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Dead Sea, Jordan, 8 March 2016

Draft Report of the Seventh Meeting of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership Advisory Group

1. Opening of the meeting

1. The seventh meeting of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership Advisory Group (PAG) was held at the King Hussein Bin Talal Convetion Centre at the Dead Sea in Jordan on Tuesday, 8 March 2016. The meeting was opened at 9 a.m. by Mr. Achim Halpaap, representative of the secretariat of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership

2. Mr. Halpaap welcomed the participants on behalf of UNEP. He noted the uniqueness of the Global Mercury Partnership and thanked the participants for the impressive work conducted since the last Partnership Advisory Group meeting as stated in the report on activities (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/PAG.7/3).

3. He proceeded by commenting on the changing role of the Partnership. While having previously mainly focused on supporting the negotiations to establish the Minamata Convention, the challenge now would be to reorient the Partnership towards supporting implementation. Among other things, this would involve moving from communication on the sound management of mercury to mercury knowledge management.

4. Mr. Halpaap ended his intervention by thanking Mr. Atle Fretheim (Norway) for his able chairmanship of the Partnership, who would step down at the end of the meeting. He also thanked Mitch Cuna (Philippines) for resuming his role as co-chair of the Partnership after an academic sabbatical.

5. Mr. Fretheim continued by welcoming all participants to the meeting and reiterated the uniqueness and importance of the Partnership. He also thanked all participants for their contributions towards the Partnership areas, noting that this was voluntary work on top of the participants' regular activities.

6. He proceeded by introducing and summarizing the meeting's agenda, noting that time was allocated for questions and comments. He also stated that the issue on resources and funding would be raised during the meeting, and looked forward to hearing the participants' views and ideas on this matter. Mr. Fretheim ended his intervention by stating that he looked forward to a fruitful meeting.

7. Mr. Cuna welcomed the participants to the meeting and stated his regret of not having been able to attend the last Partnership Advisory Group Meeting in Bangkok in November 2014 due to his sabbatical leave. He stated that he looked forward to the presentations on the activities of the Partnership. He also noted the limited time of the meeting and the need to stay focused during the discussions

8. Before proceeding to the next agenda item, the co-chairs conducted a *tour de table* to introduce all participants present at the meeting.

2. Organizational matters

(a) Adoption of the agenda

9. The meeting agreed to adopt the agenda as set out in document UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/PAG.7/1.

(b) Organization of work

10. The meeting agreed to conduct its business from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, 8 March 2016.

3. Review of the overall progress and activities of the Partnership

11. The floor was then given to Mr. Eisaku Toda of the Secretariat of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership. Mr. Toda introduced himself to the participants and stated that while he had had a good understanding of the work of the Partnership prior to taking up his new post at UNEP, this was his first Partnership Advisory Group meeting.

12. Mr. Toda then proceeded to deliver the Secretariat's presentations for the meeting, starting with the general introduction to the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership. The presentation started with a brief history of the Partnership, with a focus on its role in supporting countries with technical assistance and guidance in ratifying and implementing the Minamata Convention. Attention was drawn to the seminal publications on mercury of the Partnership and of UNEP, the first one being the original Global Mercury Assessment published in 2002. This publication was succeeded by an updated version in 2008, and the latest version that was published in 2013. Mr. Toda drew attention to the UNEP Governing Council decision to update the report (Decision 27/12), and a revised assessment is due for completion in 2018.

13. Mr. Toda, noting that the current meeting took place back-to-back with the seventh session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Mercury, drew attention to the fact that the Partnership predates the process to establish a global legally binding treaty on mercury and the Partnership's role in shaping that process by providing countries with scientific and technical background that helped shape the INC negotiations.

14. He then proceeded to take stock of the current status of the Partnership. Mr. Toda reiterated its overall goal, namely to protect human health and the global environment from anthropogenic releases of mercury. The Partnership is open to all interested stakeholders sharing this goal, and as of December 2015 there are 149 Partners involved in the Partnership's activities. Of these, 27 are Governments, 8 are intergovernmental organizations, 59 are non-governmental organizations and 55 Partners represent other stakeholders.

15. Mr. Toda then gave a brief overview of the Partnership Areas, the leads and co-leads of which would be presenting their activities later on during the meeting. The Partnership Areas consist of artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM), cement, chlor-alkali, coal combustion, products, supply and storage, transport and fate, and waste management.

16. Following then to give a brief overview of the role of the Partnership Advisory Group, Mr. Toda highlighted that the Group, among other things, promote collaboration and synergies among Partnership Areas, review the Partnership Area business plans, and provide strategic direction for the work of the Partnership. The Partnership Secretariat, responsible for the overall coordination of activities, is located in the Chemicals and Waste Branch of UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics. The current staff at the Secretariat are Programme Officers Mr. Gunnar Futsaeter, Ms. Desiree Narvaez and Mr. Kenneth Davis. Mr. Eiskau Toda is the head of the Secretariat, and the Team Leader of the Technology and Metals Partnership Team in the Chemicals and Waste Branch.

17. Moving on to the status of ratifications the Minamata Convention, Mr. Toda reminded the meeting that the Convention had 128 Signatories and 23 future Parties. He emphasized the important role to be played by the Partnership in assisting countries in ratifying the Convention to ensure swift entry into force, as well as ongoing assistance to promote effective implementation.

18. He then proceeded to elaborate on UNEP's contribution to the implementation of activities under the Partnership. In the context of the ASGM Partnership Area, UNEP has implemented a technical assistance project in Indonesia on ASGM, funded by Norway. This was a follow-up on a project previously funded by the US EPA and involved establishing a training center in Java for artisanal miners and assistance with the national action planning on ASGM in Indonesia. The project was completed in early 2016 and there are plans for further work on the development on Indonesia's National Action Plan (NAP) on ASGM.

19. Another UNEP-led project, implemented by UNITAR's Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT), was a remote sensing project in which the land cover change from ASGM in central Kalimantan, Indonesia, was analyzed from 2005 to 2015. The project's activities detected dramatic increases in deforestation related to ASGM and highlighted the complex relationship between logging, agriculture and ASGM in the region. The report is available on the Partnership web site.

20. A further major activity undertaken by UNEP in relation to the ASGM Partnership Area was the development of the document entitled *Developing a National Action Plan to Reduce, and Where Feasible, Eliminate Mercury Use in Artisanal and Small Scale Gold Mining*. This draft guidance was developed by members of the Partnership under the direction of the ASGM Partnership Area leads and UNEP, and was shared with a wide range of stakeholders for comment during 2015. The document, translated into the six UN languages, was to be presented at INC7 as meeting document UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/17 for consideration and recommendation for countries to use when preparing their national action plans on ASGM. Mr. Toda stated that the development of this guidance serves as a model for future cooperation between the Partnership Areas and the Minamata Convention to produce technical guidance documents.

21. In terms of implementing ASGM National Action Plan projects, UNEP will assist countries to ensure the quality and consistency of their NAPs. There are currently plans for UNEP to assist with NAP projects in 10 African and Latin American countries, where funds will come from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as part of the UNEP-implemented NAPs. In the execution of these project components, there will be close cooperation and collaboration with the ASGM Partnership Area to secure the necessary technical expertise, as well as an emphasis on information sharing and knowledge management.

22. Mr. Toda moved on to present the progress made within the Products Partnership Area. One major activity was the East African Dental Amalgam Phase-down Project in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, phase I and II of which is being implemented by UNEP, WHO and national project coordinators from both the health

and environment sectors. This project is a response to the challenges faced by developing countries to phase down the use of mercury amalgam in dentistry, and the project's activities include oral health promotion, awareness raising, capacity building and training of dental personnel and waste managers, as well as the promotion of environmentally sound management of waste mercury. Project outputs include the training of 196 dental personnel, 9 clinics implementing Best Management Practices for mercury waste, development and dissemination of awareness raising materials, and available national trade and waste surveys on dental amalgam and its alternatives. .

23. In the context of dental amalgam phase down, a GEF project is also proposed in the three countries, as well as Ethiopia and Zambia. This project involves the development of a global guidance document on the phase down of dental amalgam, a training module for the dental sector and information on insurance policies.

