Enhancing Collaboration: Global Mercury Partnership areas on Chlor-akali, Supply and Storage, Waste Management

Minutes of the Meeting/Conference Call
3 February 2017 13.00- 14.30 EST

Attendees:

Marianne Bailey, USEPA- Partnership Advisory Group (PAG) Chair
Ana Garcia, MAGRAMA- Co-lead, Mercury Supply and Storage partnership area
Rodges Ankrah, USEPA- Co-lead, Mercury Reduction in Chlor alkali partnership area
Takafumi Anan- representing MOEJ, Lead, Mercury Waste Management partnership area
UN Environment secretariat- Eisaku Toda, Desiree Narvaez, Jacobo Deochoa

Apologies:
Judith Torres, MVOTMA-Co-lead, Mercury Supply and Storage partnership area
Mitsugu Saito, MOEJ- Lead, Mercury Waste Management partnership area
Riccardo Savigliano, UNIDO - Co-lead, Mercury Reduction in Chlor alkali partnership area

Minutes:

1. Eisaku Toda, Chemicals and Waste Branch metals team leader opened the meeting, thanked and welcomed the participation of the relevant partnership area co-leads.

2. Desiree Narvaez, Programme Officer, secretariat support to the 3 partnership areas (PAs), provided the background of the conference call in terms of substance and process. The call for closer collaboration among the 3 PAs drew upon requests expressed by the leads at several meetings- PAG 7 (March 2016) in Jordan, Chlor alkali experts' group meeting in Vienna (June 2016) and the Supply and Storage experts' meeting in Madrid (October 2016). Based on inputs from the 3 PAs, the secretariat prepared a "thought starter/synergy paper" and suggested joint action points by the 3 PAs.

3. Marianne Bailey, Chair of the meeting affirmed the hard work and the positive and collaborative spirit of the 3 PAs. She congratulated each one for the partnership area profile posted on the web that showed the relevance of each area's work to relevant Articles in the Minamata Convention. She then called on each partnership area to present their ideas on how to enhance collaboration in order to efficiently meet the Partnership goal and objectives.

4. Ana Garcia, Rodges Ankrah, and Takafumi Anan proceeded to present their respective partnership area ideas as captured in the Annex of the "synergy paper".

5. Takafumi Anan elaborated on inputs made by the mercury waste management partnership in terms of collaboration with chlor alkali and the supply and storage partnerships. These are in the areas of information sharing on best practices and its applicability to existing chlor alkali facilities; as well as on inventories to inform about quantities of mercury remaining in the plants and the waste that needs to be disposed. He highlighted the need for financing schemes and assessment of available technologies on stabilization and waste treatment, in terms of long term stability and cost effectiveness. **The waste partnership recommends to convene an informal expert's group meeting to consider measures to treat mercury from CA process in an environmentally sound manner**.

6. Ana Garcia presented the ideas of the supply/storage partnership area and was pleased with the idea of a joint country project with practical collaboration of the 3 PAs on the ground. This idea was strongly suggested by participants at the Experts meeting of the supply and storage partnership area that took place in Madrid in October 2016. She expressed concerns about the lack of information about funding available and decision processes on projects executed by the Chemicals and Waste Branch. Eisaku clarified that the Global Mercury Partnership is not a financing mechanism and that projects and activities of the partnership area are mostly funded by the lead in line with the business plan. This is the case of Japan for the waste management partnership area. Nevertheless, Eisaku affirmed the need to improve communication flow within the Partnership.

7. Rodges Ankrah reiterated the need for a viable financial mechanism from multilateral donors, given the voluntary nature of the Partnership. He said the Partnership mandate of technical support is clear and proposed to focus on areas of specialties such as on technological options. He said it would be good to look at regional approaches for financing and that storage and waste issues will continue to grow as more and more sequestered mercury becomes available. He affirms that the 3 PAs could embark on joint projects that will entail financing for storage and waste of a closed or decommissioned chlor alkali plant. **He proposed to have closer collaboration and coordination with a wider audience to explore the possibility of joint efforts and that the Partnership can act as "technical adviser" to Parties when Minamata Convention comes into force.**

8. Marianne thanked all 3 for their inputs and turned to the thought starter that proposed a joint project for the 3 PAs. All 3 PA co-leads agreed to identify countries where they could all work together.

9. Desiree reported that among non- WCC member countries, Iraq is the strongest in expressing the need for both technical and financial assistance for its remaining chlor alkali plant. This need hasn't been addressed though, given Partnership funding situation. Desiree enumerated the non- WCC countries by region based on the 2013 global inventory of chlor alkali facilities: France, Romania, Slovak Republic, Serbia (Europe); Colombia, Cuba and Peru (Latin America); Algeria, Angola, