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**Enhancing Communication and Outreach of the UNEP Global  
Mercury Partnership**

**Note by the Secretariat**

The 2014 evaluation survey undertaken among Partners of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership reveals a need to strengthen the communication for the Partnership, both internal communication (between and among Partners) and external communication (Partners to stakeholders such as governments, private sector and civil society).

The survey available as meeting document UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/PAG.6/3 suggests that the insufficient internal and external communication could be attributed to inadequate secretariat capacities such as lack of a dedicated staff to act as the focal person for communication, lack of capacities of Partners themselves, and/or lack of modalities that allow for timely and effective communication and information sharing.

Among communication areas that are identified in the survey as requiring improvement are, in particular Partner-Partner communication, the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership website, development and distribution of information and awareness raising materials, and dissemination of technical and guidance documents related to the different Partnership areas.

At the fourth and fifth meeting of the Partnership Advisory Group, a communication strategy was presented by the secretariat where the activities to enhance Partnership communication were outlined. At both meetings brief discussions took place with limited outcome.

The Partnership Advisory Group may wish to discuss and possibly adopt a the communication and outreach strategy contained in the Annex exploring ways of enhancing communication which is key to Partnership success.

The proposed communication strategy is also envisaged to be a component of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership project under UNEP's subprogramme on Chemicals and Waste.

## Annex

### UNEP Global Mercury Partnership Communication and Outreach Strategy

#### A. Background: The UNEP Global Mercury Partnership and the Minamata Convention on Mercury

1. The Governing Council at its 27<sup>th</sup> session in 2013 affirmed the role of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership (the “Partnership”) as a vehicle for immediate action and urges all partners to continue their efforts, and urges Governments and other stakeholders to continue to support, participate in, and contribute to the Partnership. UNEP Chemicals Branch developed the project on “The Global Mercury Partnership” as one of UNEP’s projects under its Programme of Work in 2014- 2015. The project will contribute to the expected accomplishment of the chemicals and waste subprogramme where countries, including major groups and stakeholders, increasingly use the scientific and technical knowledge and tools needed to implement sound chemicals management and waste and the related MEAs.

Currently, the Partnership has 131 partners drawn from Governments, IGOs, industry, civil society and academia and is working in eight partnership areas:

- Reducing Mercury in Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining,
  - Mercury Control from coal combustion,
  - Mercury Reduction in Chlor-alkali Production,
  - Mercury Reduction in Products,
  - Mercury Reduction from Cement production,
  - Mercury Supply and storage,
  - Mercury Waste management, and
  - Mercury Air Transport and Fate Research.
2. This communication and outreach strategy is being developed as a component of UNEP’s “UNEP Global Mercury Partnership project “ and is a tool aimed at facilitating the attainment of the goal of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership which is to protect human health and the global environment from the release of mercury and its compounds by minimizing and, where feasible, ultimately eliminating global, anthropogenic mercury releases to air, water, and land.
  3. Governing Council decision 25/5 specified the role of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership as a vehicle for immediate action during the negotiations of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Many countries have emphasized the key role of the Partnership in supporting the work of the INC and stressed the importance of continual support of the Partnership in implementing the Minamata Convention on Mercury. This communication strategy seeks to provide guidance to the Partnership as it continues to provide assistance to countries during the interim period of before the Minamata Convention enters into force.
  4. The Partnership communication and outreach strategy is also being developed in response to the 2014 evaluation survey done among Partners of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership. The strategy highlights areas that need improvement: the Partnership website, development and dissemination of awareness raising materials,

utilization of technical guidance documents, and institutional strengthening of Partnership communication.

5. The nature of this Partnership communication strategy is overarching, and will encourage the Partnership leads to develop specific communication plans relevant to partnership area needs. Each partnership area communication and outreach plan will identify measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound objectives, activities, and indicators of success.

## B. Strategic Objectives

6. The Partnership communication and outreach strategy aims:
  - i) to enhance internal communication of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership defined as communication among Partners within and between Partnership areas;
  - ii) to foster effective external or outreach of the Partnership to its stakeholders;
  - iii) to support the scale-up of successful partnership activities in supporting countries towards ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury;
  - iv) to identify timely and strategic outreach opportunities in 2014-2016; and
  - v) to leverage funds to support Partnership activities.

## C. Partnership communication types, target audience and expected action

7. Partnership **internal communication** refers to communication between and among Partners within the partnership areas and across partnership areas. **External communication** or outreach is targeted at stakeholders including but not limited to governments, civil society, industry, and the private sector. Whether internal or external, Partnership communication is generally categorized into two types, each type having target audiences that will be addressed differently. Each target audience is expected to have concrete action points.