24. Further projects within the Products Partnership Area included projects demonstrating the improved management of mercury-added products and waste in Madagascar and Burkina Faso. While the Burkina Faso project only started implementation in April 2015, the Madagascar project resulted in general awareness raising on the issue, an inventory of consumption of mercury-added products, information and data on mercury products supply and trade, improved environmentally sound management of mercury waste, as well as a customs policy on the trade in mercury-added products. Among other things, the project resulted in Madagascar ratifying the Minamata Convention.

25. On a global level, the en.lighten initiative supported 48 countries in their shift towards energy efficient lighting. Among other things, the project resulted in avoiding more than 1.3 tonnes of annual mercury being emitted to the environment.

26. In relation to the Waste Management Partnership Area, UNEP implemented a mercury waste storage and disposal project in the Caribbean region, involving Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Commenced in August 2015 with the participation of CARICOM, the project involves the creation of interagency committees, the review of regulatory frameworks, the establishment of inventories of waste streams and the assessment of management options.

27. Mr. Toda then proceeded to present the Practical Sourcebook on Mercury Waste Storage and Disposal, which was launched on 2 October 2015 during a side event at the fourth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management in Geneva, Switzerland. The sourcebook was developed by an expert group on mercury waste management and is consistent with the Basel Convention technical guidelines of mercury waste. Resources are currently being raised for its dissemination through UNEP regional offices and the Basel and Stockholm Convention regional centers.

28. Within the Coal Combustion Partnership Area, a project on mercury emissions from the coal-fired power sector in Southeast Asia is currently underway in Vietnam and Thailand, with the expansion to include Indonesia yet to be confirmed. A GEF project to demonstrate mercury emission reductions from power plants in Vietnam and other countries is also being developed.

29. Having finalized the presentation on UNEP's activities in relation to the Partnership Areas, Mr. Toda continued to elaborate on the discussions that were had during the partnership area leads meeting that took place in Jeju Island, the Republic of Korea, on 16 June 2015 including discussion on re-structuring of the Partnership Areas. He noted one comment on it being challenging to only have one Partnership Area on mercury emissions, as the competencies related to the reduction of mercury emissions from the coal, cement and non-ferrous metals sectors are different. Moreover, such restructurings should also consider the expertise, the resources and the focus of work of the Partnership Areas and should be optimized to facilitate cross-area collaboration. A flexible structure of the Partnership Areas would be preferable. Additionally, the close collaboration between the Waste Management Partnership Areas on the one hand, and

the Products and Supply and Storage Areas on the other, should be encouraged. He finally noted the need for more discussions on the topic as several Partnership Areas have additional issues in common. These views are summarized in the report from the Jeju meeting, presented as document UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/PAG.7/INF.

30. Finalizing his presentation, Mr. Toda outlined the other activities UNEP had undertaken to support the Partnership. These included work on updating and improving the UNEP Mercury Toolkit and the e-learning course, Mercury:Learn, that has been developed for the UNEP Mercury Toolkit in collaboration with UNITAR. Moreover, he outlined the Secretariat's work on updating the Global Mercury Assessment for publication in 2018.

31. Mr. Thomas Groeneveld (USA), lead of the Products Partnership Area, then proceeded to present the work conducted within his Area since PAG6. He recalled the overarching goals and priorities of the Products Area, which are to a) encourage development and substitution of mercury-free products, incorporate lifecycle approach to manufacturing, use, and disposal/storage of mercury-containing products, b) encourage and implement environmentally sound management of mercury waste, by following a lifecycle management approach, c) improve global awareness on mercury exposure, use, production, trade, disposal, and release through exchange and dissemination of information, d) increase engagement of scientific and business communities to gather and disseminate information, e) for all categories, encourage and support the promulgation of laws, standards, and regulations that would prohibit or restrict importation of mercury-containing products. In parallel, his Partnership Area seeks to support the implementation of the relevant sections of the Minamata Convention.

32. He continued by outlining the primary roles of the Products Partnership Area, which are to act as a clearinghouse for technical and educational materials and to facilitate the exchange of information. Its areas of interest are to understand the changing dynamics of the global marketplace for mercury added products, explore ways to improve the Partnership's outreach and communication, and to identify opportunities to reduce or eliminate the use of mercury in products.

33. Mr. Groeneveld proceeded by outlining the currents projects being implemented by the Partnership Area, which include a project to replace mercury-added products and to manage mercury-added product waste in Madagascar and Burkina Faso in collaboration with Norway Overseas Development Assistance. The project involves establishing an inventory of mercury-added products and their alternatives, studying the imports of mercury-added products and their alternatives, and conducting awareness-raising and trainings on the environmentally sound management on mercury-added products and the Minamata Convention. This project helped the Government of Madagascar to improve its control of mercury-added products and enabled it to recommend mercury-free alternatives, as well as catalyzing the Government to ratify the Minamata Convention.

34. He moved on to present the East African Dental Amalgam Phase-Down project, which involves Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda and is implemented in collaboration with Norway Overseas Development Assistance, World Dental Federation and WHO. The project focuses on capacity building related to mercury toxicity, oral health and preventative dentistry, and the use of mercury-free alternatives. During the first phase of the project, 196 dental personnel were trained, 3 dental amalgam separators were installed per country as part of environmentally sound management of waste and identified trade flows including the origins of the dental amalgam materials imported. The work of phase one of the project is summarized in the brochure "Promoting the Phase Down of Dental Amalgam in Developing Countries", and the second phase, currently under development, will focus quantifying the mercury removed from the environment through the environmentally sound management of dental amalgam.

35. Mr. Groeneveld highlighted the "US EPA Strategy to Address Mercury-Containing Products" in light of a changing global marketplace. The Strategy aims to foster capability to assess and prioritize products strategies, encourage Partners and stakeholders to recommend and share documents, and operate as open forum for emerging or "next step" areas of interest

36. Mr. Groeneveld continued his presentation by focusing on the importance of outreach and communication. He commended the work on the Partnership Area profiles that were created in 2015, and agreed with previous statements that improving communications and outreach are key goals for the Partnership. In this regard, the USEPA is considering to dedicate one full time member of staff for the organizing and communicating information related to the sound management of mercury-added products.

37. Mr. Groeneveld also mentioned the idea of using an eco-label with a simple message to consumers that indicates that the product has been produced according to sound environmental practices. This approach has been taken with other products. Under this initiative, the US EPA could identify and prioritize areas of concern and opportunity, and conduct outreach activities to involve industry, consumers and other relevant stakeholders. With regards to this initiative, Mr. Groeneveld welcomed any interested Partnership Areas to get involved to develop the idea and submit proposals.

38. Following his presentation, Mr. Groeneveld was asked about the aim of the US EPA communications and outreach work in terms of the target audience. He replied that no outreach information had thus far been published and that the idea was for a web-based platform of communication. With regards to its final design, he was open to many ideas. He said that it was possible to design the site as a complement to the current Global Mercury Partnership website. Another possibility would be to create a mirror site at the US EPA end and to forward internet traffic to UNEP, or even to host their own website.

39. Asked on the development of the eco-label, Mr. Groeneveld replied that at present such labels are not directly relevant to mercury and that the current US EPA label is more applicable to other chemicals in products such as solvents and cleaners. However, he reiterated his support for the creation of a label which takes the mercury content of a product into account that is developed together with industry actors.

40. One participant referred to examples where the industry had changed its environmental practices in response to outreach from environmental interest organizations, and asked if the US EPA will conduct such outreach to manufacturers of mercury-added products. Mr. Groeneveld replied that this could be included in the new US EPA strategy and is currently being investigated. An upcoming report would address this matter.

41. The meeting then proceeded with the first presentation from the Supply and Storage Partnership Areas, delivered by Ms. Ana Garcia Gonzalez (Spain) and Ms. Judith Torres (Uruguay). They commenced by reiterating the objectives of their Partnership Area, namely the minimization and, where feasible, elimination of mercury supply, the removal of mercury from the market by environmentally sound storage and disposal, and reduction of the amount of mercury present in the environment.

42. They continued by highlighting the priorities of the Supply and Storage Partnership Areas. These are to work with Governments and relevant stakeholders to reduce or eliminate the production and export of mercury, to establish national mercury inventories and assess any potential illegal sources of mercury supply; to work with key industrial sectors, including the chlor-alkali and non-ferrous metals industries, to obtain knowledge on by-product mercury resulting from their activities; and to assess solutions for the environmentally sound management and storage of mercury through studies of national infrastructure and the development of improved methods.

