



**United Nations
Environment
Programme**

**UNEP Global Mercury Partnership
Advisory Group
Tenth meeting
Geneva, 23 November 2019**

**Report of the tenth meeting of the Global Mercury Partnership
Advisory Group (23 November 2019, Geneva)**

Item 1

Opening of the meeting

1. The tenth meeting of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership Advisory Group (PAG) took place on Saturday, 23 November 2019 at the International Conference Centre (CIGC) in Geneva, Switzerland, back to back with the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP3) to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (25 to 29 November 2019, Geneva). The meeting was opened at 9 a.m. by Ms. Jacqueline Alvarez (Head a.i. of the Chemicals and Health Branch, United Nations Environment Programme) on behalf of the Secretariat of the Global Mercury Partnership (hereinafter referred to as the “Partnership”).
2. In her opening remarks, Ms. Alvarez welcomed members of the PAG to their tenth meeting and thanked observers for their attendance, recognizing the wealth of their knowledge and experience, which would undoubtedly contribute to the success of the meeting. She drew attention to the Partnership’s more than 190 members, noting continuous interest by a wide range of stakeholders in joining. She congratulated partners on their work and dedication to address mercury issues. She then welcomed the interim Chair of the PAG, Mr. Rodges Ankrah (United States of America), in replacement of Ms. Marianne Bailey (United States of America). Ms. Bailey’s dedication and contribution to the Partnership were greeted by a hearty round of applause.
3. Mr. David Kapindula (Zambia), President of the Minamata Convention COP3, congratulated the Partnership and its partners on their commitment and continuous efforts to making mercury history. He pointed out that since its initiation in 2005, the Partnership had played a critical role in building a strong global legally binding instrument on mercury, helped establish momentum and provided support towards the Convention, including through significant contribution to the work of the COP on key aspects such as effectiveness evaluation, customs codes to control trade in mercury-added products, mercury wastes, guidance on artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) or mercury emissions, amongst others. He encouraged the Partnership to pursue its efforts in supporting the Convention, as well as the mercury issues it may not yet cover, highlighting the critical importance of awareness-raising and outreach both within and beyond its community of partners. He looked forward to the exploration of further avenues for cooperation with the Partnership, including in terms of capacity-building, technical assistance as well as scientific and technical work to be carried out under the Convention.
4. Ms. Rossana Silva-Repetto, Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention, stressed in her introductory statement the key role played by the Partnership throughout the negotiations process, noting that it was still today a major mechanism to support its implementation. She paid particular

tribute to the PAG Chair as well as the leads and co-leads of individual Partnership areas, and highlighted some of their recent work, amongst which on customs codes, ASGM, with significant input to the GEF-funded planetGOLD programme, mercury emissions from coal combustion, support to the work of the group of technical experts on mercury waste thresholds and the ad-hoc technical expert group on effectiveness evaluation. She concluded by highlighting the importance of collaboration between the COP and the Partnership, and the future work of the Partnership in supporting the implementation of the Minamata Convention.

5. Mr. Ankrah welcomed participants to the meeting, including the leads and nominees of the different Partnership areas, as well as all observers. He thanked Mr. Kapindula and Ms. Silva-Repetto for their inspiring words, which reminded participants of the key role played by the Partnership since its very beginning as well as the important mission ahead to protect human health and the environment from the terrible effects of mercury, and in doing so in supporting the implementation of the Minamata Convention. He stated that he was looking for constructive and productive discussions on ways the Partnership could evolve and improve as it continues to meet its objective of protecting human health and the environment by reducing mercury pollution, improving understanding of mercury in the environment, and looking for new ways to reduce mercury use. Mr. Ankrah concluded by thanking the partners for their considerable work and dedication.

Item 2

Organizational matters

(a) Selection of Partnership Advisory Group Co-Chairs

6. PAG members selected Ms. Teeraporn Wiriwutikorn (Thailand) and Mr. Ankrah as co-chairs for a two-year term, as per the provisions of the Overarching Framework Document of the Partnership (Annex 1 - Operational Guidelines, Section 3(d)). Both thanked the PAG members for their trust and looked forward to supporting the work of the Partnership.

(b) Adoption of the agenda

7. The PAG adopted the agenda for its meeting on the basis of the provisional agenda set out in document UNEP/Hg/PAG.10/1/Rev.1.

(c) Organization of work

8. The PAG agreed on the organization of work for its meeting as presented in the annotations to the provisional agenda set out in document UNEP/Hg/PAG.10/2.

Item 3

Overview by the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on activities on technical assistance and capacity-building, including under the Specific International Programme

9. Upon invitation by the Chair, Ms. Claudia ten Have (Secretariat of the Minamata Convention) provided an update in relation to supported activities to facilitate the implementation of the Convention as well as to the Secretariat's planned programme of work for the 2020–2021 biennium with respect to capacity-building, technical assistance as well as scientific and technical activities, including on its foreseen areas of cooperation with the Partnership, as well as latest developments under the Specific International Programme.

