



UNEP Chemicals Branch Newsletter

June 2012

Division of Technology, Industry and Economics



Another busy year...

Another busy year for UNEP Chemicals Branch as we launch into a new biennium of work and prepare for major meetings! While the mercury negotiations keep us busy putting everything in place for the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in Punta del Este, much else is happening in the Chemicals Branch. This year we have several exciting publications that will be released including, the first Global Chemicals Outlook and the accompanying document, the Costs of Inaction on Sound Management of Chemicals. Additionally, along with the World Health Organization, we will be launching the State of the Science on Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals. All of these documents will inform the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management coming up 17-21 September 2012 in Nairobi. The work of the mercury partnership also continues with a new guidance and film on artisanal and small-scale gold mining to inform both policy makers and miners on means to move toward better and mercury free practices. We look forward to continuing to engage all partners in our work and to serve the needs of member states towards the 2020 goal of sound chemicals management.

*Tim Kasten, Head
Chemicals Branch, DTIE, UNEP*

Punta del Este ... the turning point in the negotiations on mercury ...

Negotiations on a legally binding instrument on mercury have travelled far: from Bangkok (PrepOEWG), Stockholm (INC1), Chiba (INC2), Nairobi (INC3) to Punta del Este (INC4). From Punta del Este the journey will continue to Geneva (INC5) and ultimately to Minamata in late 2013 for the Diplomatic Conference.

Expectations are high for progressive negotiations in Uruguay. Many hours have already been spent in translating the ambition set out in decision GC 25/5 to the current draft text of the instrument.

A busy intersessional period between INC3 and INC4 has produced promising results. A productive Expert Meeting on Financial Resources and Technical Assistance combined with constructive regional consultations have all contributed to a strengthened platform for the negotiations at INC4. The six days of negotiations will be intense, but also an opportunity for all delegates to experience the



Photo / Ignacio Naon

La Mano de Punta del Este

unique Uruguayan hospitality, culture and food. The Government of Uruguay has provided us all with the settings required to achieve progress, and Punta del Este in the future will be a symbol for success and progress towards realizing the mercury instrument.

Supporting African countries in developing mercury release inventories

UNEP Chemicals Branch is assisting 10 countries in Africa to prepare mercury inventories that identify priority sources and releases. The work is being undertaken with financial assistance from Norway and UNITAR and is managed by Groundwork South Africa.

The participating countries - Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia, are using the new version of the "UNEP Toolkit for identification and quantification of mercury releases" following a training workshop held in Nairobi in September 2011. Nine countries have now submitted draft inventories and, with technical support from UNEP, are well on their way towards finalizing their work. The information provided by the inventories helps to identify priority mercury sources and thus forms a preliminary baseline for national mercury management activities. The results may also be useful in informing national and regional policy-making towards the current negotiations.



Photo / Luca Galuzzi

UNEP is currently developing a proposal for GEF funding to continue this support to countries in Africa. The proposal will support further, and more detailed, inventory efforts in key sectors and assist participating countries to develop action plans to manage the most pressing problems.

Further need for reducing risks posed by lead and cadmium



Photo / Juan Calceño

Solar Lead-acid battery

In line with UNEP Governing Council decisions, UNEP DTIE Chemicals Branch is moving forward on addressing risks posed by lead and cadmium.

We are therefore:

- 1) continuing to promote and facilitate the work in relation to the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV) and the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint (GAELP),
- 2) continuing activities on lead and cadmium at all levels, especially in developing countries, particularly in Africa, and countries with economies in transition including activities such as capacity-building and awareness-raising activities and

the environmental and human health problems associated with exposure to these two metals, the initiative to coordinate global efforts to achieve the environmentally sound management of lead and cadmium batteries throughout their life cycles, and the deepening of the scientific basis of existing studies; 3) initiating a partnership on lead and cadmium; and 4) compiling available information, and making this information available through the clearing-house mechanism of SAICM, on the possibility of replacing lead or cadmium with less hazardous substances or techniques and on techniques for emission abatement. The second meeting of the GAELP will be hosted in Bangkok, Thailand from 9-11 July 2012.

In addition, key stakeholders will be meeting in Geneva, Switzerland from 22-24 October 2012 to discuss key actions to be taken into consideration for the partnership on lead and cadmium.

Did you know that...

the major use of lead is in energy storage batteries, accounting for 78% of reported global consumption?
and a growing proportion of refined cadmium consumption accounts for 81% of the total for Nickel Cadmium batteries?