43. They proceeded to present on a demonstration project on technologies for mercury stabilization in waste from chlor-alkali plants. The chlor-alkali waste originated from the private sector in Uruguay and was processed in two waste management centers in Spain. The National Technological Center for Mercury Decontamination stabilized and microencapsulated the mercury in a sulfur polymeric matrix, while the Cement International Technologies facility stabilized the mercury with sulfur microcements. Detailed information on the performance of the two methods were provided in the presentation. In summary, a 90% reduction of mercury leaching was achieved by both techniques. The final monolite could be sent to industrial landfills according to Uruguayan legislation.

44. Other activities of the Partnership Area included participation in the *Sub-regional workshop for enhancing capacities for environmentally sound management of mercury wastes*, organized by the BRS Secretariat and BCCC LAC in Montevideo, Uruguay, from 17 to 20 November 2015, as well as participation in the *Training on mercury management and remediation of contaminated sites* workshop organized in Almadén, Spain, from 18 to 19 November 2015 by the EU Horizon 2020 program and UNEP MEDPOL in collaboration of the Spanish Centers SCPRAC and CTNDM and the Ministry of Environment. Moreover, the Government of Spain conducted a global study on mercury supply, trade and other relevant mercury activities in the scope of the Supply and Storage Partnership Area and the first draft of the study was finalized in January 2016.

45. The second presentation from the Supply and Storage Partnership Area on the *Preparatory project to facilitate the implementation of the Minamata Converion in Argentina* was delivered by Ms. Lilian Corra (Argentina). The project consists of an awareness raising component, the establishment of a multi-sectoral steering committee of the project with a view to improve the dialogue between the relevant sectors, and the establishment of a clearing house website in Spanish to disseminate and share information and successful experiences.[1] Moreover, the project seeks to develop an in-depth analysis of the existing legal and policy frameworks and the best available techniques and environmental practices for the management and disposal of mercury waste in Argentina, as well as the formulation of proposals and recommendations for the technical adaptation and changes to the existing legal and regulatory framework in Argentina to facilitate the implementation of the Minamata Convention. Finally, the project aims to develop and present a pilot proposal for a small-scale technical project to demonstrate the interim storage and final disposal of mercury wastes.

46. Ms. Corra pointed out that the project seeks to address both hazardous industrial waste and hazardous household and municipal waste. She said that there currently are 18 companies in Argentina that are registered to treat relevant waste, 8 are registered to export relevant waste, but only 4 are operating (3 in Buenos Aires and one in Cordoba). Moreover, only one company is registered to treat mercury wastes, which employs a sulfide stabilization method before final deposits in secure landfills.

47. She continued her presentation by elaborating on the precipitation and micro-encapsulation method using sulfur employed to stabilize mercury in waste matter. She noted that the use of this technology has to take into account the concentrations of the different pollutants in the waste to be treated. She also noted that, in Argentina, there is no requirement to define the specific concentration of mercury and other pollutants if the waste is disposed of in a secure landfill.

48. Finalising her presentation with some general comments, Ms. Corra noted that the capacity of the safe disposal facility is limited. She moreover stated that there is no information on mercury in Argentina that originates from the metal mining sectors, which mines ores containing gold, silver, copper and other metals in a mantle that is shared with Chile. She ended her presentation by stating that Argentina's only safe

[1] www.mercurioenargentina.com.ar

disposal facility is located in northern Patagonia, meaning that mercury waste from other regions need to be transported very long distances for safe disposal.

49. In the question and answer session, one delegate representing a non-governmental organization congratulated the presenters on the information provided and stated that similar problems exist for the environmentally sound management of mercury in Africa. In Africa, he stated, all materials containing mercury end up as waste, and there is a lack of knowledge of what to do with it and where to send it. It is also difficult to understand what policy measures are required to address this problem. This, he stated, should be the role of the Global Mercury Partnership, and it should give advice to Governments on the policy changes required, as well as providing guidance on what to do, in practice, with batteries, lamps and other hazardous materials that have been collected.

50. Ms. Garcia agreed with the representative, concurring that there is a lack of clear tools on how to achieve the environmentally sound management of mercury. She continued to state that it is important that all sectors are represented in such guidance, as well as highlighting the need to decide whether mercury is a commodity or a waste. She maintained that this should be clearly stated in any guidance or policy, also taking into account that pure mercury is very different from mercury wastes and requires different techniques for its safe management.

51. Continuing on this topic, Ms. Torres stated that the Government of Uruguay is presently developing such legislation on mercury products which will be finalized by the end of the year.

52. The floor was then given to Mr. David Evers (Biodiversity Research Institute, BRI), who presented on the activities of the Fate and Transport Partnership Area. He began by reiterating his Partnership Area's business plan, which currently involves working with the Group on Earth Observations, the CNR and WHO human biomonitoring survey, the human hair sampling project implemented by BRI, IPEN and UNEP, and the UNEP Live project using the BRI Global Biotic Mercury synthesis database which is supported by funding from GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP). He also stated that future elements of the business plan could include the development of a technical information document to provide a standardized science-based tool with instructions on mercury monitoring. Moreover, the Partnership Area would increase its focus on monitoring mercury in air, biota and humans, as would be presented in a side event the following day.

53. He proceeded by describing the recent activities on the Ground-based Monitoring Network (GMOS), which, due to the expiry of its EU funding, has now merged with the Group on Earth Observations (GEO).

54. Mr. Evers then proceeded to discuss a number of projects that were currently being implemented by the members of the Partnership Area. These include the development of a plan for global monitoring of human exposure to, and environmental concentrations of, mercury. Its objective is to harmonize the approaches and to strengthen the analytical capacity for monitoring mercury concentrations in humans and in the environment at the global level. The two-year project has UNEP as an executing agency, GMOS/CNR IIA leading the environmental monitoring and WHO leading the human biomonitoring. Its main outputs are to review existing networks and information for mercury monitoring; to establish a databank of mercury laboratories; and to develop a monitoring plan on mercury concentrations in air and in humans based on five pilot projects.

55. A second project undertaken by members of the Fate and Transport Partnership Area monitors the exposure of humans to environmental concentrations of mercury on the global level. This two-year project seeks to increase the awareness and capacity of countries with human biomonitoring capabilities, and is implemented by IPEN and UNEP as lead entities in collaboration with BRI as a co-lead and responsible

for the mercury analyses. The outputs of this projects are to demonstrate that mercury monitoring is relatively easy and that it provides useful data; to create a global comparison of this project; and to help identify communities at risk from elevated mercury exposure.

56. A third project, implemented by UNEP in collaboration with BRI and SETAC, seeks to increase the awareness and capacity through the gathering and interpretation of existing mercury data. The nine-month project's main outputs are a review of existing data on mercury, the establishment of a standardized database and the use of existing mercury data through UNEP Live.

57. Finalising his presentation, Mr. Evers outlined the project which will seek to develop a standardized technical information document on mercury monitoring. The two-year project, whose inception date was yet to be decided, has proposed UNEP as the executing agency, BRI as the lead for organizing components and CNR and Environment Canada as co-leads for the project. Its outputs will be to establish standardized methodologies, to review the existing data to identify biological mercury hotspots and temporal trends, and to develop a technical document on mercury monitoring in the environment to evaluate the effectiveness of the Minamata Convention. With the regards to this document, Mr. Evers presented details on its conceptual design; its production drawing on both peer-reviewed publications and translations of scientific findings, the latter being aimed at communicating technical information to layman audiences through both published material and on-line sources. Mr. Evers ended his talk by drawing attention to the follow day's side event on this topic.

58. In the following question and answer session, one participant from a non-governmental organization highlighted the importance of building on existing structures when issuing guidance on and developing mercury data collection systems. The key, she said, was to obtain new data that is comparable with that from existing sources, and emphasized that many data collection systems already have a very good performance level.

59. One participant representing a Government mentioned a project that is currently taking place in a toxicological center in Uruguay, and noted that this project can be replicated in most toxicological centers around the world.

