

## Overview of Mercury Waste Management Project

Honourable Chief Guest, Mr. Hameed Ullah Jan Afridi, Federal Minister for Environment

Mr. Abid Ali, Joint Secretary (International Cooperation) & SAICM National Focal Point

Dr. Mario Yarto, UNEP Chemicals Expert, Mexico

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Assalam o Alaikum & good morning!

As you are kindly aware, this workshop is being organized by the International Cooperation Wing, Ministry of Environment with the support of UNEP's Chemicals Branch, Geneva. I would like to apprise you that Mercury is one of the serious global environmental issues. In this regard, UNEP's Governing Council had decided to assess mercury globally in 2002 and Pakistan was a part of this assessment. The assessment has revealed that Mercury is toxic chemical which is a potential threat to human life all over the globe. Keeping in view the gravity of the situation, UNEP's Governing Council has recognized the issue and decided to make Mercury's pilot inventory projects.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would like to recall that the 1<sup>st</sup> Workshop on National Consultation on Mercury was held at Islamabad in 2008 to prepare an inventory on the Mercury sources and releases in Pakistan. After the successful preparation of inventory of this project, UNEP has now recommended Pakistan along with two other regional countries to develop Mercury Waste Management Plan.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The instant workshop has brought together the representatives of Environmental Protection Agencies, line ministries, researchers, academia, industries and NGOs. The participants of the workshop will primarily identify the priorities areas and devise

a strategy to collect samples of human hair to be sent to the University of Aberdeen, UK for Mercury analysis. In this project, we will apply technical guidelines of the Basel Convention on Mercury waste particularly Chlor-alkali industry i.e. Ittehad Chemicals. We will also apply these guidelines in waste incineration as well as in dental amalgam.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

I hope that the learned participants will hold very useful discussions in the technical sessions of the workshop to develop pragmatic Mercury Waste Management Programme for Pakistan.

Thank you very much.