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UNEP Global Mercury Partnership
Advisory Group
Fourteenth meeting
19 December 2023, online, 13:00 to 16:00 CET

Report of the fourteenth meeting of the Global Mercury Partnership Advisory Group (19 December 2023)

Item 1

Opening of the meeting

1. The fourteenth meeting of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership Advisory Group (PAG-14) took place on 19 December 2023 in an online setting¹.
2. The meeting was opened on 19 December at 1:00 PM CET by Stephanie Laruelle (UNEP) on behalf of the Secretariat of the Partnership. Ms. Laruelle welcomed the Chair, Co-leads and the audience before introducing the meeting agenda. She then handed the floor to Ludovic Bernaudat, Head of the Knowledge and Risk Unit, Chemicals and Health Branch, and Rodges Ankrah, Chair of the PAG, for their opening remarks.
3. In his opening remarks, Mr. Bernaudat welcomed all participants to the meeting, recalling the opportunity it offers to exchange and hear of great successes from the partnership and its areas of work, including the cross-cutting work and activities jointly organized by Partnership Areas. He further highlighted the renewed acknowledgement of the Partnership at the fifth Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention as a testimony of confidence, resulting notably from the valuable collaborations, partnering, dialogues and joint actions within the Partnership.
4. After reminding the audience about the remaining work towards making mercury history, Mr. Bernaudat invited all participants to participate in the meeting discussions and reflections on possible ways the Partnership may further support the implementation of the recent COP-5 decisions to protect human health and the environment from the harmful effects of mercury.
5. Finally, Mr. Bernaudat welcomed new Co-leads, i.e. Elena Lymberidi-Settimo and Michael Bender from the Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG) for the mercury in products Partnership Area, Lilian Corra from the International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE) for the mercury supply and storage Partnership Area, as well as Rodica Ivan from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) for the ASGM Partnership Area, before welcoming Bianca Hlob'sile Dlamini from Eswatini and handing the floor to the PAG Chair, Rodges Ankrah, whom he warmly thanked for his energy and leadership.
6. Following Mr. Bernaudat, Rodges Ankrah extended a warm welcome to the Partnership Area Leads and all participants of the PAG-14. He appreciated the participation and continuous close collaboration with the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention, encouraging the audience to build on discussions and recommendations of PAG-13 to continue open and constructive exchanges on several

¹ <https://www.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/events/unep-event/partnership-advisory-group-meeting-14>

priorities and cross-cutting topics and ways the Partnership can support the implementation of the COP-5 decisions for advancing the mercury agenda.

7. Moving forward, the Chair welcomed the above-mentioned new Co-leads as well as Bianca Hlob'sile Dlamini and conveyed deep appreciation to the leads of each Partnership Area for their considerable work throughout the year and flexibility considering the very busy end of year calendars. He similarly expressed his sincere thanks to all the partners for having dedicated their time, efforts, and expertise for successful implementation of activities and events all the year round.

8. He finally extended deep appreciation to the Governments of Sweden and Switzerland for their financial contribution to the Partnership, which has allowed to support various work, including on mercury-added products and wished the audience a good-spirited open discussion.

Item 2

Organisational matters

(a) Selection of Partnership Advisory Group chair/ co-chairs

9. In view of Teeraporn Wiriwutikorn's recent departure to pursue new functions, Rodges Ankrach informed the audience of the candidature of Bianca Dlamini from the Government of eSwatini for the position of Co-chair of the PAG. After a few words from Ms. Dlamini, notably expressing her interest in the work of the partnership, her nomination was approved in the absence of any objections.

(b) Adoption of the agenda

10. Following its presentation by Stephanie Laruelle (UNEP), the PAG adopted the agenda for its meeting based on the provisional agenda set out in document UNEP/Hg/PAG.14/1.

(a) Organization of work

11. 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.14/2.

Item 3

Update from the Global Mercury Partnership Secretariat and its areas of work on key activities and future priorities

12. Imelda Dossou Etui (UNEP) shared insights on activities and key highlights. She noted that since PAG-13, 16 organizations had joined the Partnership, bringing to over 250 the total number of partners to date². She then provided an overview of online information sharing sessions recently organized by the Partnership as well as Partnership Areas annual meetings³, including online events organized in the context of the fifth Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention as well as the latest webinar on “Phasing down the use of dental amalgam and managing its associated waste: from knowledge to action”.

