

“Reduction of demand for mercury in mercury containing products in Bangladesh”

The project was undertaken under the umbrella of the UNEP Mercury in Products Partnership. It was one of the projects prioritized by the products partnership based on criteria set. The project supported the Government of Bangladesh in its effort towards the ratification and early implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

Project specific objectives:

- a. Identify mercury-added product categories of concern at the national level, investigate their trade and waste management, and identify opportunities for substitution by mercury-free alternatives;
- b. Assist the government to understand opportunities to control the import of mercury-added products and to promote mercury-free alternatives in accordance with the Minamata Convention on Mercury;
- c. Create awareness on the hazards and risks of mercury among decision-makers, relevant stakeholders, and the general public, in particular women; and
- d. Strengthen capacities for the environmentally sound management of end-of-life mercury-added products.

Activities Undertaken:

1. Literature review, desk study- review of Journals, Research papers, online information; assessment of current situation of Mercury containing products in Bangladesh
2. Conduct of baseline survey- data collection, key informant interview, compilation and analysis of information
3. Conduct of inception workshop
4. Consultation with decision makers, concerned government agencies (health, industry, customs) and stakeholders including suppliers and buyers of mercury added products (health care products, batteries, cosmetics)
5. Consultation with professionals of health sector to eliminate mercury devices (fever measuring thermometer, sphygmomanometers and dental amalgam)
6. Conduct of workshop with academe, research organizations and related individuals to discuss alternatives of mercury and waste management system
7. Development of IEC materials namely factsheets, sticker, poster, flyer (samples of IEC materials provided to UNEP)
8. Awareness raising activities especially in schools
9. Conduct of national workshop to disseminate study findings and project outcomes (with concerned stakeholders, government agencies and media)
10. Report writing

Photo documentation of above activities provided to UNEP

Project Outputs:

- a. Introduction of the project to the population, information dissemination, public awareness through print and online media, 70 participants: policy makers, professionals, stakeholders and media
- b. Report on mercury production, consumption, products and pollution in Bangladesh. The report has chapters on button cell batteries, pharmaceuticals, health & dental care, skin lightening cream and beauty products. Reports were

shared with concerned stakeholders, launching of the report, media exposure through online and print media, Sample size: 1200

- c. Introduction about the issue of mercury in health & dental care; Study related to healthcare and mercury pollution; Recommendations on introducing alternatives to existing mercury equipment available; Guidelines proposed on environmentally safe mercury waste disposal in hospitals; Suggestions to achieve international standards, policy commitment: Building mercury free network, 20 participants for consultations
- d. Discussion on ways to minimize industrial and commercial use of mercury, alternatives to mercury in industrial and commercial products, especially for button cell battery and beauty products; Awareness amongst the producers; Suggestions to achieve international standards; Commitment of the producers responsibilities
- e. Awareness created on alternatives of mercury; discussion and ideas shared for alternatives of mercury; discussion and involvement in formulation of guideline for regulative framework of mercury; indirect information dissemination; sharing of promotional materials and research report

The project enhanced cooperation between governmental and non-governmental organizations, between public and private parties and a common approach on the mercury phase out in Bangladesh. It identified major mercury added products and promoted the environmentally sound management of mercury-waste in Bangladesh. It provided information to the country's legislative council (Parliament) towards the ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.