10. She noted that some work had been initiated on the issues of mercury trade and emissions with funding from the EU, which included cooperation with the Partnership area on mercury releases from coal combustion, with a joint sub-regional workshop on emissions recently held in Hanoi, Vietnam (October 2019). The Secretariat envisaged continuing its work on these two issues in the future, hoping for further and enhanced cooperation with the Partnership.

11. Looking forward, she pointed out that in terms of capacity-building and technical assistance, the Secretariat was very much guided by the Convention's timelines and obligations and informed by the needs and priorities identified by Parties through individual requests, Minamata Initial Assessments (MIAs), as well as in the future by the reports pursuant to Article 21, which would provide further insights on national circumstances. The Secretariat also aimed at working on cross-cutting topics to prevent a fragmented approach at national level to address mercury issues. She also mentioned potential work on gender issues, on guidance on ASGM and emissions, and on waste, stressing that the symbiotic relationship between the Partnership and the Convention should continue.

12. She briefly discussed the Specific International Programme, from which Parties can apply directly for grants. Further to the Programme's operationalization at COP1, two rounds of applications had been completed, with 5 projects approved in 2018 (accounting for about 1 million USD), and 10 projects in 2019 (accounting for about 2 million USD), covering a range of topics, including the phase out of mercury-added products, mercury wastes, health intervention, or monitoring. She thanked the Secretariat of the Partnership for its support in the review of projects submitted to the second round.

13. Subsequently, a number of areas where opportunities may arise for future cooperation or which may be of interest to the Partnership were highlighted, including with respect to technical work on mercury releases; work on customs codes; mercury waste thresholds; effectiveness evaluation; reporting, with the first short reports submission deadlines of 31 December 2019; or the submission, implementation and subsequent review of National Action Plans (NAPs) for ASGM.

14. In response to a question from a member of the PAG related to efforts envisaged on enhancing knowledge on the Convention's provisions and implementation, Ms. ten Have noted that focus had so far been on reporting in light of the upcoming set deadlines, on communication to making the Convention's text accessible to a broader audience, and also on disseminating information relating to technical aspects of the Convention.

Item 4

Updates by the Secretariat of the GEF and intergovernmental organizations on mercury-related activities

15. Upon invitation by Mr. Ankrah, Mr. Anil Sookdeo (GEF Secretariat) indicated that since 2010, the GEF had programmed 185 million USD, mostly during GEF6 with support to MIAs and ASGM NAPs. He pointed out that as of now 111 countries had received funding for MIAs and 35 for NAPs. The GEF had also developed a programmatic approach to address the ASGM sector with the planetGOLD programme, which began work in 2019. Turning to GEF7, which would be running until 2022, he outlined that 17 million USD had so far been programmed, and that the current work programme included projects proposal worth about 19 million USD. Since GEF5, resources had been directed towards ASGM, enabling activities, industrial sectors (including chlor-alkali), primary mining, products, contaminated sites and capacity-building. In terms of tonnage of mercury reduction expected from the allocated resources, he said GEF6 projects targeted 638 tonnes per year, while GEF7 resources so far targeted 1,118 tonnes per year. Finally, he drew attention to a number of mercury-related activities planned in the coming years under GEF7, including the second phase of the planetGOLD programme, projects related to mercury emissions from relevant sectors including non-ferrous metals as well as possibly coal.

16. Mr. Ankrah subsequently invited the representatives of UNEP, UNIDO, UNITAR and of the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions to provide a brief update.

17. Mr. Kenneth Davis (UNEP) outlined recent and future planned work in supporting the Partnership as well as the implementation of the Minamata Convention. On ASGM, UNEP was supporting 25 countries in the development of their NAPs and had developed, in collaboration with the Partnership area, a series of tools and methodologies. UNEP was also the lead agency of the GEF-funded planetGOLD programme, in the context of which it was working with Conservation International, UNDP and UNIDO, and with the support of the Partnership area to assist the sector in reducing and where feasible eliminating mercury use in the sector. He then said UNEP was developing a project on the phase-out of mercury-cell chlor-alkali in Mexico. With respect to products, UNEP had supported the work conducted on customs codes and was preparing GEF project proposals in cooperation with WHO on mercury-containing skin lightening creams, dental amalgam and medical devices. In relation to mercury air transport and fate research, he stated that UNEP had completed a GEF project on global monitoring of mercury, in cooperation with a number of partners including WHO, BRI, and CNR. In relation to supply and storage, UNEP was currently developing a project addressing primary mercury mining in Mexico and mercury trade in the Latin American and the Caribbean region. UNEP International Environmental Technology Centre was investigating the issue of mercury emissions monitoring on open dumping and burning. UNEP was also leading a number of overarching activities, which included the recent release of the Technical Background report to the UNEP Global Mercury Assessment 2018, a project funded by China to support Asian countries in the implementation of chemicals multilateral environmental agreements, and the maintenance and further development of the UNEP Mercury Inventory Toolkit¹. Finally, UNEP had been supporting to date 62

¹ UNEP Toolkit for identification and quantification of mercury releases

countries in the development of their MIAs, including through assistance and training in the use of the UNEP Toolkit.