13. Ms. Dossou Etui also mentioned the event on “Managing mercury along the oil and gas value chain: sharing of experiences and best practices,” organized in July 2023 as a follow up to the study report on mercury from the oil and gas sector, and mercury from oil and gas. She also mentioned upcoming events, including on mercury non-ferrous metals mining and smelting. She finally reminded participants of existing communication tools, including the quarterly newsletter and the website where resources and information could be advertised, including on Partnership Areas webpages, which provide overview of recent and ongoing activities within each area of work.

14. Following the secretariat's presentation, each Partnership Area provided the audience with an update on recent, ongoing and planned activities. Key messages from the Co-lead's interventions⁴ are as follows:

Mercury releases from coal combustion

15. Lesley Sloss (International Centre for Sustainable Carbon), and Peter Nelson (Macquarie University) Co-leads of the Partnership Area, shared updates of the recent work undertaken. The ICSC

² The list of partners may be found at: www.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/partners

³ Information on events may be found at: www.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/events

⁴ https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/44573/GMP_PAG14_Presentations.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

has completed its 4-year U.S.-DoS project in Indonesia and India. Key outputs for Indonesia were a unit-by-unit mercury emission inventory, a catalogue of applicable emission reduction techniques, an analysis of the financial challenge and potential funding strategies, as well as a training and capacity-building delivered to over 370 stakeholders. In India, the project strengthened capacity building through the development of best practice guidance documents on emission monitoring, plant performance, emission control technologies, and mercury-specific reduction efforts. The project provided training to over 1100 stakeholders at 12 regional events; and the establishment of two legacy initiatives, one on the flexibility of coal fleet (Flex-India) and the other on emissions monitoring (CEM-EG India).

16. Peter Nelson (Macquarie University) then provided an overview of the GEF project initiated in October 2021 on the “Assessment of existing and future emissions reduction from the coal sector toward the implementation of the Minamata and Stockholm Conventions.” The project consists of two components: (i) a comprehensive coal sectoral analysis, which will review scientific data on mercury, persistent organic pollutants, and greenhouse gas emissions from the coal sector to predict the scale of mercury emissions up to 2050; and (ii) a synthesis of strategies, including policy guidance for the coal sector’s emissions reduction contribution to the Stockholm and Minamata Conventions.

17. In terms of future activities, the partnership will be contributing to the sixteenth International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant (ICMGP-16) in July 2024. The partnership is also exploring a potential project on seawater Flue Gas Desulfurization (FGD) mercury contamination (as a potential source of mercury releases to the marine environment). Other planned actions include fundraising for further training, capacity building, and replicating the work undertaken in Indonesia and India.

Mercury waste management

18. Kishor Parajuli (EX Research Institute), shared an update on the latest work of the Waste Management Area. Key highlights included: meetings organized in March and October 2023, a side event in the margins of the Basel Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions Conference of Parties, an update of the “Catalogue of Technologies and Services on Mercury Waste Management,” and participation in the online information sharing on mercury from the oil and gas sector in July 2023.

19. He also noted that 11 new members had joined the Partnership Area since the PAG-13, and commented on the activities of the specific working groups, covering resource development, capacity-building and awareness-raising, and solution exchange. Solution exchange has considered developing a platform to facilitate interactions between stakeholders in need and solution providers.

20. With regards to future activities, the Partnership Area envisions periodic meetings, initiating virtual events on waste management, and continuing to update the catalogue and ongoing work under the working groups. Another possible future activity could include mapping the waste treatment facilities listed in the catalogue and mercury storage facilities.

Mercury air transport and fate research

21. Celia Chen (Dartmouth College) shared highlights on ongoing work under the Partnership Area. These highlights included:

(a) Collaborating between Dartmouth College and the Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) to publish special issues in recent publications in the *ambio*- and *eco-toxicology* journals, titled “Global Mercury Impact Synthesis: Impacts of Climate on Mercury and Processes in the Southern Hemisphere” and “Global environmental mercury loads in biota and impacts on biodiversity”, respectively.