60. After the break, Mr. Fretheim then passed the floor to the Waste management Partnership Area. Mr. Takafumi Anan (Japan)

61. Mr. Anan presented the main objective of the Waste Management Area which is to minimize and, where feasible, eliminate mercury releases to air, water, and land from mercury waste by following a lifecycle management approach. It currently has 79 partners (19 Governments, 6 IGOs, 31 NGOs, and 22 others) who work together in the preparation of good practices for management of mercury releases from waste and the preparation of the resource person list that could be drawn upon to assist in mercury waste management projects. The partnership area hosts bi-annual face-to-face meetings to encourage activities through information exchange and discussion. Its priority activities are providing support to UNEP's Sourcebook on Mercury Waste Storage and Disposal; the update, revision and dissemination of the Basel Convention Technical Guidelines for the Environmentally Sound Management of Mercury Waste; and the finalization of the "Good Practices for the Management of Mercury Releases from Waste (Good Practice Document)

62. Mr. Anan ended his presentation by stating that the Waste Management Partnership Area is open to collaboration with other areas, in particular the Products and Supply and Storage Partnership Areas.

63. The next presentation was delivered by Ms. Susan Keane (Natural Resources Defense Council) and Mr. Ludovic Bernaudat (UNEP) from the ASGM Partnership

Area. Ms. Keane commenced by stating that there has been a significant increase in the number of projects addressing ASGM, a development that is strongly driven by the Minamata Convention. She also explained that a third co-lead of the Partnership Area is now in place. Mr. Jerome Stucki of UNIDO will join Ms. Keane and Mr. Bernaudat as co-lead.

64. Data presented by Ms. Keane showed that most of the current projects were being conducted in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. She noted, however, that this is not only a developing country concern. Here, a meeting participant gave a brief intervention, stating that historical ASGM pollution remains a problem in Australia and that the Government is still working on addressing these. This should, he said, be a warning to other countries that have ASGM occurring in their territories at present.

65. Further ASGM project information revealed that most projects seek to support governments in setting national objectives or targets on ASGM, followed by projects that focus on eliminating worst practices and promote alternatives to mercury, or mercury intensive, amalgamation. The presentation included geographical descriptions of where what kind of intervention is being implemented.

66. The floor was then given to Mr. Bernaudat, who sought to initialize a debate on what the ASGM Partnership Area should focus on next. The main product of the Partnership Area, he said, had been the *Draft Guidance to Develop National Action Plans on ASGM*, which would be presented at INC7 for consideration and recommendation to countries developing their National Action Plans (NAP) in accordance with the Minamata Convention. As the NAPs are an obligation under the Convention, the ASGM Partnership Area had been focusing, with US EPA funding, to develop this document. He drew attention to the fact that the draft guidance was now available in the six official UN languages, as the lack of translations was something that had been criticized in the past. He also pointed out that, during its development, the guidance had been circulated broadly to both Governments and other stakeholders, and that it had therefore been a very inclusive process.

67. He proceeded to state that the draft guidance was complemented by the WHO's work on the public health guidance on ASGM.

68. Mr. Bernaudat also pointed out that the draft guidance was currently in use by 10 countries that were developing their NAP projects, and that these projects' outcomes would provide useful information on the use of mercury in the ASGM sector. Further information on this would be provided at a technical briefing event the following day.

69. The floor was then passed to Mr. Paul Cordy of Cordy Geosciences, who presented a video with information for artisanal gold miners on how to reduce their use of mercury. After the screening, Mr. Cordy stressed that the process of milling ore is key to efficient gold extraction. Properly milled ore will release the gold particles from the other substances in the ore and will facilitate easier separation and more efficient mercury amalgamation, and is dependent on the unique composition of each ore and on the milling equipment used. He also emphasized that his key message to the miners was that reduction in the use of mercury, besides having environmental and health advantages, is above all a economically beneficial as mercury is a major expense for miners.

70. During the questions and answers session, one participant noted that gold mining is often done by relatively large groups of miners, and that these constitute small scale rather than artisanal gold miners. Related to this observation, the participant asked the room if there is a good understanding of how this looks in reality, and if the solutions shown in the video is applicable to all gold mining actors, rather than just a segment. Mr. Cordy replied that, in the Philippines, the scale of mining shown in the video is in fact the most common scale of informal gold mining in the country. However, he also stated that, while the information he provides is already relevant to a significant part of the ASGM sector, he would like to provide further information that is

relevant to even smaller scale operations. He pointed out that his material also contains some useful information on the design of efficient sluices, which are low-cost investments that can be beneficial to gold miners operating on a very small scale.

71. Following Mr. Cordy's reply, Ms. Keane added that the main issue the video addresses is whole ore amalgamation. As this is one of the most inefficient uses of mercury in ASGM, this was an obvious place to start. Ending the discussion on this topic, Mr. Bernaudat stated that the main challenge was to make miners understand the need to make the initial investments in their operations, so that economic and environmental benefits can be achieved later on.

72. The floor was then passed to the Chlor-alkali Partnership Area, where Mr. Rodges Ankrah (USA) presented latest summary of activities. He began by stating that there had been a substantial reduction in the number of chlor-alkali facilities using mercury, as well as in the amount of mercury used by these facilities. To summarize the progress made, the total number of chlor-alkali facilities using mercury had nearly halved between 2002 and 2014, and their mercury capacity had been reduced by more than two fifths. Meanwhile, the total mercury emissions from the sector had reduced by more than a fifth during that period.

73. Taking stock of the present situation, Mr. Ankrah summarized that there are now approximately 70 mercury-cell chlor-alkali facilities remaining in operation in about 40 countries. A major development on the immediate horizon will be the EU's phase out of mercury in chlor-alkali facilities by the end of 2017, which will see the closure of over 20 facilities.

74. Looking towards the future, he hoped that the Chlor-alkali Partnership Area will go out of business by 2025, when the Minamata Convention requires the phase out of mercury use in the sector. In the meantime, however, the Partnership Area would focus on engaging with non-members of the World Chlorine Council and their associated Governments to assist in identifying the status of the use of mercury in their chlor-alkali facilities and their needs, as well as to help them identify and access the technical and financial resources necessary to address their mercury use. Moreover, Mr. Ankrah stated that the aim of the Partnership Area will be to play a more facilitative role, enabling members and clients to find the necessary financial and technical resources to make the transition into a mercury-free chlor-alkali sector, and to identify viable interim and long term storage solutions. A further key activity is also to ensure that the mercury from decommissioned facilities is not sold on the open market.

75. Finalizing his presentation. Mr Ankrah stated that the crucial next steps will be to ensure that the Chlor-alkali Partnership Area remains relevant to the needs of the sector, to work effectively with partners, and to support greater collaboration across the different partnership areas.

76. In the following question and answer session, Mr. Halpaap stated that the Chlor-alkali Partnership Area is a good example of where the results-based management approach can be taken, as there are clear numbers of facilities for conversion to mercury-free methods and clear targets. He also mentioned a recent discussion with Uruguay about their need for financing the conversion to the membrane method where energy efficiency gains provides return on investment in the longer term.

77. The participant from India mentioned that he would be willing to share their experiences of the shift to mercury-free chlor-alkali production methods, and invited interested stakeholders for further discussions.

78. A participant representing a non-government organization asked what the Chlor-alkali Partnership Area was doing to understand if the decommissioned mercury was being put into circulation on the global market. Mr. Ankrah replied that this is a challenge, and that there is a need to reach out to non-WCC members to gain a greater understanding of this issue.

79. Finalizing the question and answer session, Mr. Toda stated that it was good to see the extent of synergistic work happening within this Partnership Area.

80. The floor was then passed to Ms. Leslie Sloss (UK) of the IEA Clean Coal Centre, the lead of the Coal Partnership Area. Ms. Sloss started her presentation by stating that, unlike the Chlor-alkali Partnership Area, her area would not be able to publish explicit targets for mercury emission reductions, as these would be neither accurate nor feasible. Recalling her Partnership Area's objective of *continued minimization and elimination of mercury releases from coal combustion where possible*, her area had 48 partners as of November 2011, of which 6 were Governments, 2 were intergovernmental organizations, 14 were non-governmental organizations.