18. Mr. Jerome Stucki (UNIDO) mentioned that UNIDO was also actively involved in the planetGOLD programme, in particular through support to in country projects as well as the execution of the global component with the organization of the Global Forums held every two years, the first one being scheduled in June 2020 in Ecuador. He highlighted some very good results yielded from the UNIDO implemented project in China on vinyl chloride monomer production. Finally, UNIDO, with funding from Switzerland, was supporting small-scale activities which may not be eligible under the GEF, such as the development of a national action plan for waste management in the Philippines as well as country-specific interventions. Looking forward, he indicated that UNIDO was developing project proposals, amongst which on mercury trade for the West African region. Finally turning to GEF-funded enabling activities, he concluded by saying UNIDO was supporting 25 countries in their MIAs, as well as 9 countries in their ASGM NAPs.

19. Mr. Jakob Maag (UNITAR) indicated that they had so far supported mercury activities in over 40 countries. With funding from Switzerland, UNITAR had assisted 24 countries in their Minamata Convention ratification process. He added that UNITAR was supporting the execution of MIAs as well ASGM NAPs projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and Eritrea. They also contributed to the 2019 update of the UNEP Toolkit, in the context of which they conducted a market survey for mercury-added products. Finally, he presented the MercuryLearn platform hosted by UNITAR, which amongst others provided interactive modules on the development of mercury inventories with the UNEP Toolkit, as well as the Chemicals and Waste Platform developed in collaboration with the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata conventions secretariats.

20. Finally, Ms. Melissa Lim (Secretariat of the BRS Conventions) drew attention to the ongoing update of the technical guidelines on mercury wastes, conducted in response to a request by the Basel Convention COP at its fourteenth meeting, and which was led by the Government of Japan. Recognizing the wealth of knowledge available in the Partnership on the issue, she invited partners to participate in this revision process. Ms. Lim also highlighted work initiated under the Basel Convention to develop an electronic exchange system for the notifications on transboundary movement of hazardous wastes and noted that partners may wish to contribute as experts to this work.

Item 5

Updates by the Secretariat of the Global Mercury Partnership and each Partnership area with a focus on cross-cutting activities, outreach, and new partners

21. Introducing the agenda item, Mr. Ankrah drew attention to document UNEP/Hg/PAG.10/3, which presented the report on activities undertaken within the Partnership, reflecting input received from Partnership areas on their activities during the period from August 2018 to October 2019. He invited area leads to provide a brief update on their respective activities and to share key highlights, future plans and potential challenges.

Artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM)

22. Ms. Susan Keane (Natural Resources Defense Council – NRDC), co-lead for the area, informed the meeting that there had been a wide range of activities conducted by partners around the world, and that new key partners had recently joined the Partnership. Looking forward, she indicated that the Partnership area and its partners would continue to focus on activities that supported the implementation of ASGM NAPs, as well as sharing of NAP experience amongst governments; strive to attract and foster the collaboration and engagement of more private sector partners, including jewelers and refiners; and act as an information-sharing mechanism on technical solutions and approaches. She stressed that the issue of creating alternatives to mercury-based processes that were both affordable and acceptable by miners remained challenging, and that there was a need to further explore models for alternative business practices (e.g. selling ore directly to centralized processing).

23. Regarding collaboration with other Partnership areas on cross-cutting issues, she indicated an interest in joint activities with the mercury waste management area on tailings, with the mercury supply and storage area on the issue of mercury seizure and with the mercury air transport and fate research area on the impact of ASGM emissions and releases on local, regional and global environment.

Mercury air transport and fate research

24. Mr. David Evers (Biodiversity Research Institute - BRI), co-lead for the area, noted the support of the Partnership area to the preparation of the UNEP Global Mercury Assessment 2018, including its

technical background report and report for policy makers, through the chapters on atmospheric pathways, transport and fate of mercury and on monitoring mercury concentrations in biota. He added that partners had provided research and information related to mercury monitoring under the ad-hoc technical expert group on effectiveness evaluation established by the Minamata Convention COP. Partners had also contributed to the GEF-funded project on global monitoring of mercury.

25. Ms. Alessandra Fino and Mr. Sergio Cinnirella (Institute of atmospheric pollution research, National Research Council - CNR), spoke on behalf of Mr. Nicola Pirrone (CNR), co-lead for the area, and presented the work conducted in the context of the network of the Global Observation System for Mercury (GOS4M), a flagship of the Group on Earth Observation (GEO), and future activities relating to the federation of monitoring networks, the promotion of an inter-comparison exercise among different Passive Air Samplers (PASSs) currently available for monitoring mercury and the development of user-friendly web tools to support the effectiveness evaluation under the Minamata Convention. In order to strengthen the cooperation with other on-going monitoring programmes and initiatives in support to the implementation of the Convention, the exhibition booth organized in collaboration with GEO was described, and participants invited to share information and material.

26. Looking forward with respect to cross-cutting issues, interest in fostering cooperation with other scientific institutions and organizations involved in mercury monitoring (for air, biota and humans) as well as the development of environmental mercury monitoring protocols for standard use and comparison within areas affected by ASGM activities were highlighted.