(b) Continuing the passive sampling monitoring program by the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and related activities through 2024.

(c) Welcoming South Korea to the GMOS Network as a new member.

(d) Highlighting the continued efforts under the GOS4M knowledge hub to bridge science to policy and support decision making.

(e) Noting that many of the members of the Partnership Area are involved in the effectiveness evaluation (EE) through participation in the Open-Ended Scientific Group (OESG) of technical experts in the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

(f) The Global Mercury Partnership participating in the ICMGP-16, leading in plenary sessions on effectiveness evaluation, biodiversity, and mercury. Additionally, the Partnership will lead

sessions on mercury in ASGM, biodiversity and mercury, advances in analytical chemistry, and anthropogenic sources and emissions.

22. Organizing the annual meeting of the area of work and engaging with the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on the upcoming Minamata online series.

Artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM)

1. Susan Keane (Natural Resources Defence Council), Co-lead of the Partnership Area, started by introducing Rodica Ivan (UNIDO) as the new co-lead of the area, replacing Jerome Stucki. After a short introduction from Ms. Ivan, Ms. Keane moved to key highlights of the Partnership, namely partners' activities on testing and dissemination of mercury-free technologies, responsible supply chains, mercury trade, remediation, the recovery of mercury from tailings, and human health concerns related to mercury exposure in the ASGM sector. She also noted activities of area partners, including the signing of a MoU with a Local Government Authority in Papua New Guinea to improve the ASGM sector, the creation of a "Global Community Miners Forum" by a group of miners, and the finalization of the fourth regional training on ASM for English-speaking Eastern and Northern Africa countries under the Pan-African Support to Geological Science and Technology Africa-EU Partnership (PanAfgeo-WPC) project.

2. Fellow Co-lead Ludovic Bernaudat (UNEP) presented the following four actions for the Partnership Area: (i) continuing to support the implementation of the NAP in an increasing number of countries through the planetGOLD programme, which currently counts 23 countries with more to join in the near future, (ii) organizing the ASGM Global Forum in Ecuador in February 2024⁵, (iii) further analysing National Action Plans (NAPs) implementation by Parties to the Minamata Convention and review called for by COP-5 decision MC-5/7, and, (iv) increasing involvement in the development of projects on mercury trade and ASGM as contributions to the Bali Declaration and COP-5 decision MC-5/2 on trade.

Mercury cell chlor-alkali production

3. Franz Mayer (UNIDO) took the audience through key highlights of the area on behalf of Ozunimi Iti (UNIDO), Co-lead of the Partnership Area. Mr. Mayer started by revisiting the objectives of the Partnership Area as follows:

- (a) Prevent the construction of new mercury-cell chlor alkali production facilities.
- (b) Minimise mercury emissions and usage in existing mercury-cell facilities.
- (c) Promote the shift to non-mercury processes in these facilities.
- (d) Reduce or eliminate mercury releases from waste, including waste generated during conversion to non-mercury processes, and
- (e) Promote safe storage.

4. He then moved to ongoing and planned activities. Ongoing activities include finalizing a Mexico project, involving the conversion of two mercury cell facilities addressing the resulting waste management concerns, and the continued assistance to Brazil eliminate the use of mercury in four chlor-alkali plants, including further exploration of project financing. Another ongoing activity is the joint webinar organized with the waste management area of work on "eliminating mercury and managing mercury waste in the chlor-alkali sector" which among other discussed best technologies and financially viable options. Future activities include the organization of the annual meeting of the area, data collection on ongoing and potential chlor-alkali conversion projects, technology consultation, funding assistance, and a special attention to the management and disposal of stocks in converted facilities. The Partnership Area would also be looking to collaborate with other Partnership Areas and explore the nomination of a new co-lead.

Mercury releases from the cement industry

5. Claude Lorea (Global Cement and Concrete Association – GCCA highlighted the meetings held in the margins of the COP-5 in Geneva, between the Co-leads and the chair of the Partnership Advisory

⁵ Post-meeting update: The planetGOLD global forum was moved to June 2024 and will take place in Philippines due to the security concerns at the original location.

Group, together with the secretariat of the Global Mercury Partnership, as an opportunity to further exchange on activities and envisaged programme for the area.

