

**Revised Discussion Paper Following the Informal Consultation on the
“Global Partnership for Mercury Reduction in Products,” held on May 25, 2005
Portland, Maine, United States
June 23, 2005**

On May 25, 2005 an informal consultation on the “Global Partnership for Mercury Reduction in Products” was held in Portland, Maine. Additional details on the informal consultation can be found in the meeting report, also on the [UNEP website](#). Both [the revised discussion paper](#) and [the meeting report](#) reflect the current state of the discussion. Further comments will be taken into account as stakeholders have the opportunity to discuss this partnership within the structure of their national government or organization, and to consider the development and implementation of pilot projects under the partnership.

The Mercury Products Partnership

Mercury has been used globally in numerous products including paints, fungicides, household appliances, electronics, batteries, automobile switches, dental amalgam, medical equipment and thermometers. While mercury use in pesticides, fungicides, paints, and most batteries has been banned or phased-out in many parts of the world, these uses are continuing in many countries. Some estimate that mercury use in batteries may comprise about one third of the global mercury use in products. Yet for most products, there are effective alternatives available that could replace mercury. The “Global Partnership for Mercury Reduction in Products” would bring together governments, international organizations, national and international companies, trade associations, healthcare, and environmental organizations, international funding institutions, and other interested stakeholders from around the world to share information and provide technical assistance on successful approaches for reducing or eliminating mercury in products.

Proposed Goal of the Partnership

The Partnership would identify the needs of developing countries and countries with economies in transition with regard to reducing the demand for and uses of mercury that impact human health and the environment, consistent with the 2003 and 2005 Decisions of the UNEP Governing Council. The Partnership would promote the reduction of global use and demand for mercury through reduction or elimination of mercury in products and associated processes, where there are effective substitutes. The Partnership would also seek to reduce global mercury releases to air, water, or land that may occur during manufacturing and industrial processes, and during the disposal or recycling of mercury-containing products and wastes.

Proposed Objectives of the Partnership

- Exchange information and expertise on the identification of mercury-added products, effective non-mercury substitutes, products (and specifications) where mercury has been significantly reduced or eliminated (e.g., batteries, thermometers, lamps), and effective regulatory or voluntary approaches to phasing out unnecessary mercury product uses or reducing mercury content of products.

- Transfer and apply best management practices, best available techniques, and technologies for reducing releases from product manufacturing; reducing and eliminating the use of mercury-containing products, where there are effective substitutes, and their associated wastes in health care and other sectors; and programs for reducing or eliminating mercury and other toxic substances from the product supply chain.
- Develop and improve mercury use and emission inventories in countries to establish a baseline for future reductions in specific product categories (e.g., batteries, paints, thermometers).
- Better characterize the amount of mercury used in products globally, including where the products are manufactured and used, and raise public awareness of mercury-containing products and alternatives.
- Conduct assessments of technical, economic, regulatory, or other impediments to using non-mercury alternatives or reducing the amount of mercury used in products.

Proposed Initial Actions of the Partnership

- Identify and exchange information by September 1, 2005 through the UNEP Mercury Program website on: (a) needs of developing countries and countries with economies-in-transition for reducing mercury use in products; and associated processes; and (2) interest and capabilities of developed countries, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, industry, funding institutions, and other stakeholders in addressing those needs.
- Exchange information on approaches and programs for reducing or eliminating mercury and other toxic substances from the product supply chain.
- Facilitate the transfer of successful approaches for reducing the use of mercury-containing products and their associated wastes, including in consumer products and the health care sector.
- Where data is available, partners are encouraged to provide export and import data on commodity-grade (elemental) mercury to assist UNEP in the preparation of the report on global mercury flows called for in the 2005 Governing Council Decision.
- Develop a work plan with an identified time line for this phase of the partnership, including mechanisms for: sharing information on products and alternatives (e.g., Product Partnership section of the UNEP mercury website) for: mobilizing the necessary resources to initiate pilot projects; and reporting on progress of the partnership, as requested in the 2005 Governing Council Decision.
- Initiate pilot projects in 2005 to reduce mercury use in the manufacture of batteries, paints, fungicides, and other products in developing countries and countries with economies-in-transition identified as in need of assistance.

Becoming a Partner

[The UNEP Mercury Program](#) welcomes all stakeholders to participate in the Global Partnership for Mercury Reduction in Products. Generally, a partner is an entity who indicates a willingness to contribute time, resources, or expertise to implement the partnership, which would be designed to advance the objectives of the [2005 UNEP Governing Council decision](#). Partners can include national, state or provincial governments, international organizations, national and international companies, trade associations, healthcare, and environmental organizations, international funding institutions, and other interested stakeholders. As partners, we would hope to work together very closely to ensure the success of this partnership by working to identify the elements and mechanisms necessary to achieve the objectives of the partnership. Interested partners or participants should contact either [Mr. John Buccini](#), Director of the UNEP Chemicals Program, or his staff members: [Ms. Aase Tuxen](#) or [Mr. Juan Caicedo](#).