course of year 2011, is implemented by the Basel Convention Coordinating Centre in Uruguay in cooperation with the Basel Convention Regional Centre in Argentina.

- For the mercury storage projects, an options analysis study for the safe long term storage of elemental mercury has been completed for Asia. Noting deficiencies in the study, revision of the study will be undertaken and will be available in January 2011. For Latin America, the options analysis study is currently being circulated to governments in the region who will have the opportunity to comment. An improved study will be available in November 2010. The studies will be basis for a recommended storage option for governments in the region.

- Most recently, the UNDP GEF Global Healthcare Waste programme developed"G**uidance on the Cleanup, Temporary or Intermediate Storage, and Transport of Mercury Waste From Healthcare Facilities"**. The document is useful in many developing countries where healthcare facilities are moving towards mercury-free health care. It is available at http://content.undp.org/go/cms-service/download/publication/?version=live&id=2681158

C. Needs:

It is recognized that there are gaps and potential overlaps between these projects, other related guidance and other outputs from Mercury Partnership areas such as on products. These include: Mercury device collection work does not currently include provision for the waste management of the devices; the waste guidelines do not provide guidance on the long term financial responsibility or liability issues related to the short term or interim storage of mercury nor the on elements of emergency response in the event of spillages and breakages; the storage projects currently only consider options for the safe long term storage of elemental mercury but does not address the need for interim storage of both elemental mercury and end of life mercury containing products. Further, the outcomes and experiences have not been assessed horizontally.

D. Mercury Waste and Storage Project

In response to the identified needs, Norway is funding a Mercury Waste and Storage project that will address these currently perceived and identified gaps or overlaps. A consultant will be subcontracted who will compile and assess the presently available information from the projects and cross-reference the existing guidance. Together with identified key waste and storage partners, the project will produce a synthesis report and develop handy guidance through practical cases studies addressing specific but commonly perceived problems. It is expected that a user-friendly guidance reflecting especially developing country situations be developed and be made available for use. The guidance will be specific for three scenarios: industry, household, and healthcare.

II. Objective of the Meeting:

This meeting will bring together key country representatives and stakeholders of the completed and ongoing projects on waste and storage, and other interested stakeholders. Based on the subcontractor's compilation and assessment of existing information of results, gaps, experiences, guidelines on waste and storage, the participants will:

1. Identify priority areas/issues and propose practical output and agree on the design of the pilots in three developing countries.
2. Agree on the next steps of the project: selection of 3 pilot developing countries facing mercury problem; identifying the typical scenarios (industry, household, health care) in three developing countries; preparation of a user-friendly and integrative guidance document (three different scenarios)

III. Expected Output:

1. Identification and selection of three pilot scenarios (preferentially in three different countries)

2. Terms of reference/design for pilot studies and user-friendly specific guidance in three scenarios

Draft Agenda:

Time	Activity	Person Responsible
9:00	Opening and Introduction	P. Bakken
9:15	Present status of Basel ESM guidelines (Table of content)	SBC
9:30	Presentation of assessment report on existing information, gaps analysis among waste and storage projects	M. Yarto, S. Hagemann
10:00	Country presentations	Presentations by countries
10.30	Coffee break	
11:00	Country presentations	Presentations by countries
12:30	Lunch break	
14:00	Presentation and discussion of design and elements of pilots in 3 different scenarios	M. Yarto, S. Hagemann
15:30	Coffee break	
16:30	Workplan and deliverables	UNEP Chemicals, SBC
17:30	Closing	UNEP Chemicals, SBC