6. Ms. Lorea expressed the need for future work to continue with the organization of informational workshops among others on stocks measurement and BAT/BEP with a focus on obligations under Annex A of the Minamata Convention. She also mentioned the need to ensure the participation of relevant stakeholders (i.e., possibly hold a dedicated workshop for Francophone African countries). She stressed that topic ideas like improving inventories of emissions would depend on the availability of funding.

Mercury in products

7. The Co-leads of the Partnership Area, Thomas Groeneveld (United States of America), and Elena Lymberidi-Settimo (European Environmental Bureau and Zero Mercury Working Group) shared the floor to provide an overview of the area's work.

8. Mr. Groeneveld mentioned some of the key highlights including the annual meeting (which welcomed Ms. Lymberidi-Settimo and Mr. Bender as new Co-leads of the area of work), the technical session on "Transitioning to Mercury-Free Lighting in Asia-Pacific Countries, and participation in the Global Workshop on the implementation of the Minamata Convention Obligations on Mercury added-products, organized by the Secretariat of the Convention. The partnership took part in the launching of the two GEF-funded projects on skin lightening products and dental amalgam.

9. With regards to the Zero Mercury Working Group activities, Ms. Lymberidi-Settimo mentioned the third phase of the capacity-building activities related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements in African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries aiming at phasing-out mercury-added products. She then recalled ongoing activities on mercury containing skin lightening products, fluorescent lighting, and dental amalgam.

10. Looking at planned activities and priorities, Mr. Groeneveld announced further assistance to the Secretariat in gathering information for the report on challenges of phasing-out the manufacture, import, and export of mercury-added cosmetics. He then expressed the wish to organize various webinars on mercury-added products, and conduct outreach to seek interest for the development of specific factsheets.

Mercury supply and storage

11. Judith Torres (Uruguay), Co-lead of the Partnership Area, started by thanking Ana Garcia, former co-lead of the partnership, for all the years dedicated to the area of work, before welcoming Lilian Corra (International Society of Doctors for the Environment – ISDE) as the new co-lead.

12. Ms. Corra raised the need to explore options to further engage with various stakeholders including governments and the private sector, as well as ensuring resources' availability for a dissemination of the study reports on mercury from oil and gas and mercury from the non-ferrous metals mining and smelting. She also mentioned further reflection on enhancing collaboration with Latin American countries, notably through further cooperation with the Basel Convention Regional Centre for the South American Region based in Argentina. Finally, options for identifying funding for small projects that could involve stakeholders including governments and the private sector, particularly in low- and medium-income countries, was also proposed.

13. Following updates from the Co-leads, reactions/suggestions from the audience firstly related to:
- Considering a collaboration with the science-policy interface being put in place currently on chemicals;
 - Further engagement with the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on the solution exchange platform put in place under the Waste Management Area; and
 - Updating the inventory of the mercury cell chlor-alkali facilities.

Item 4

Update from the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) on mercury related activities

14. On behalf of Halshka Graczyk (ILO), current chair of the IOMC mercury group, Oliver Wootton (UNITAR), former chair of the group, shared an update of recent activities of the mercury group (composed of a BRS Secretariat, ILO, OECD, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, UNITAR, WHO, the World Bank, the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention, and the Global Environment Facility, among others). He recalled that over the past years, the group worked on mercury related activities and initiatives, notably on coordinating the templates for Minamata Initial Assessments (MIAs) and NAPs, as well as agreeing on the use of the mercury inventory toolkit.

15. With regards to recent activities, while agencies directly implement some of the mercury-related work, there are still some relevant coordination activities that the IOMC does collectively. Recent activities include technical sessions on key themes to update members on different activities undertaken, including the third technical session held in April 2023 which focused on emissions and releases. The group also held a preparatory mercury session in October 2023.

16. Moving forward, Mr. Wootton mentioned the various interventions made by several group members during COP-5, as well as a joint IOMC intervention that provided an update on the group activities, highlighting the importance of multisectoral engagement for future actions. Finally, Mr. Wootton expressed the wish of the group to continue organizing technical sessions in preparations for COP-6 planned for November 2025, particularly on mercury waste and trade related issues.