81. With regards to the activities of the Coal Partnership Area, outreach and dissemination of information has been a major component with workshops having taken place in India and South Africa and academic papers being presented at the 2015 International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant (ICMGP), PCC, Sino-USA meetings, and CEM. The reports developed include a comparative analysis of the implementation of the UNFCCC and the Minamata Convention in the coal combustion sector, a study of the effectiveness of mercury emission reductions using activated carbon in Russian coal-fired thermal power plants, and a study of the implications of China's efforts to address pollution from the coal sector on the sector's mercury emissions. Ms. Sloss also noted that, in terms of India's mercury emission control, it is unlikely that significant progress will be made within the next 5 to 10 years.

82. Further activities of the Partnership Area has been to provide input to the guidance on Best Available Techniques (BAT) and Best Environmental Practices (BET) produced in accordance with Article 8 of the Minamata Convention, as well as to run projects in Southeast Asia on coal analysis and development of emission inventory for the coal-fired power sector.

83. Another activity has been continuing the work on the Process Optimization Guidance (POG) document and its digital version, the iPOG. The iPOG, a programme that allows the user to calculate the emissions of various pollutants by defining a set of characteristics of the coal burning facility as well as the coal burned, is undergoing a further update to perform calculations on coals from South Africa, Russia and India. With regards to India, Ms. Sloss noted that here the updated programme was very important due to the high ash and incombustible material content of the coal burned in the Indian coal sector. Related to this matter, the Partnership Area is coordinating the use of pollutant measurement technologies.

84. Elaborating on the communications and outreach strategy of the Coal Partnership Area, Ms. Sloss stated that the Mercury Emissions from Coal (MEC) workshops are now established annual meetings which takes partners to various parts of the world to disseminate information on mercury emission control and to provide networking opportunities within industry and beyond. She also concluded that with the Partnership Area papers being presented at various other workshops, there is a good level of outreach in that regard.

85. In terms of meeting objectives and targets of the Coal Partnership Area, Ms. Sloss noted that national administrative delays had affected the Partnership's activities in Thailand and Indonesia. She also drew attention to the fact that, due to the lack of reliable data and the variability of coal and coal facility characteristics, it is still not possible to effectively quantify the mercury emission reductions from the coal sector in the Partnership Area's business plan. As a result, the work has therefore been focused on the development of the BAT/BEP guidance and on information transfer between stakeholders.

86. Moreover, Ms. Sloss stated that it is still not possible for the Partnership Area to conduct work on the industrial and domestic coal burning sectors due to a lack of

funding, and that more work should be done in terms of newsletters and website updates. Furthermore, Ms. Sloss stated that the position of the Coal Partnership Area's co-lead remains vacant and she welcomed anyone interested in exploring this role.

87. Finalizing her presentation by setting out the Partnership Area's future plans, Ms. Sloss said that the project work in Thailand and Indonesia would proceed as soon as possible, and that deepening its engagement with India is another high priority. In terms of synergistic work, she said that work was being conducted in collaboration with the US EPA and US State Department to demonstrate and promote the use of the mercury measurement toolkit, and conducting outreach through targeted workshops (such as energy efficiency) and reports. Moreover, she said that work was being done to create proposals for GEF projects, and that the Coal Partnership Area was continuously coordinating with other organizations working on mercury emission control.

88. Speaking about the outlook for mercury emissions control in the coal combustion sector, Ms. Sloss said that rather than focusing solely on mercury, the most efficient approach was to take a broad approach to address all pollutants from the coal sector. She ended by saying that reasonable mercury emissions from coal combustion can be achieved, but that the results were sometimes more dependent on the type of coal burned, and in particular its chlorine content, than the technologies used.

89. In the following question and answer session, Mr. Fretheim thanked Ms. Sloss for her presentation and noted the need for a co-lead for her Partnership Area. She was then asked by a participant representing a non-governmental organization what her message is to international development banks who provide funding for infrastructural development projects in developing countries, including for the construction of new coal burning plants, and in particular her message regarding the required investments to reduce mercury emissions. Ms. Sloss replied that, as developing countries have a great demand for new power sources, many coal fired power plants will be built in the coming years. Her general message is that development banks may be the only investors who can require reasonable environmental and efficiency standards. She said that international development banks, like the World Bank, are good partners for these kinds of projects as these concerns are taken into consideration.

90. On a question concerning if there are synergies in the Coal Partnership Area to also investigate the mercury emissions from household fuel consumption, Ms. Sloss replied that the mandate of the Partnership Area was only for coal burning facilities with an effect over 50 MW. However, she did acknowledge that emissions from indoor cooking using coal was a large and important avenue of inquiry.

91. Ending the question and answer session, Mr. Toda noted the current efforts to develop a GEF project on demonstrating mercury reductions from coal-fired power plants, and discussion with Vietnam with regards to this project are currently underway.

92. After the break, Mr. Adel Sheikh Osman (Egypt), a member of the Cement Partnership Area, gave a short summary of its activities. The lead of the Cement Partnership Area was not available to attend the Partnership Advisory Group meeting. The stated objective of the Partnership Area is to reduce emissions of mercury from the cement industry and its launching meeting was held in June 2013. The discussions at the meeting focused on the behavior of mercury in the cement kiln, as well as on the origins of the mercury in the cement. Thus far, the activities of the Partnership Area has been to explore the best environmental practices for cement production facilities with a view to find the most cost effective approaches to mercury emission reduction.

4. Discussion of the future work of the Partnership

93. Introducing the next item on the agenda of the meeting, Mr. Cuna thanked the Secretariat for initiating the discussions on the future work of the Global Mercury Partnerships during the regional meetings held in preparation for INC7. These meetings, held in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 20 to 22 January 2016; in Lusaka, Zambia,

from 2 to 4 February 2016; in Brno, Czech Republic, from 3 to 4 February 2016; and in Montevideo, Uruguay, from 9 to 12 February 2016. The GMP Secretariat were represented at these meetings by Mr. Eisaku Toda in Jakarta, Ms. Desiree Narvaez in Lusaka, Mr. Kenneth Davis in Brno, and Mr. Toda in Montevideo. Mr. Cuna ended his intervention by stating that the target of the future work of the Partnership must be to fit the needs of its stakeholders.

94. While seeking input on the future work of the GMP from the participants at the Minamata INC regional consultations, the GMP awareness raising and knowledge sharing event were specifically aimed at : informing governments and stakeholders on the activities of the GMP; fostering understanding on the partnership approach to reducing risks of mercury; identifying immediate needs of governments and stakeholders to enable them to reduce mercury pollution in relation to the 8 partnership areas; developing recommendations on how the GMP can possibly support early implementation of the Minamata Convention; and encouraging governments and stakeholders to participate in and engage in GMP activities. Each event started with a brief presentation from the UNEP Secretariat on the principles of GMP, highlights, achievements and challenges. The presentation was followed by interactive discussion either by open forum style or by small "buzz" group discussions. An on-line survey was filled in by most participants while others preferred to fill in hard copies of the questionnaire

95. Ms. Desiree Narvaez then proceeded to present the results of the survey that was conducted by the Secretariat during the regional preparatory meetings. In terms of familiarity with the GMP, the survey concluded that majority of the participants at the regional meetings were only somewhat familiar with the partnership. Of the total respondents, only a quarter are members of the GMP. This implies that the partnership areas need to enhance their communication and outreach activities in order to assist governments in the ratification and early implementation of the Minamata Convention. The areas in which the participants felt the Partnership could best address their needs to reduce mercury use and emissions were ASGM, mercury-added products, supply and storage, fate and transport, and mercury waste management.

96. Specific needs expressed per partnership area were:

On ASGM: Estimating illegal ASGM activities, addressing illegal trade of mercury being used in the sector, dealing with socio-economic issues, addressing the issue of contaminated sites amalgamation in gold markets , expertise to develop national regulations training on alternatives.