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4th Meeting of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership Advisory Group

The Overarching Framework of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership establishes a Partnership Advisory Group (PAG) to encourage the work of the partnership areas. The 4th meeting of the PAG will take place from 27-28 September 2012 in Rome, immediately following the International Conference on Heavy Metals in the Environment. The 25 member Group is comprised of the partnership area leads, partners nominated by the partnership areas and other representatives.

Welcome to Jacob Duer

Mr. Jacob Duer joined the Chemicals Branch as the Coordinator for the Mercury Negotiations Team in January 2012. Mr. Duer continues also to serve as the Chief of the Strategic Policy and Facilitation Branch with the Division of Environmental Law and Conventions. Mr. Duer has more than 15 years of experience with the United Nations. Before his transfer to Geneva, he worked for seven years at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya on a range of environmental policy issues and on UNEP's engagement with Multilateral Environmental Agreements.



Mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants in India



Photo / Gurnar Futsaeter

Coal-fired power plant outside New Dehli, India

UNEP, with financing from the European Commission and the U.S. Department of State, is supporting India's Ministry of Environment and Forests and its Central Institute of Mining and Fuel Research (CIMFR) to develop a mercury emissions inventory for the coal-fired power sector and to characterize the sector with regard to pollution control technology used. CIMFR has analyzed samples of Indian coals used in power generation and measured mercury concentrations in flue gas from coal-fired power plants. A report will be available later this year.

UNEP will also support work to demonstrate how to optimize existing pollution control technology in order to reduce mercury emissions. The performance of an electrostatic precipitator (ESP), the most commonly used pollution control device used in India, will be evaluated in order to maximize the mercury it captures as a result of improved operation and maintenance practices. Mercury will be measured before and after implementation of improved practices. Training of Indian experts in the use of analyzing equipment will also be an important element of the project, including participation in the measurement campaigns and the arrangement of a capacity-building workshop.

Mercury Free Medical Devices: safe, accurate and affordable alternatives exist

The World Health Organization (WHO) and Health-Care-Without-Harm (HCWH) are contributing to the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership through the Global Mercury Free Initiative. This Initiative aims to eliminate mercury-added fever thermometers and sphygmomanometers in health care facilities; and to promote substitution with safe, accurate and economically viable alternatives. Part of the strategy is to build capacity in large cities for phase-out action. Policies on mercury phase-out include legislation and regulatory measures such as import bans of mercury medical devices, awareness raising among health professionals, and promoting availability of mercury free medical devices. Transition success has been demonstrated in both developed and developing countries. Recently, UNEP Chemicals commissioned the Lowell Centre in Massachusetts to conduct a

study on the “Economics of Conversion to Mercury Free Medical Devices”. The study revealed that the incremental cost in the transition is minimal. Market demand and regulation trigger innovation towards mercury free products. This could be an opportunity for manufacturers to shift into the production of mercury free products. The study is available at http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/Portals/9/Mercury/UNEP%20Economics%20of%20Conversion%20to%20Mercury-free%20Report%20Final%20102611_finaldraft_wAPP.pdf More information on mercury free products is available at <http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/Mercury/PrioritiesforAction/Products/Reports/tabid/4513/language/en-US/Default.aspx>



Blood pressure measurement device for low resource settings

Guidance Documents Available on Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining

UNEP, in collaboration with the Global Mercury Partnership, has recently prepared four documents to support government efforts in reducing mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM). The documents are available on the UNEP web-site:

- Guidance Document on the Formulation of National Strategic Action Plans for Reducing Mercury Use in ASGM (English, French, Spanish).

- Technical Guidance Document on ASGM providing examples of existing technologies that can reduce mercury use and emissions in ASGM communities. This document will assist governments with the development of mercury reduction programmes and is also being designed as an easy-to-access source of basic education regarding ASGM.
- A Review of Formalization approaches in the ASGM sector, based on experiences in selected countries. This document highlights essential elements of the formalization processes including institutional considerations, legislation development or reform and financing.
- Environment for Development Perspectives: Mercury Use in ASGM explores the potential environmental and development co-benefits from elimination, reduction and safer use of mercury.

Welcome to Leonor Alvarado

Ms. Leonor Alvarado joined the SAICM Secretariat in February 2011. Ms. Alvarado previously held several posts within the Canadian Public Service. She is a Programme Manager with over 20 years experience, including supporting the Joint Public Advisory Committee of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation. She led the Children's Environmental Health Department at the Canadian Institute of Child Health where she developed awareness raising programmes for parents and caregivers on the risks of exposure to hazardous substances. We take this opportunity to give her a long overdue welcome!