Item 5

Key outcomes from the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention (COP-5)

17. After presenting Monica Stankiewicz's regrets for her absence and congratulating Bianca Dlamini for her nomination as Co-chair of the Partnership Advisory Group, Marianne Bailey, Secretariat of the Minamata Convention, and Eisaku Toda, Senior Programme Management Officer, provided the audience with an overview of the key outcomes of the fifth Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention (COP-5) held from 30 October to 03 November 2023, in Geneva, Switzerland. Ms. Bailey began with a reference to the letter sent by Monika Stankiewicz to Rodges Ankrah to discuss areas of cooperation between the Global Mercury Partnership and the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention.

18. Moving forward, Ms. Bailey conveyed the Secretariat's thanks to all stakeholders who contributed to making the COP-5 a productive and successful meeting notably including through the organization of side events, knowledge labs and exhibits which made the COP-5 very valuable. She then highlighted two key points from the letter sent, namely the high priority given by the Secretariat to the collaboration with the Global Mercury Partnership and some of the workstreams envisioned for the upcoming biennium, as done before the PAG-13 to define the cooperation between the Partnership and the Convention Secretariat.

19. Ms. Bailey then recalled the 21 decisions resulting from the COP-5, which should guide the intersessional mandates. She also highlighted the importance of capacity building, technical assistance, and technology transfer (decision MC-5/12) raised several times throughout the COP-5 meeting, including engaging with the partnership on the matter and for enhancing support to parties as they cooperate to provide capacity-building and technical assistance pursuant to Article 14. Still on decision MC-5/12, Ms. Bailey mentioned the other key element of Article 14 being the requirement for the COP-5 to consider information on alternative technologies, including needs and challenges of parties in technology transfer. As a result to the above-mentioned decision, and depending on funds availability, desk and case studies may be developed on appropriate technologies and technology transfer opportunities, building on the good example of the planetGOLD document on the technology transfer activities for the first 8 planetGOLD countries. Before moving forward, Ms. Bailey invited the audience to share any follow-up ideas and suggestions with the Secretariat on these desk and case studies. Furthermore, the decision on supply, storage, and trade generated great interest. Also, a number of decisions evidenced the opportunity of working across various focal areas such as biodiversity and climate change (decision MC-5/17). Additionally, enhancing international cooperation and coordination to the strengthen the collaboration between both the Minamata and the UNFCCC Secretariats was mentioned. Ms. Bailey then welcomed the adoption of the Global Framework on Chemicals as well as the Bonn declaration by ICCM5 to be considered by Parties in the implementation of the Minamata Convention.

20. Eisaku Toda then took over to present the individual mandates emerging from the decisions, based also on the letter from Ms. Stankiewicz. Starting with decision MC-5/1 on related to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, the mandate from the COP-5 to the Secretariat includes the gathering

of information on the needs and priorities regarding the effects of mercury pollution on the health, livelihood, culture and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. With regards to decision MC-5/2 on mercury supply sources and trade, the mandates relate to the development of guidance to assist parties in identifying, managing, and reducing mercury trade from primary mercury mining, as well as updating the existing guidance on stocks and gathering experience and challenges in implementing the trade related provisions of the Minamata Convention. Decision MC-5/3 focuses on global supply, trade and use of mercury compounds intends to consider whether mercury compounds should be under the convention obligations.

21. Moving forward, Mr. Toda highlighted decisions MC-5/4 and MC-5/5, respectively, on Amendments to Annexes A and B (i.e. on dental amalgam and addition of products to the list of products to be phased-out) and preparations of a report on cosmetics, outlining the process under which parties and stakeholders may submit information on the challenges in preventing the manufacture, import and export of mercury-added cosmetics. The compilation of and information on the economic and technical feasibility of mercury-free catalysts in VCM production was also mentioned per decision MC-5/6.

22. With regards to ASGM, decision MC-5/7 requests the Secretariat to develop a supplemental guidance on the effective engagement and participation of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of NAPs. On mercury emissions (Article 8) and waste management, decisions MC-5/8 and MC-5/10, respectively, call for (i) the submission of information on experience in using the BAT/BEP guidance on mercury emissions and submission of information from Parties on their waste management regulations and programmes by 31 October 2024 and (ii) the submission of data and information on the effectiveness of the threshold for waste contaminated with mercury in protecting human health and the environment, including challenges and experiences related to its use.