On coal combustion: Characterization of mercury in coal, technologies to reduce mercury emissions, given that coal is an inexpensive energy source, low carbon technologies, addressing not only emissions but also releases to the environment through fly ash and slag as well as fertilizer production from slag, ambient and stack emission of mercury

On chlor alkali: Identifying existing facilities estimating mercury stockpile at chlor alkali sites, engaging industry and government together in the change-out to membrane cell technology, being a non WCC member, technologies and financing in the transition to membrane cell technology, technologies in the environmentally sound storage and disposal of mercury after decommissioning

On mercury-added products: Information of mercury content (product labelling such as through the Globally Harmonized System of Labelling and Classification), number of products produced and sold , alternatives to mercury-added products financial support to small and medium enterprises promoting alternatives quantification and trade flows of mercury- added products information on trade ; work with customs

On cement: Monitoring mercury in cement kiln technologies on the reduction of mercury emissions and releases

On supply and storage: Quantification of by-product mercury from large scale gold mining , dealing with primary mining and plans of closure, need to revisit the UNEP publication on "Analysis of Options for the Environmentally Sound Storage of Surplus Mercury in Asia and the Pacific"

On mercury waste management: Environmentally sound disposal of mercury-added products, capacity building for customs personnel in dealing with trans-boundary movement of mercury waste best practices, technologies on waste management; an assessment as to whether such technologies comply with the Minamata Convention

On fate and transport: Monitoring activities in different regions in addition to the EU-GMOS project, enhancing the development of a globally coordinated mercury observation system including air and water ecosystems, capacity building for monitoring not only human matrices but also contaminated sites

97. The four participating regions identified their priorities:

Asia and Pacific (AP) : The discussion at the event in AP region focused on coal combustion, ASGM, chlor-akali (including the associated supply and storage issues) and products. Some countries were interested in waste and fate and transport as well. These interests may reflect the importance of these emission sources in the region.

Africa: End-of-life mercury added products and waste are a priority in the African region. The participants noted that mercury-added products are not manufactured in Africa but are abundantly used in the continent. Overall, the participants felt there is still need for awareness raising on mercury toxicity preferably in the local dialects. Environmentally sound management (ESM) of mercury waste is a challenge with the lack of infrastructure in Africa.

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) : Mercury- added products especially lamps and medical devices (thermometers) as well as the ESM of mercury waste are priority in the CEE region. The CEE also expressed need for assistance on contaminated sites: identification and assessment of sites, as well as for management and remediation technologies. Other needs are how to address mercury emissions from cement, paper production and acetaldehyde production.

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) : Much of the discussion at the regional event focused on ASGM. Concerns on newly emerging primary mining was also expressed. The Region still has existing chlor alkali facilities and have identified this as a priority as well. Supply and storage issues associated with these sectors also attracted attention. Caribbean countries were more interested in activities on products and waste, since they do not have large industrial emission sources. Polluted contaminated sites are also a concern of the LAC region. The region also wants to be engaged in mercury monitoring activities

98. Ms. Narvaez also noted that a majority of the respondents had an interest in a new Partnership Area on contaminated sites being created.

99. In terms of providing technical assistance and expertise, Ms. Narvaez emphasized that the Partnership can provide helpful assistance with the ratification and early implementation of the Minamata Convention. Potential measures include, the assessment of countries' priorities and the establishment of comprehensive inventories of emissions and releases of mercury; developing human and laboratory capacities for mercury monitoring; providing expertise and financial support in the development of mercury policies and regulations; sharing information on mercury management,

policies, guidelines and technical issues with countries who have ratified the Convention or are about to execute a Minamata Initial Assessment project; develop projects on mercury products and waste; and to enhance awareness raising on mercury toxicity to human health and the environment, including in local languages.

100. She proceeded to highlight the ways in which governments and other stakeholders can contribute to the Partnership. These include the joint development of guidance documents; sharing experiences about mercury pollution reduction; developing project proposal, co-financing projects and conducting joint projects with other countries; providing technical expertise on fate and transport research, coal and cement, and creating expertise in laboratory testing and data banking; share experiences on implementing Minamata Initial Assessment projects; mobilization of stakeholders and setting up institutional arrangements; national coordination of projects; and by becoming a partner of the Global Mercury Partnership of an area co-lead.

101. On finalizing her presentation, Ms. Narvaez said that survey provided an insight into the needs and priorities of the countries in relation to the Partnership. In this respect, Governments and other stakeholders have confirmed that the Partnership can provide access to a pool of technical experts in each Partnership Area; that the Partnership can play a role in donor coordination and resource mobilization through the GEF and other financing mechanisms; and disseminate knowledge and information by gathering and sharing best practices, and in particular from industry on technologies to be shared with countries.

102. Ms. Narvaez highlighted that the GMP events in the margins of the INC 7 regional consultations provided very useful and timely information in the planning for activities that will assist countries in the early implementation of Minamata Convention. The event raised the profile of the GMP and created awareness about the benefits and strengths of the Partnership. Countries recognize the complementarity of the GMP and the Minamata Convention and request both secretariats to collaborate closely. Some countries have expressed interest to become a Partner to the GMP

103. One participant agreed with the co-chair that the presentation on the survey was comprehensive and that it was helpful to know the main areas where work is needed. The priorities, therefore, are clear. However, the participant also added that mercury-added products are also very important, and it is important to know where the emissions come from in this sector. The delegate therefore suggested conducting a follow-up survey to bring clarity on the needs of the products category. This survey should be as comprehensive as possible. Given several products categories, the delegate also suggested to have partnership areas by product categories.

104. Ms. Narvaez responded that with the online survey's analytical tools would be possible to go back to the respondents themselves, so that the respondents concerned about mercury-added products issues can be sent further questions in order to clarify their views and needs. As to the partnership areas by product category, Ms. Narvaez said that the products partnership needs to discuss this further.

105. Ms. Keane suggested that all Partnership Areas could create a library of existing products and make them available to the countries implementing Minamata Initial Assessment projects now, as many countries lack this kind of information. She also suggested that the MIA implementing agencies also received access to this list. She further suggested making this information available through various media such as the internet, and that this would be a good way for the Partnership of raising its profile.

106. Ms. Narvaez said that this was a good idea and agreed that the Partnership possesses a rich library of information in all partnership areas such as on mercury-added products and should advise stakeholders to use it. She further suggested that it could be a Secretariat task to compile this list for the countries implementing Minamata Initial Assessment projects to use.

107. One participant asked if the survey conducted prior to the sixth Partnership Advisory Group meeting ago could be revisited, as some good conclusions were drawn from that, and that these should now be taken into consideration.

108. Mr. Toda said that, although he was not present at that meeting, it was his understanding that the Secretariat had built on the results from that survey. For instance, that survey had indicated that communications and outreach activities were important areas of activity for the Partnership's stakeholders, and that Mr. Davis would present on the Secretariat's efforts on those issues.

109. Ms. Narvaez further stated that the possibility of reorganizing certain Partnership Areas was raised at the Jeju meeting. However, the participants were not prepared to agree on reorganizations and instead recommended to increase synergies and collaboration across the Partnership Areas. There was a general feeling that the current structure of the Partnership was appropriate.

110. The participant from the European Union stated that, from the survey, it appeared that there was a perception that GMOS was a European project. He wanted to emphasize that GMOS was in fact a global project with both European and other partners. GMOS has many stations located outside of Europe. He added that the current project has ended, but that the collaboration network created by the project was being maintained.

111. One participant from the African region wondered whether any African countries had expressed any need for support, namely further financing and technical support. She stated that this was a persistent problem in the region.

112. Ms. Narvaez agreed that these views had been expressed during the preparatory meeting for INC7 held in Lusaka. However, she also emphasized that a core principle of the Partnership was to share resources, information and rewards and that, therefore, some partners should be prepared to also contribute towards the Partnership. She also drew attention to the fact that there were many ongoing MIAs and other GEF projects in Africa.

113. A participant from Japan drew attention from the fact that Japan leads the mercury-waste Partnership Area, and that, therefore, expectations on this Partnership Area are high. However, he also noted that waste relates to many other Partnership Areas, including products and supply and storage, but also with inventories and in particular waste inventories.

114. The participant proceeded to recommend a strong linkage with other Partnership Areas and proposed joint activities. The participant also encouraged UNEP and the Global Mercury Partnership to enhance the collaboration between these Partnership Areas, especially when requested at the INC or the Partnership Advisory Group.

115. A participant from Japan also suggested that due to a high turnover with government personnel, the new personnel may not be familiar with the Partnership, and that might be some reason why many officials in the survey were not familiar with the Partnership.