Mercury cell chlor-alkali production

27. Ms. Ozunimi Iti (UNIDO), co-lead for the area, informed the meeting that the Partnership area had continued its work to identify facilities still using a mercury-cell process and to encourage such facilities to close down or transition to mercury-free processes. Over the recent period, activities had been carried out in Brazil in close cooperation with ABICLOR. Efforts had included facilitating the search for financing the conversion process and for addressing the management and disposal of mercury wastes.

28. She said the Partnership area wished to explore opportunities for joint missions with the mercury waste management area, to identify the needs and challenges faced by chlor-alkali producers both in terms of financing, as well as with the supply and storage area in light of their close linkages. Looking forward, she also noted work in countries that were not yet Parties to the Minamata Convention and could not benefit from GEF funding and may hence require assistance.

Mercury in products

29. Mr. Thomas Groeneveld (United States of America), coordinator for the area, reminded the meeting of the contribution provided by the Partnership area in response to the mandate set forth by the Minamata Convention COP at its second meeting in relation to customs codes. In this context, the Partnership area had collaborated with the Secretariat of the Convention as well as key partners and stakeholders, to draft a report and to identify and suggest “approaches for customs codes to identify and distinguish non-mercury-added and mercury-added products listed in Annex A to the Convention, including approaches for their possible harmonization”².

30. He then turned to Ms. Elena Lymberidi-Settimo (Zero Mercury Working Group), who presented their work in support to the phase-out of mercury-added products. In particular, they were implementing mercury-added product reduction projects in Kenya, Ivory Coast, India, Bangladesh and the Philippines. Guidance had been developed to phase out mercury-added products and assist governments in taking the necessary steps. She stated that 60% of samples tested in the context of an ongoing skin-lightening cream campaign showed mercury concentrations beyond 1 ppm. Finally, three workshops had recently been carried out as part of a GEF/UNDP small grants programme “Building Local to Global Coalitions for Chemicals and Waste Management, Towards Zero Mercury Use, Supply, Trade and Emissions”, which included information-sharing on customs codes.

Mercury releases from coal combustion

31. Ms. Lesley Sloss (International Energy Agency - Clean Coal Centre), co-lead for the area, informed the meeting that work was ongoing to develop two medium-scale project proposals to reduce emissions from the coal combustion sector in developing countries, to be presented for funding by the US State Department and the GEF. The Partnership area had held its annual meeting at the Mercury and multipollutant emissions from coal (MEC) workshop in Hanoi, Vietnam, from 28 to 30 October

² The outcome of this work was presented to COP3 in documents UNEP/MC/COP.3/5 and UNEP/MC/COP.3/INF/12

2019. She raised the issue of limited financial resources, which called for fundraising activities to support projects under the area.

32. Regarding collaboration with other Partnership areas on cross-cutting issues, she noted the work with the mercury air transport and fate research area on emissions and inventories and the interest in collaborating with other areas, including on mercury releases from the cement industry.

Mercury releases from the cement industry

33. Ms. Claude Lorea (Global Cement and Concrete Association - GCCA), new lead for the area, informed the meeting that the activities of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) Cement Sustainability Initiative (CSI), previous lead of the Partnership area, had stopped and were subsequently integrated into the recently established GCCA.

34. She indicated that amongst others, future work under the Partnership area would relate to the development of databases for emissions inventory. In light of the variations in mercury emissions worldwide, she said this work would help disseminate information on monitoring techniques; support evaluation of emissions and the effectiveness of emission reduction approaches; establish an accurate plant information database; and encourage the inclusion of cement manufacturing in country mercury inventories. She also mentioned the wish to develop outreach materials and collaborate with complementary programmes to disseminate information about mercury emissions from the sector, in particular with respect to techniques for mercury management and control. Future work would also encompass support to the development of policies and regulatory frameworks and the facilitation of knowledge exchange on new and emerging technologies. She raised the issue of data collection as particularly challenging.

35. Finally, in relation to cross-cutting issues, the Partnership area would explore opportunities for collaboration with other relevant stakeholders and Partnership areas, including the area on mercury releases from coal combustion.

Mercury supply and storage

36. Ms. Ana García (Spain), co-lead for the area, said future activities would relate to updating information on main mercury supply sources: primary mercury mining, mercury-cell chlor-alkali, mercury from non-ferrous mining and smelting and from oil and gas production; collaborating with relevant partners and Partnership areas; replicating past successful workshops and promoting transparency and traceability of mercury supply sources to address potential illegal trade and uses of mercury.

37. She stressed the importance of identifying and characterizing relevant supply sources, the amount of mercury generated and its destination; of associating strategies to decrease the production, use, import, and export of mercury with its environmentally sound storage and disposal as well as of controlling mercury trade and supply sources to reduce the availability of mercury globally.