23. Other decisions, including MC-5/14 (first effectiveness evaluation of the Minamata Convention), MC-5/15 (gender action plan), and MC-5/17 (contribution of the Minamata Convention to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework) would also benefit from contribution and expertise from the Partnership Areas. Mr. Toda reiterated invitations to the audience to share inputs that could contribute to the effective implementation of the above-mentioned decisions, also announcing several calls for information that may be circulated during the year in preparation for COP-6.

Item 6

Future work of the Partnership: exploring opportunities for cross-cutting collaboration on a) Trade and flow, b) Biodiversity, climate change and mercury, and c) any other topic

24. Rodges Ankrah introduced the envisaged cross-cutting topics for future work in the context of the Partnership, namely: (a) trade and flow, (b) biodiversity, climate change and mercury; and (c) other topics raised by the audience.

25. Members of the PAG subsequently exchanged and shared ideas, and resulting key outcomes included the followings:

- (i) **Trade and flows:** Kenneth Davis recalled various activities and initiatives, including reports, projects, and declarations (i.e., the Bali declaration at COP-4). The UNEP supply, Trade and Demand report provided a useful baseline on the topic; more recently, some of the mandates and decisions of COP-5 relate to trade, specifically the report on trade and compounds as well as the development of a guidance document on trade in primary mining. In terms of projects, Mr. Davis highlighted the GEF-funded project on trade to be started soon in Latin America and the Caribbean region, and the concept for a trade project in the Asia-Pacific region currently in development. Moving forward, Eisaku Toda provided an overview of trade related activities under the Minamata Convention. He emphasized the development of the trade, supply, and demand report for the effectiveness evaluation, but also the request from the COP-5 to further investigate the trade, supply, and demand of mercury compounds. Peter Maxson then mentioned some of the issues that may need to be raised during further discussions on mercury compounds, including the identification of key mercury compounds, the potential trade of certain compounds that could be converted again in elemental mercury, and other related issues.
- (ii) **Biodiversity, climate change and mercury:** Imelda Dossou Etui presented the progress made on the Global Literature Review on ASGM and biodiversity. She highlighted key findings of the review, which investigated over 100 documents as well as the 27 National

Action Plans published by July 2023. Key observations were made between ASGM and biodiversity, including three key ASGM regions (i.e., Africa, Asia, and Latin America), the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and Protected Areas, deforestation, land degradation, chemicals pollution, alterations in water turbidity. As a support to the implementation of both the Minamata Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity, recommendations arising from the work included the improvement of policy frameworks, the use of mapping tools to visualize ASGM impacts on biodiversity, and the promotion of restorative actions for mine closure and increased communication and awareness-raising on the topic. As discussions moved forward, it was suggested to further explore formal interactions between the climate change and the Minamata Conventions. The COP-5's⁶ decision on international cooperation and coordination was welcomed, such as the opportunity for the Minamata Convention Secretariat to be an observer at meetings of the United Nations Climate Change Conferences and a request for the Minamata Secretariat to continue fostering engagements with the Secretariats of the Biological Diversity and Climate Change Convention. Recommendations were also formulated towards the exploration of linkages between other mercury related sectors and biodiversity.

26. Following exchanges on biodiversity, climate change, and mercury, Mr. Ankrah invited participants to raise any additional topics, while informing the audience that further exchanges would be organized for more in-depth discussions on potential work of the Partnership Areas, including on the above-discussed cross-cutting topics moving forward. On that note, the audience was informed that PAHO had been conducting trainings and workshops on health, gender, and mercury for health service professionals with regards to the ASGM sector in Chaclacayo, Peru, in 2023. Additional sessions are expected to be held in January 2024.

Item 7

Improving the overall effectiveness of the Partnership in moving forward

27. Upon invitation from Mr. Rodges Ankrah, Mr. Ludovic Bernaudat shared the below introductory remarks for future discussions on the overall effectiveness of the Partnership.