116. Ms. Narvaez replied that this would be taken into consideration, but also pointed out that there was a lot of work to do for the Partnership in terms of reaching out to Governments.

117. A participant from Uruguay stated that, the survey recommendation to use the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) in labeling mercury-added products is not appropriate since this use of terminology was confusing.

118. Ms. Narvaez replied that this was just a recommendation and that it does not necessarily need to be adhered to. Mr. Toda pointed out that this discussion should not be conducted on a word-by-word basis, as participants may not have full knowledge of GHS but should know that it does deal with labeling.

119. Mr. Fretheim pointed out that this may be a supply and demand issue. For instance, Parties to the Minamata Convention may know about the Global Mercury Partnership but may not be familiar with all Partnership Areas. He also pointed out that if the Partnership were to increase its visibility then it could have a greater impact. In this regard, he also acknowledged that many countries are already at a limit in terms of what they can do due to limited funding for Partnership-related activities.

120. Mr. Toda stated his appreciation for the various suggestions made during the discussion, and expressed his wish to know what the Partnership Area leads want to know in terms of the future work of the Partnership. He asked the Area leads to let the Secretariat know what questions they have for Government stakeholders in future surveys. He furthermore indicated that additional tools can be made available or developed in collaboration with UNITAR. He reiterated that, from the Secretariat's perspective, the most important activity is to generate synergies between the Partnership Areas and that he looked forward to the discussion on how to enhance synergies.

121. Mr. Osman pointed to a potential possibility for synergies between the waste and the cement Partnership Areas, where waste is used to provide heat in cement kilns. He stated that knowing and addressing the environmental implications from this was a significant challenge, and that, in particular, there was a strong rationale for the management of used cathode ray tubes that contain mercury.

122. A participant from Japan said that they had already drawn attention to this problem, and that the waste Partnership area is looking at the sound management of mercury from a lifecycle perspective. For instance, mercury supply and storage may face similar challenges to the environmentally sound disposal of mercury waste. The delegate emphasized that action on these issues do not have to be coordinated through him, but some parts could benefit by being coordinated by the waste Partnership Area.

123. The Supply and Storage Partnership Area developed a draft study examining global trade in mercury and document should be shared with the Waste Partnership Area before publishing so that there are no contradictions between that material and that of the waste Partnership Area. The participant also suggested that consultations within and between Partnership Areas should be strengthened in general. He also suggested that UNEP develops a logo for the Partnership so that all material produced under the Partnership's framework can be labeled, as this would give the Partnership a stronger image.

124. One participant noted that, from the survey, 82% of respondents identified contaminated sites as an important issue for further work. In relation to this, the participant suggested that the Partnership should work towards identifying and characterizing contaminated sites, and that this could serve as a good umbrella topic to use as a cross-area working group or discussion group within the Partnership.

125. One participant referred to the mercury waste stabilization project described earlier and the Basel Convention technical guideline documents are also useful in this regard. She further suggested that the chlor-alkali Partnership Area cooperate with the storage and waste Partnership Areas, as there are significant opportunities for synergies.

126. One participant raised the idea of thematic groups that could include participation from multiple Partnership Areas. Members of these areas could work in these groups to foster greater collaboration between the Partnership Areas. In this regard, one possibility would be to create a group to work on contaminated sites issues.

127. Mr. Bernaudat noted that the mercury used for ASGM-may come from primary mercury mining, and here the Secretariat is aware of two countries with newly established primary mercury production - Mexico and Indonesia. There are in addition to the primary mercury mining in Kyrgyzstan and China. He stressed the need for a global picture of mercury sources in order to better understand its international movements.

128. Mr. Toda stated that the issue of the logo and partnership branding would be addressed and that the Secretariat would further consider how to classify a publication as a Partnership product. He noted the importance of a clear visual identity in this regard.

129. Ms. Keane stated that, as countries are moving from ratification towards implementation of the Minamata Convention, the Partnership ought to focus specifically on its obligations even if individual stakeholders wish to address issues outside of their obligations. She said that the needs of stakeholders are always important, but that these should now only be addressed as far as they are in line with countries' requirements to implement the Minamata Convention.

5. Review of the Partnership business plans

130. Mr. Davis then proceeded to introduce the next item of the meeting on the review of the Partnership's business plans. The overview of the Partnership Areas' current business plans was presented in meeting document UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/PAG.7/5. Mr. Davis pointed out that the business plans should be updated on a regular basis and encouraged the co-leads that have not updated their business plans to do so. He drew attention to the fact that, in a few cases, time dependent objectives exist for certain Partnership Areas. For some of these, the deadlines have passed and therefore the progress against these should be evaluated by the relevant Partnership Area co-leads. He also urged the relevant co-leads to set new objectives to replace any expired ones. Mr. Davis also drew attention to the two page summaries that provide an overview of the Partnership Areas' activities and goals. These, presented in meeting document PAG.7/5 and available on the Partnership's website, were created in accordance with a recommendation made at the sixth meeting of the Partnership Advisory Group. Due to the fact that the Partnership Area business plans are documents aimed for internal consumption by stakeholders, the two page summaries are more suited for outreach purposes.

131. After Mr. Davis' presentation, Mr. Cuna asked the Partnership Area co-leads to share any changes in their business plans with him.

132. Ms. Sloss stated that the business plan for the Coal combustion Partnership Area has not been updated as she wished to wait to see what happens with Governments as the Minamata Convention establishment process moved towards COP1.

133. Mr. Evers stated that he was eager to know how to proceed on the Fate and Transport business plan and how to best connect activities of his Partnership Area with what is required from the standpoint of the Minamata Convention. He stated that further guidance on this matter would be appreciated.

134. In response to these remarks, Mr. Toda replied that there are, at present, uncertainties with regards to decisions to be made at the INC and at COP1. He noted, however, that the Partnership is very flexible and should be able to assist stakeholders in the interim process. He also stated that the Secretariat would communicate the relevant information to the Partnership Area co-leads so that the business plans can be updated as appropriate.

135. Adding to this response, Ms. Narvaez stated that the needs of Governments were expressed in the survey conducted during the preparatory meetings for INC7.

Therefore, it should be possible for the Partnership to take the initiative and act on certain issues, even while waiting for COP1. She stated that the vision and leadership of the Partnership Area co-leads are crucial in this regard.

136. In response to her comments, Mr. Fretheim stated that, in relation to the work of the Fate and Transport Partnership Area, there is a strong incentive to respond to the needs of countries. However, this particular Partnership Area may also need to support the INC in its future work on monitoring. Therefore, it would be expedient to look at the direction of the work done on this issue under the Convention and to adjust the fate and transport business plan later.

6. Enhancing communication and outreach

137. Mr. Davis then introduced the next item of the agenda on enhancing the communication and outreach of the Partnership. He started out by presenting meeting document UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/PAG.7/6 which summarizes the Partnership's communication and outreach efforts, contains a list of recommended actions to improve the Partnership's communication and outreach strategy as well as an analysis of the traffic on the Partnership's website.

138. On the issue of the Partnership's website, Mr. Davis stated that the calls for improvements on the website had been noted. He said that these calls were taken seriously, as survey statistics have shown that the website is the Partnership's most important communication tool. From the website statistics, it is apparent that visitors are looking for technical information on particular mercury issues, and that the ASGM page is the most visited.

139. Mr. Davis stated that funding for the website refresh had been secured, and that the revamp of the website has been carried out with the help from a web consultant. With regards to this work, it was decided to improve the UNEP-hosted website rather than create a separate website hosted outside unep.org.

140. Mr. Davis also stated that there is a move to develop other visual materials to support the Partnership's outreach. In this regard, the Secretariat is currently developing infographics, maps and charts to convey key messages from the Partnership using in-house expertise and freely available software. The information products being developed include interactive maps, e-books with interactivity, visual summaries of documents, and graphics. In terms of developing the visual identity of the Partnership, this work would include the creation of a logo and perhaps icons for each partnership area as well as publication templates. Mr. Davis stated that this work will be coordinated with the Partnership Area co-leads, but that funding has not yet been secured for the visual identity.

141. In terms of other outreach activities, Mr. Davis summarized the events where representatives of the Partnership participated in-person, including the partnership area leads meeting at the ICMGP in Jeju, Republic of Korea, arranging Partnership events at the regional preparatory meetings for INC7, as well as exhibitions and side events at the BRS COPs in in May 2015.