38. Regarding cross-cutting issues, she saw particular relevance in enhancing collaboration with the Partnership areas on ASGM, on mercury cell chlor-alkali, on mercury in products and on mercury waste management. She concluded by highlighting the need for information on mercury from non-ferrous mining, oil refining and cleaning of natural gas as well as on possible strategies related to environmental controls, safety and health in the processes related to the cleaning of natural gas. She reported that the Partnership area had carried out a review of information on cleaning of natural gas in scientific and other international publications and the data found were very scarce and proposed that work on this mercury supply source be coordinated within the area.

Mercury waste management

39. Ms. Misuzu Asari (Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies, Kyoto University – Japan), co-lead for the area, indicated that the Partnership area had held its annual meeting on 6 October 2019 in Bilbao, Spain, back to back with the 2019 Congress of the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA), where the outcome of the meeting was presented. Key activities over the recent period included the development and dissemination of the “2019 Catalogue of technologies and services on mercury waste management”, knowledge sharing at relevant international meetings as well as a joint mission conducted with the mercury cell chlor-alkali production Partnership area in March 2018, in Uruguay.

40. In terms of future actions, she noted the importance of promoting knowledge-sharing among partners and other stakeholders; of continuous outreach; as well as of disseminating information, with the update of the Catalogue in 2020 to also include technologies and services of NGOs, IGOs, academia and others. Acknowledging the difficulty to match partners’ technical knowledge with actual

on the ground needs and challenges, she said MIAs were a useful source of information to enhance the identification of such needs. Mindful of the lack of capacity in waste management faced by a number of developing countries, she noted that strategies to address mercury waste should be part of a comprehensive waste management plan, rather than a singled-out issue, and considered in the broader context of other environmental agenda issues, such as the sustainable development goals or climate change. As mercury wastes were generated from all phases of the mercury life cycle, she stated that opportunities for collaboration on cross-cutting issues with other areas were numerous.

41. Participants subsequently discussed mercury stocks management and disposal, as well as the tracking of the decommissioning of mercury-cell chlor-alkali plants, which could be important issues to consider further. One participant noted that waste management companies had started in Europe to report on their mercury stocks, and this could serve as an interesting model to look at.

Update in relation to cross-cutting issues raised at PAG9

42. Mr. Ankrah reminded the PAG that at its ninth meeting (November 2018, Geneva), it had decided to examine in further details two cross-cutting issues, namely mercury from the oil and gas sector as well as from non-ferrous mining and smelting. He invited presentations in relation to those, noting that cross-cutting issues would subsequently be discussed more in depth under agenda item 8.

43. Mr. Peter Maxson (Concorde East/West Sprl) provided an overview of preliminary findings on the issue of mercury from the oil and gas sector. He started by identifying the geological mercury belts and global hotspots for mercury in oil and gas, as well as mercury levels reported in natural gas reservoirs. Based on information from industry colleagues, he estimated that 15 to 20% of the mercury content from natural gas was released to the environment due to the absence of, or inadequate removal system, and that in cases where the mercury was properly removed, no more than 70% of the metal oxide mercury waste and 30% of the contaminated activated carbon were typically recycled. He identified a number of challenges associated with the issue, amongst which the broad range of mercury levels in fields and wells; the global increase in gas production; the extent of uncontrolled releases; the decommissioning of contaminated rigs; the contaminated oil storage ships sent for ship-breaking; and the differences in environmental performance across the industry, especially in terms of waste management practices.

44. Mr. Davis gave a snapshot of 2018 Global Mercury Assessment figures on emissions and releases of mercury from non-ferrous mining and smelting. With respect to emissions of mercury, the assessment showed that 326 tonnes of mercury originated from the production of non-ferrous metals (aluminum, copper, large scale gold, lead, mercury, and zinc), representing about 15% of total emissions and making the sector the third largest source in terms of emissions. Total mercury emissions were estimated at 140 tonnes for zinc, 84.5 tonnes for large scale gold, 50 tonnes for copper and 30 tonnes for lead. Turning to releases to water, he noted that with an estimated 240 tonnes per year, the sector was responsible for roughly 40% of total releases, hence being the largest source of releases to water, ASGM aside. In the ensuing discussion, one participant noted that emissions originated from the smelting process rather than the initial concentration stages, with emissions from the steps before the roasting not considered in the assessment.

Update by the Secretariat of the Global Mercury Partnership

45. In her update, Ms. Averous-Monnery (UNEP) noted that 13 new partners had joined the Partnership since the previous PAG meeting, bringing to 195 the total number of partners to date. At the invitation of Mr. Ankrah, Ms. Laruelle (UNEP) presented the new fact sheets developed for each Partnership area, with the support from Partnership area leads, as well as the revised Partnership registration form, all of which were available online and in print for future use. Turning to outreach at COP3, she highlighted the Partnership exhibition booth that would be set up and would feature “Special Open-Door Clinics” organized throughout the week by Partnership areas, as well as the side events organized by the areas on mercury control from coal combustion and mercury air transport and fate research.

46. She briefly introduced recent statistics of the Partnership website, currently the main vehicle for external communication and a key medium for stakeholders to learn about the Partnership and access information. She noted that with a standard weekly frequentation of up to 300 users, the website had a good usage level.