Interactive Process Optimization Guidance (iPOG)

The iPOG is a computer programme developed to assess mercury control options in coal-fired power plants. The iPOG computer programme uses basic technical data on coal and plant characteristics to estimate mercury emissions likely to be emitted by a coal-fired power plant. The user can “play” with options, such as coal blends and control technologies, to compare the effectiveness of different options for mercury control. For further information, please visit: <http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/Mercury/PrioritiesforAction/Coalcombustion/ProcessOptimizationGuidanceDocument/tabid/4873/Default.aspx>

Chemicals Branch collaborates with Secretariat of Stockholm Convention on DDT Global Alliance and PCBs Elimination Network

At its fifth meeting (25-29 April 2011) the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention decided to transition the leadership of the “PCBs Elimination Network” and the “Global Alliance for the Development and Deployment of Products, Methods and Strategies as Alternatives to DDT for Disease Vector Control” from the Convention Secretariat to entities whose mandate is better suited for its implementation. Chemicals Branch is now working with the Secretariat to transition these activities.

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UNEP Chemicals is a Branch of UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE).

The UNEP Chemicals Branch Newsletter is published periodically to give readers world-wide an update of activities to promote the environmentally sound management of chemicals and so help protect public health and the environment.

UNEP promotes sustainable development by catalysing vital global actions and building national capacity for the sound management of chemicals through information exchange, training, and capacity building.

Inquiries and editorial correspondence should be sent to: chemicals@unep.org.

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A list of publications is available from UNEP Chemicals Branch and on the Web (www.chem.unep.ch). Publications are free of charge.

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International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM3)

Chemical Safety for Sustainable Development - Nairobi, 17-21 September 2012

With only 8 years left to the 2020 goal, SAICM is entering a crucial phase in its implementation. The third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management will mark an important milestone in the global efforts to protect human health and the environment from the detrimental effects of unsound chemicals management.

The first report on Progress in the Implementation of SAICM will take stock of the progress made since 2006, based on the 20 indicators

adopted by the Conference at its second session. The Conference will also consider the adoption of a strategy for strengthening the engagement of the health sector in implementation of the Strategic Approach. Emerging policy issues, new activities for addition to the SAICM Global Plan of Action, and the future financing options for the chemicals and wastes cluster are some of the issues that will be discussed, with emphasis on identifying the gaps and areas of action that need to be addressed to reach the 2020 goal of sound chemicals management.

State of the Science of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs), 2012

In 2002 IPCS reported on Endocrine Disruptors. UNEP, with WHO and international experts, now updates the findings regarding exposures and effects of EDCs. A separate Summary for Decision Makers provides key messages regarding our understanding of the potential impact of these chemicals on human health and wildlife, including during development in early life. The document is scheduled to be released in June 2012 and will be available on www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/UNEPsWork/EDC/tabid/79616/Default.aspx

Chemicals in Products update

As reported in the last Chemicals Branch newsletter, since 2009 UNEP has been leading a Chemicals in Products (CiP) project. The CiP project addresses the need for information on chemical content in products to be exchanged to enable sound management decisions for these chemicals. Through the project's research of existing information systems and stakeholder needs (and gaps) for chemicals content information, it has developed recommendations designed to facilitate the exchange of this vital information. These recommendations were considered and broadly approved at the first meeting of the SAICM Open-ended Working Group in November, 2011 and will be further discussed at SAICM-ICCM3 in September 2012.

Where to next? UNEP recommends that the multi-stakeholder dialogue to date be continued and broadened to bring in experience on exchange and use of chemical content information from specific product sectors. This policy issue has continued to grow in importance for numerous sectors and stakeholders, and calls for an efficient and effective approach for access to chemical content information are widespread. UNEP has maintained active outreach to a wide range of product sector actors. Their experience will provide important contributions to discussions on the many stakeholder needs for CiP information and in identifying appropriate approach(es) to this emerging and evolving policy issue.

Guidance and training for the sound management of chemicals

UNEP has developed a guidance tool entitled "Guidance on the Development of Legal and Institutional Infrastructures for Sound Management of Chemicals and Measures for Recovering Costs of National Administration (LIRA)" together with a training package to assist countries in strengthening national legislation and institutional setups for achieving sound management of chemicals, including measures for financing necessary national administration support. Countries interested in using the guidance in their national legislative process can contact the Chemicals Branch or download it from www.chem.unep.ch/unepaicm/mainstreaming/default.htm.