142. Mr. Davis concluded his presentation by summarizing key ideas and recommendations on the future work on the Partnership's communication and outreach strategy. These include continuing with the work on further developing the Partnership's website, developing a wide range of information materials including visual materials, as well as maintaining a proactive approach to information sharing in general.

143. During the following question and answer session, the participant from Argentina encouraged the Secretariat to translate publications and information tools into Spanish. This, she said, was needed by the private sector and the lack of Spanish materials had limited the access of key stakeholders to the Partnership's information.

She further suggested that the regional offices of UNEP could be responsible for translating this material. She also suggested that the websites produced by the projects conducted in her region should be further publicized through the Partnership's channels. She stated that, at present, there appears to be very large focus on ASGM. In this regard, she encouraged a broader approach to the health impact of mercury pollution as, for instance, populations are also exposed to mercury in products such as lamps, and that this should be better reflected in the Partnership's outreach material.

144. The participant from Panama then proceeded with commending the Secretariat on communications and outreach work, but also asked if the Partnership had elaborated a "pull strategy", meaning that it created content in hopes that users would find it useful and be drawn to the Partnership. He encouraged this work to be supplemented with more effective communication to lay audiences, as the target ought to be to engage millions of people rather than thousands. He ended his intervention by suggesting that a number of Convention ambassadors could be nominated in countries or regions so as to broaden the awareness of the environmental issues addressed by the Partnership.

145. In response to these questions and comments, Mr. Davis replied that Partnership publications do exist in several languages. He also conceded that translating the website into other languages remains a challenge to the Partnership due to a lack of resources. With regards to the apparent focus on the ASGM issue, Mr. Davis suggested that this was in part due to the design of the previous presentation and that in reality the Partnership provided a more balanced exposure for all Partnership Areas. He also thanked the participant from Panama for his comment on broadening the outreach strategy and agreed that the current focus of the Partnership was to communicate to stakeholders rather than the broader public.

146. The participant from Uruguay added that she had worked with the Basel and Stockholm centers to make webpages based on their own project on their own websites. In terms of drawing attention to the issues addressed by these projects, this had been a very useful exercise.

147. The floor was then passed to Mr. Usman Tariq (UNITAR) who stated that, as the Minamata Initial Assessment projects are being initiated, many of the issues raised in the previous comments could be addressed through these projects as they have a large focus on awareness raising and information exchange. He noted that the Partnership may not always have the funds or staff for public communication on mercury issues, but that doing some of this work through the MIAs would be useful. He also added that it may be useful to show a short video during these projects with information on the Partnership and what it can do to help stakeholders address mercury issues in the MIA countries.

148. Mr. Patience Singo of the Swiss Development Corporation then gave a presentation about the Mongolia ASM knowledge hub project, an example of an effective communication of knowledge among stakeholders. This project was initially started in Mongolia but is now in the process of being implemented on the global level. The project seeks to make information available on a wide range of ASGM topics and could serve as a model for knowledge management under the Partnership.

149. Mr. Singo stated that the project originated from a need to make information on ASGM easily available to a large number of partners, as well as to make the different stakeholders of the ASGM thematic networks interact more closely, in order to have a global impact on ASGM on all levels. Above all, the vision of the project is to enable actors to both access and to disseminate information on ASGM.

150. His presentation included further information on the knowledge hub's organization and resources, international organizational arrangements and future plans on regional hubs. In terms of the tools and services the knowledge hubs provides, these include an ASGM information repository, websites with links to a number of other

online platforms, social media platforms and the provision of face-to-face meetings and study tours.

151. In terms of the future of the project, Mr. Singo said that resources were committed up to 2018 for the project's secretariat and other activities. He also stated that partner organizations support the ASGM knowledge hub through their activities, as well as the creation and sharing of knowledge. At present, the project's steering group and secretariat are working on securing further resources and funding. He ended his presentation by stating that organizations interested in hosting the secretariat in the future are encouraged to contact the secretariat.

152. In the following question and answer session, the participant from the US thanked Mr. Singo for this presentation and voiced his support for centralizing information. He also stated that it is useful to have a clear definition of one's audience and asked Mr. Singo if he was able to distinguish clear groups within the project's audience.

153. Mr. Singo replied that the ASGM knowledge hub is open to all stakeholders willing to participate. On the regional level, national governments can participate as well.

154. The floor was then passed to Ms. Sloss who recalled her recent workshop in India. At that workshop, the Government had showed limited willingness to focus discussions on mercury emissions from coal fired power plants. In order to address this issue, she had engaged the US State Department to redesign the workshop and to broaden the issues discussed. Her main point with this, she said, was that workshops should be adapted to the regional or national context, both in terms of politics and in terms of what assistance the stakeholders at the workshop require.

155. As no further points were raised on the matter of communications and outreach, Mr. Toda asked Mr. Davis to put up a meeting evaluation form for the meeting participants to fill out. He also encouraged the participants to visit the Partnership's booth in the INC7 exhibition area, and invited participants to attend the INC7 side events on mercury monitoring, the draft guidance document for developing ASGM NAP projects and the dental amalgam phase-down presentation.

156. Summarizing the meetings discussion points, Mr. Toda noted the call for greater synergies between the Partnership Areas, and in particular between supply and storage, waste management, chlor-alkali ASGM, and these area's links with mercury trade and contaminated sites. He further stated that the idea of cross-area discussion or working groups on topics such as contaminated sites would be considered, and urged the co-leads of the relevant Partnership Area's to update their business plans as necessary. He also noted the additional work to be done on the Partnership's communication and outreach, and stated that the report of the meeting would be published soon.

157. Mr. Cuna then proceeded to thank all participants for their inputs at the meeting. He noted that the Partnership Areas were doing a lot of good work, and that further improvements to the Partnership's communication strategy would serve to better communicate their important work to stakeholders in the respective regions. He also thanked the Secretariat for the presentations given at the meeting, as well as for the valuable work conducted during the regional preparatory meetings for INC7. On the issue of communication, he noted the importance of the Partnership's website and encouraged its further enhancement by uploading reports on activities, proved best practices.

7. Election of Partnership Advisory Group Chairs / Co-Chairs

158. Moving to the next item of the meeting, Mr. Toda his gratitude to Mr. Fretheim for having served as co-chair, having occupied that position since the fifth

meeting of the Partnership Advisory Group. He also expressed his gratitude towards Mr. Cuna for continuing as serving as the other co-chair of the Group. He proceeded by stating that the issue of selecting the new co-chair had already been communicated with the participants, and that Ms. Marianne Bailey of the US EPA had kindly offered to take the lead for the next few years. He noted that there was no objection in the room to her appointment, and that therefore she would become the new co-chair of the Group.

159. After the thunderous applause, the floor was passed to Ms. Bailey who stated that the Global Mercury Partnership was very dear to her as she had participated in it from the beginning. She said that it was a pleasure to see the work that had been conducted under the Partnership and that it was clear to her that significant progress was being made. She recalled the need to move away from simply communication and awareness-raising on mercury to knowledge management in order to assist Parties in implementing the Minamata Convention, and with the new work on the website and the enhanced visibility the Partnership would be in a strong position to carry out this important work. She thanked the participants for agreeing for her to be the new co-chair and noted that, while all meeting participants have other professional responsibilities, the rewards of contributing towards the Partnership makes them willing to allocate time and effort to its work.

160. Mr. Cuna then thanked Mr. Fretheim for his contribution towards the Partnership and for his work as Partnership Advisory Group co-chair. He also expressed his admiration for Mr. Fretheim's mastery of the mercury issue and for the length of time he has been involved with the Partnership.

161. After the applause, Mr. Fretheim thanked Mr. Cuna and echoed the comments from him and Ms. Bailey on the merits of the Partnership. He thanked the participants and the Secretariat for their great work and stated that he was convinced that the Partnership would face a bright future as long as it managed to find the right priorities, which he understood was exactly what the Partnership was in the process of doing.

8. Other matters

162. No other matters were raised.

9. Closure of meeting

163. Mr. Cuna declared the seventh meeting of the Partnership Advisory Group as closed.