Item 6

Overview of key findings from Minamata Initial Assessments

47. UNEP and the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention provided an overview of key findings from their review of completed MIAs, which included an analysis of the data from the inventory

reports produced as well as the identified trends and national priorities. At the time of the meeting, 46 MIAs out of 111 were completed and available on the Convention website.

48. The UNEP Toolkit had been used to conduct all MIA inventories. Mr. Juha Ronkainen (UNEP) noted that the review of finalized MIAs generally showed consistency with the data presented in the latest 2018 Global Mercury Assessment. Based on the Global Mercury Synthesis report produced by UNEP in partnership with BRI, mercury-added products and mercury waste appeared as prevalent in the inventories, along with primary metal production. Regarding the latter, industrial gold production appeared as a dominant sector, a fact that could be partly attributable to the default input factor used, revised in the 2019 version of the Toolkit, or to the particular countries in the assessment. The need for more information on the mercury content in ores, including at country level, was highlighted in order to properly assess the burden of the sector and further refine and develop the Toolkit.

49. Mr. Takafumi Anan (Secretariat of the Minamata Convention) pointed out that the main national priorities from 39 of the finalized MIAs were the phasing-out of mercury-added products and the management of mercury waste. Other major priority areas included ASGM, emissions, releases and monitoring. Many countries also prioritized awareness-raising and the strengthening of legal and institutional frameworks, both basic requirements to ratify and implement the Convention. Further analysis would be conducted as more MIA reports become available. The Secretariat indicated that the inventories and national priorities identified in MIA reports would inform its capacity-building and technical assistance programme for 2020-2021 as well as support from the Specific International Programme.

50. In the ensuing discussion, Mr. Maag clarified that while the new default factors for mercury waste from the 2019 version of the Toolkit would lead to decreased emission estimates, the sector would still remain a major relevant source. In response to a query about inventory data from developed countries, it was highlighted that while MIA reports were from developing countries only, mercury data from developed countries may be found in the UNEP Global Mercury Assessment and will also be made available by Parties in the inventories required for emissions and releases under articles 8 and 9 of the Convention. The importance of data comparability, between countries and over time, in particular for the purpose of the Convention's effectiveness evaluation, was raised.

Item 7

Selection of insights from the 14th International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant

51. Mr. Ankrah invited Ms. Lesley Sloss to provide a few introductory words on the 14th International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant (ICMGP) held in September 2019, in Krakow, Poland. Ms. Sloss noted that the ICMGP, which brought together about 700 participants under the overall theme of "Bridging knowledge on global mercury with environmental responsibility, human welfare and policy response" included a specific focus on the work of the Convention, through dedicated sessions and plenary talks. Workshops were held on the day preceding the opening of the ICMGP, amongst which one hosted by the area on mercury releases from coal combustion.

52. Noting that the ICMGP had become an excellent platform for information-sharing and dissemination, she shared some of her thoughts on how the Partnership may wish to seize the opportunity of the next ICMGP, scheduled to be held in July 2021 in Cape Town, South Africa, under the theme "From Minamata to Africa and beyond: addressing mercury challenges in global environmental change", to support and promote its work. The future locations of the ICMGP, South Africa in 2021 and India in 2023, created an opportunity to share knowledge and expertise with these regions and raise awareness on the work of the Partnership. She encouraged the Partnership to work closely with the event organizers and its Steering Committee, to suggest topics, speakers, plenary talks, possibly to direct sessions on a specific theme, and also to take the advantage of the workshops organized prior to the Conference to offer training. She noted that a number of members of the PAG were actually also on the Steering Committee, hence creating enhanced opportunities for cooperation.

53. In the ensuing discussion, partners were invited to reach out to their networks, including African scientists, about the upcoming ICMGP. One participant, who also sat on the ICMGP Steering Committee, suggested alignment of the Conference with some of the key milestones of the Minamata Convention, with effectiveness evaluation being one of them. Another participant drew the attention of the PAG to the issue of synthesis reports for the Conference, which ought to be initiated promptly should there be a need for them on any particular issue.

54. Mr. Ankrah concluded by stating that as the Partnership moved forward, in this period where the Convention was going into further operationalization and implementation, the ICMGP represented an excellent opportunity to seize for information-exchange with stakeholders involved in addressing

the mercury issue and outreach to a broader community of scientists. The Partnership's contribution to the next ICMGP would hence be further explored in the coming months.

Item 8

Strategic discussion on future priority actions by the Global Mercury Partnership

55. The PAG then discussed future priority actions by the Partnership in supporting timely and effective implementation of the Minamata Convention; providing state of the art knowledge and science; and delivering outreach and awareness-raising towards global action on mercury.

(a) Support towards the implementation of the Minamata Convention

56. PAG members brainstormed in small groups, looking in particular at how the Partnership and its Partnership areas, including in a cross-cutting manner, may support the implementation of the Minamata Convention. In doing so, they considered amongst others the specific activities or projects that may be undertaken, the possible stakeholders, resources required as well as expected timeline. Discussions took place in the following three clusters: (1) products, processes and waste; (2) emissions and releases and (3) research, development and monitoring.