**General awareness raising** materials that are solution-oriented and in simple language

Target audience:

- Governments/Policy Makers- to facilitate ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention;
- Donors - to support scaling up of successful partnership actions;
- Government, NGOs, practitioners - to raise awareness about mercury issues and implement immediate action to reduce mercury pollution ;
- Professionals and practitioners/ of different areas involved with mercury management including product and processes manufacturers - to improve knowledge, attitudes and practices towards mercury free management;
- All stakeholders - to advocate for existing Partners to become more active and for new partners to join the Partnership.

**Technical documents such as** guidance documents, technical publications that are brief and concise

Target audience:

- Governments/Policy makers to facilitate ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention;
- Practitioners (miners, industry, healthcare, dentists, etc.) - to improve knowledge, attitudes and practices towards mercury free management;
- Partners - to advocate use of technical documents by stakeholders.

## **D. Enhancing internal communication**

8. Within available resources, UNEP will seek to identify a dedicated staff member from the **UNEP Partnership secretariat** who will serve as the **focal person for communication and outreach**. The person will be tasked to review and support the upgrade, development and maintenance of the **Partnership website**. Deemed as an effective information sharing amongst partners and stakeholders, recent information about the partnership areas will be disseminated via the website. UNEP will continue to send a **regular e-mail update** to partnership area leads (approximately every two months) and will **host teleconferences** of partnership area leads, as requested by partners and as deemed appropriate.
9. To ensure regular communication between the secretariat focal person for communication and the **partnership areas, each partnership area** will be invited to designate a **focal person for communication**. Partnership area communication focal persons will be invited to coordinate directly with the Partnership secretariat focal person on communication; review regularly the partnership area webpage, inform the UNEP Partnership secretariat on current activities, provide links and references to relevant reports and other information materials, and suggest updates to keep the site active and interesting. A special **closed chat-area** can be created in the UNEP Partnership website where Partners will be able to communicate and have discussions across partnership areas.
10. The Partnership may consider having a **web-based platform**, which could include information about the Partners, projects, and contact details. A web-based platform could serve as an online forum where Partners can update and regulate their profile, recent activities, and contact details by themselves. The platform could be linked to an **automated system to give UNEP notifications of new and relevant information, changes in profile and contact details**. This would likewise provide a means by which the Partnership can determine why Partners are joining, what their current/recent activities are, and how/whether or not they are active.

## **E. Fostering external communication**

11. Recognizing the need to increase its visibility, the Partnership may wish to consider a tab-access page on the Minamata Convention website. A single page where all of the key documents can be found, and having a platform that is linked to the Minamata Convention would facilitate external communication.
12. The Partnership areas may also explore the possibility of having a regional focal person or network as the hub of regional information sharing and dissemination.
13. Based on special topics proposed by the partnership areas, UNEP Partnership secretariat could organize special e-forum sessions/webinars where Partners and stakeholders will have a chance to participate in the discussions.

## F. Communication tools and channels

14. Whether for internal or external communication, the Partnership may wish to maximize tools and channels that will feature case studies, best practices and demonstration projects to take immediate action towards reduction of mercury pollution.
15. The following are suggested communication tools and channels:
  - UNEP's website
  - The website of Partnership leads
  - Conferences, workshops, webinars, and specialized briefings
  - Media relations, press briefings and short documentaries on television channels
  - Print media: banners, fact sheets, brochures, posters, magazines, newsletters, traveling exhibits
  - Broadcast media: audio-visual documentaries, newsfeeds and radio programmes (for example UNifeed and UN radio), Public service announcements
  - Social media
  - Special/celebration events
16. The partnership areas are encouraged to continue using successful communication tools and channels such as webinars (ASGM), brochures (products), audio-visual documentaries (coal), on-line guidance materials (chlor-alkali, coal) among other examples. Partnership areas are encouraged to continue developing technical guidance documents that are brief and concise, and preferably in the 6 UN languages. The Partnership may also wish to consider **publishing such guidance documents in scientific and/or industry journals**.
17. In order for the Partnership to have its own identity and attract more Partners, a **Partnership logo and branding** may be developed using Partnership branding and logo guidelines.
18. UNEP will continue to coordinate the "Story of the Month" that features recent and interesting topics and activities from the partnership areas. The Story is published on the Partnership website and is distributed to partners via an e-mail distribution list. UNEP will be seeking input from the partnership areas. The Story will increase the profile and raise awareness on a certain topic/activity that can be considered a partnership success worth replicating and / or in seeking additional funds.
19. UNEP will continue to **provide technical information from the Partnership at future INCs** and COPs as well as at **regional workshops** and meetings as appropriate and as requested by delegates. The Partnership may also wish to take advantage of relevant conferences and meetings organized by the UN and others to showcase its work.
20. Drawing on the positive feedback gained from "Mercury: Time to Act", and "Mercury: Acting Now" brochures, UNEP will continue to issue brochures that consolidates success stories in reducing mercury pollution. In doing so, governments may be assisted towards early ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention. Increased visibility may also lead to **leveraging of funds** to support Partnership projects and activities.