- (i) In view of human resources adjustments, the Secretariat may experience a period of reduced support compared to engagement throughout previous years but should continue ensuring core functions of coordination of the Partnership.
- (ii) Along with human resources limitations, financial resources are also limited, which currently impacts the ability to organize in-person gatherings including PAG meetings and other costly activities.

28. Moving forward, Mr. Bernaudat provided the audience with the following suggestions to overcome the current situation and ensure the partnership's engagement in the implementation of COP-5's decisions:

- (i) Co-leads may fully coordinate the organisation of their Partnership Area meetings, including events initiated within their area of work. Should it be useful, the Secretariat may share checklists and guidance to support the organization of events.
- (ii) Partnership Areas are also encouraged to identify financing opportunities to further support their activities, as well as develop communication materials to share relevant information among their partners.
- (iii) The Secretariat would provide limited support to events and meeting organized by its areas of work, however, would continue leading the organization of events, webinars, and other activities it has initiated, including work on cross-cutting topics in line with the PAG meetings' decisions, among others.

29. With regards to the activities report, recommendation was made in favour of the synchronization of the reporting to the PAG with the reporting cycle to the COP meetings, with a reduced format for the intermediate year reporting.

⁶COP-5 INF document: Analysis of the mutually supportive implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework | Minamata Convention on Mercury

30. Finally, Mr. Bernaudat and the Mr. Ankrah reiterated the objective of continuing the discussions in the course of 2024, encouraging the audience to further share suggestions and ideas on how to prioritize current capacities and improve the overall functioning of the partnership moving forward.

Item 8

Overview of preparations for the sixteenth International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant (21 to 26 July 2024, Cape Town, South Africa)

31. Upon invitation by Mr. Rodges Ankrah, Mr. Lynwill Martin (South African Weather Service), member of the executive committee of the sixteenth International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant (ICMGP16), shared the latest developments on the ongoing preparations for the Conference. He informed the audience that the event is scheduled to take place in-person in Cape Town, South Africa, from 21 to 26 July 2024, on the topic “from Minamata to Africa and beyond”.

32. In recalling the long-standing collaboration between the ICMGP and the Partnership (especially the areas of work on ASGM, mercury from coal combustion, and mercury air transport and fate research), Mr. Martin invited the audience, including Partnership Areas Co-leads to submit abstracts for special sessions, as the submission deadline has been postponed to 31 January 2024. Further information, including on registrations, are available, and will be updated as deemed appropriate on the website of the conference⁷.

33. Building on Mr. Martin’s intervention, the opportunity of holding a workshop on the partnership in the margins of the ICMGP16, as part of the extra workshops envisaged, was raised and may be further explored in the coming weeks before confirmation to the Executive Committee. Topics of the other additional workshops include biomonitoring, air monitoring, and waste management and contamination issues for which expressions of interest from relevant stakeholders would be most welcome. Mr. Ankrah reiterated the opportunity the ICMGP16 would offer to bring to participants’ awareness objectives and activities the Partnership and its areas of work.

Item 9

Other matters

34. The PAG did not raise any other matters. Considering the current situation of the Partnership, further reflection may be needed for the planning of the next PAG meeting, the date and format of which would be communicated in at a future date.

Item 10

Closure of the meeting

35. In his closing remarks, Mr. Ankrah reiterated his thanks to all as participants and partners whose work is making a tremendous difference. Mr. Ankrah recalled the need for further exchanges over the course of the year on topics not yet fully addressed, such as the resources question that would require further reflection.

36. Before handing the floor to the Partnership Secretariat, he then thanked the leads, Co-leads and all participants for their time and contribution to the Partnership and the meeting, which are essential to the work being done.

37. Following Mr. Ankrah’s words, Stephanie Laruelle also expressed the Secretariat’s gratitude for the very active participation during the meeting. She then recognized the wealth of topics to be covered, which therefore requires follow up discussions, notably in relation to the COP-5 decisions and other cross-cutting issues such as trade, biodiversity, and the improvement of the overall effectiveness of the partnership. She also reminded everyone that, as a follow up to the meeting, the Secretariat will share the letter received from Monika Stankiewicz as well as the activities report of the partnership once finalized.

38. After season’s greetings, the meeting was closed at 4:00 p.m. CET.

⁷ <https://www.mercurycapetown.com>