57. As an outcome from these discussions, a number of topics were identified as possible future priority areas of work: mercury from non-ferrous mining and smelting, the further refinement of default factors from key sectors, the establishment of a framework for a centralized repository on mercury assessments, the development of guidance to address mercury-added products and of tools to make information on waste technologies accessible, and the organization of webinars to facilitate information sharing.

(1) Priority issues identified in relation to products, processes and waste

58. Noting that unlike for ASGM, only a limited number of countries seemed to have elaborated national plans for the implementation of their obligations in relation to mercury-added products, the group discussed the possibility of developing guidance to support countries on this matter. Such guidance could provide information in relation to mercury-added products, their mercury content and their appropriate end of life treatment in an environmentally sound manner.

59. Partnership areas may also collaborate in developing tools to support governments as well as other relevant stakeholders, which may include webinars to facilitate information-sharing. Particular emphasis was put on the need to tailor the information to the targeted audience.

(2) Priority issues identified in relation to emissions and releases

60. The highest-ranked priority identified by the group was mercury from non-ferrous mining and smelting. As a practical way forward, the group suggested the convening of a meeting with key stakeholders, which could also be an opportunity for leading companies to share their best practices. Amongst others, it was suggested that organizations such as the International Copper Study Group, the International Lead and Zinc Study Group as well as the International Council on Mining and Metals be approached to gauge their interest as possible partners in such work.

61. The further refining of default factors was also discussed, in particular with respect to the cement production and coal fired power plants. In the latter case, the difficulty related to the growing evidence that emissions of mercury from coal relied not only on the mercury concentration in the coal but also heavily on the halogen or chlorine content as well as the type of particulate filters was raised.

62. Another issue highlighted related to the use of mercury as a satellite propellant, which could lead to an estimated use of up to the 20 tonnes of mercury per year, returning to earth through the effect of gravity. In response to a proposal for a PAG statement discouraging all new uses of mercury when alternatives are available, it was indicated that the use as a satellite propellant may already have been practiced in the past and would hence not be able to qualify as a new use of mercury.

(3) Priority issues identified in relation to research, development and monitoring

63. The highest-ranked priority identified by the group was the establishment of a framework for a centralized repository, which could gather in a single platform information on mercury assessments, country-generated data, for instance on biota (e.g. mercury in fish), inventories from developing and developed countries, or information from industry associations.

64. Clarification was requested as to how such repository/database would relate to emissions and releases inventories that would be developed under articles 8 and 9 of the Convention. It was stated that the intent was not to duplicate existing efforts but rather to provide a single-entry gateway to information from different sources, which could support multiple purposes, be it effectiveness

evaluation under the Convention or national assessments to measure progress. A continued conversation would be required to further clarify and discuss how the concepts and general ideas brought by the group may be operationalized.

65. It was also suggested that the UNEP Toolkit could be streamlined to distinguish between the sources of releases that fall inside and outside the scope of the Convention, allowing countries to choose whether they wish to conduct a broader inventory at the national level.

66. Mr. Ankrah concluded by requesting the leads of each Partnership area, in follow up to the meeting and the discussions in small groups, to identify the concrete actions falling within the realm of their area of work as well as the opportunities for collaboration with other areas and to revise their respective business plans as need be to advance work on these issues.

(b) Cross-cutting issues

67. Mr. Ankrah introduced the item, noting that cross-cutting issues in the context of previous PAG meetings were to designate specific topics where the collaboration of multiple Partnership areas would facilitate the development of needed information, interventions and projects³. He reminded the meeting that formerly identified cross-cutting issues included mercury from non-ferrous mining and smelting as well as from the oil and gas sector.

68. The PAG agreed to initiate work in relation to mercury from non-ferrous mining and smelting, recognizing the sector was estimated to be a major source of mercury emissions and releases. As a first step, it requested the Secretariat to identify and reach out to interested partners as well as relevant stakeholders, seeking their appetite in engaging in such work. The need for a dedicated Partnership area, which had been discussed previously and was envisaged in the Partnership Overarching document, would be considered at a later stage. The PAG also agreed to work on the issue of mercury from oil and gas production, for which the need for further information was also recognized.

69. On both these issues, the PAG requested the Secretariat to convene targeted discussions with interested area leads, partners as well as other relevant stakeholders, including interested Parties to the Convention, to identify the needs and challenges, the information currently available as well as the possible aspects where the Partnership may have a useful contribution and move the issue forward.

70. Responding to Mr. Ankrah's request as to which other cross-cutting issues the Partnership could or should engage in, the disposal of excess mercury, including in light of the expected increased discard of mercury-added products as a result of the implementation of the phase-out obligations, as well as the use of mercury as a satellite propellant were mentioned. In the ensuing discussion, Mr. Eisaku Toda (Secretariat of the Minamata Convention) indicated the Secretariat would welcome information from the Partnership in relation to the decommissioning of chlor-alkali facilities.