## G. Key messages for each partnership area

21. Each partnership area through the communication focal person may wish to develop further the key messages as shown below. The overarching message for the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership is: “The time to act on mercury is now!” The Partnership areas may also wish to draw on outreach materials such as fact sheets and technical commentaries developed by the interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.
22. The following key messages were taken from the brochure “Mercury: Acting Now!”:
- Mercury Supply and Storage
    - Mercury is an element that cannot be created nor destroyed
    - Excess mercury supply should be stored in an environmentally sound manner and should be prevented from going back to the marketplace
  - Mercury Reduction in Chlor-alkali
    - Mercury-cell chlor-alkali production is a significant use of mercury
    - Mercury-cell facilities are being replaced by plants using mercury-free technologies
    - Environmentally sound management of surplus and waste mercury is required at mercury-cell facilities that close or convert to mercury-free technologies
  - Mercury Reduction in Products
    - Reducing mercury in products will be the most effective means to reduce mercury in waste
    - Affordable alternatives to mercury are available for most products including thermometers; switches and relays; batteries other than button cells; thermostats; high-intensity discharge lamps; and sphygmomanometers
    - Good practices in dental care will reduce mercury releases from amalgam use
    - Sound management should consider all stages of a product's life-cycle
  - Reducing Mercury in Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining
    - The source of the largest releases of mercury, estimated at 1400 tonnes per year in 2011
    - Whole ore amalgamation is a worst practice that should be stopped
    - Cost effective low mercury and mercury-free techniques are available
    - The rising price of mercury is encouraging the use of alternative techniques
    - Disseminating information and training miners is challenging with 10–15 million miners in more than 70 countries
    - Initiatives to reduce mercury use in ASGM need to be integrated with broader development interventions including healthcare, education and formalization
  - Mercury Control from Coal Combustion

- Coal combustion is a major source of anthropogenic emissions of mercury to air. The releases from power plants and industrial boilers represent roughly a quarter of anthropogenic mercury emissions to the atmosphere
- Mercury emissions from power plants could be reduced by up to 95% by improving coal and plant performance and optimizing existing multipollutant control systems
- Mercury releases from the Cement Industry
  - Mercury in the cement industry originates from three basic sources: the limestone, the fuel, other additives or fuels
  - Cement manufacture is estimated to have generated 9% of total anthropogenic emissions of mercury to air in 2010
  - The major pathway for mercury releases from cement production is to the air. Mercury may also be released to the soil, in wastes and residues and in the cement product itself
- Mercury Waste Management
  - The elimination of mercury in products and processes may be the most efficient way to avoid the presence of mercury in waste
  - While mercury is being phased out of products and processes, there is a need for its environmentally sound management as waste
- Mercury Air Transport and Fate Research
  - An improved understanding of mercury emission sources, fate and transport is important in developing and implementing policies and strategies and establishing baselines to monitor and assess progress on mercury reductions;
  - Enhancing the development of a globally-coordinated mercury observation system, using the Global Mercury Observation System project as a framework (GMOS-[www.gmos.eu](http://www.gmos.eu)), to monitor the concentrations of mercury species into the air and water ecosystems is essential for global understanding and for predicting trends of mercury.
- Global Mercury Assessment and National Inventories
  - Assessment and inventories help focus attention on key issues at global and national level
  - Consistent inventory information facilitates compilation of needs at the global level

## **H. Budget, timeline, evaluation**

23. Whenever possible, communication will be programmed into the “UNEP Global Mercury Partnership project” and into partnership area activity budgets. Fundraising will also be required for specific communication activities that are deemed important for partners. While an initial budget might have been allocated by UNEP for the development of the communication plan and the production of basic communication tools, a regular and sufficient allocation must be considered to ensure that the



communication is sustained and results are built upon in order to achieve the level of profile and message dissemination that have been set out in this strategy.

24. A phased approach is recommended to match the needs, readiness and progress of the implementation of the work of the Partnership, and also the resources available. The initial communication phase which can be set for 12-month duration, will cover the foundational work of strategy development, brand definition, production of basic communication tools, such as the website, and logo development at the Partnership secretariat level. An initial assessment of this phase should be conducted and will inform the development of the second communication phase. This phased approach could also be employed per partnership area to be coordinated by the partnership area communication focal person.
  25. The communication and outreach activities will be regularly monitored and evaluated based on output and impact indicators at both Partnership secretariat level and per partnership area. Possible indicators can include: visits to the website; number of visitors and responses/feedbacks received; number of new initiatives recruited; number of publications produced, distributed and published; number of press releases distributed and the extent of the media pick-up; media activities and events organized; number of requests for assistance and hard-copy materials and type(s) of stakeholder groups making the request etc. Impact can be assessed from direct feedback from the internal stakeholders and external audiences through surveys and the number of participants at various events.
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