(c) Development and dissemination of knowledge and scientific information on mercury, including in relation to emerging issues of concern, innovations and innovative technologies

71. Complementing the previous discussions at the meeting, Mr. Ankrah noted that the Partnership had played an important role in developing knowledge and scientific information on mercury since it was established, and that in light of the needs expressed, it should continue to do so. The PAG noted that such work would be undertaken as part of the core activities of individual Partnership areas as well as in a cross-cutting manner.

(d) Outreach and awareness-raising

72. Mr. Ankrah introduced the agenda item, noting that efficient and effective outreach and awareness-raising were key to maximize the impact of the work undertaken by the Partnership and its partners, ensure the visibility of their activities and engage current and new partners and stakeholders, allowing them to feel "connected".

73. Partnership area leads discussed their current internal communication practices, including challenges encountered. Most areas relied primarily on email distribution lists, including listservs. The type of information that would be useful sharing, beyond information on meetings, was discussed, noting that it could include notice of future relevant events, useful projects and materials.

74. Some Partnership areas, such as the areas on mercury releases from coal combustion and mercury waste management, indicated they held regular face to face meetings, while others held teleconferences. Some areas, such as the areas on mercury in products and mercury waste

³ See meeting report of the ninth meeting of the PAG available at <https://web.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/partnership-advisory-group-meeting-9>

management, were considering the organization of webinars to exchange information on specific topics, noting that those may be held jointly between areas.

75. Turning to the issue of additional tools that the PAG may wish to consider in order to enhance communication and outreach, the PAG agreed to the development of a Partnership newsletter which would be circulated on a regular basis to all partners and interested stakeholders and feature amongst others information in relation to news, relevant resources and publications, introduction of new partners, and events. The organisation of webinars on targeted topics was also proposed and agreed upon. Noting that each Partnership area was to meet at least on an annual basis either in person, by conference call or by any other means, the secretariat indicated it stood ready to assist leads in convening such meetings through teleconferences or online meetings. The secretariat would hence be liaising with Partnership area leads and partners to roll out the implementation of the above.

Item 9

Resource mobilisation for the Global Mercury Partnership

76. The PAG then turned to the consideration of resource mobilisation, in particular the type of in-kind and financial resources needed by the Partnership, including to support its identified future priority areas of work, and how to leverage the required resources. Mr. Ankrah introduced the item, noting that continued and enhanced contributions were needed both for the secretariat functions as well as for activities undertaken by partners in the context of the Partnership.

77. Ms. Alvarez provided an overview of resources currently available. She noted that two staff members, whose salaries were covered by the Environment Fund, were currently supporting the secretariat of the Global Mercury Partnership. Funding had been secured to cover the costs of convening the meeting of the PAG and some limited substantive follow-up work, and the development of communication tools including website management. Looking at the next annual PAG meeting, in the absence of a COP meeting in 2020, the Partnership would not be in a position to benefit from cost savings based on sharing of expenditures for the travel of a number of sponsored participants. This may result in a more limited sponsorship, or the need to identify alternative solutions for the convening of the forthcoming PAG. She also highlighted the importance of financial but also expertise and in-kind contribution by all partners.

78. Mr. Ankrah pointed out that while the resources available to the secretariat were not ample, they had certainly been very useful. In addition, he called on partners to reach out to potential donors and also to think of resources in the context of projects where the Partnership and the secretariat may have a role to play, and in such cases invite them to participate in the projects' development processes.

Item 10

Proposals for updates to the Partnership Overarching Framework

79. Mercury partnerships were initiated in 2005 by the UNEP Governing Council and formalized in 2008 through the development of the document "Overarching Framework for the Global Mercury Partnership". In order to reflect a number of evolutions, including the adoption and entry into force of the Minamata Convention as well as practices under the Partnership, the secretariat had proposed updates to the current version of the Overarching Framework document, as set out in document UNEP/ Hg/PAG.10/4.

80. At the invitation of the Chair, Ms. Laruelle introduced the proposals for updates. Amongst others, it was suggested that the document clearly set out that the Partnership and its areas of work were to focus on supporting timely and effective implementation of the Convention; on providing state of the art knowledge and science on mercury; as well as on delivering outreach and awareness-raising towards global action on mercury. Mr. Ankrah then opened the floor for follow up questions and reactions to the proposals as well as their possible endorsement. He also asked PAG members whether any additional changes may be needed. The secretariat addressed some clarifying questions raised, after which the PAG endorsed the proposals for updates as set out in document UNEP/ Hg/PAG.10/4.

Item 11

Other matters

81. Mr. Ankrah drew the attention of the PAG to its next annual meeting. In the absence of a meeting of the Minamata Convention COP in 2020, consultations would be held in the coming months to determine the most suitable date and format for such meeting, which may be held both in person or through electronic or other means.

Item 12

Closure of the meeting

82. Mr. Ankrah thanked the members of the PAG for their engagement and productive spirit in the meeting as well as the secretariat for its support. In his closing remarks, he highlighted the growing role of the Partnership as a forum for action, which complemented the policy discussions taking place in the context of the Minamata Convention COP. He declared the meeting closed at 6.00 p.m. on Saturday, 23 November 2019.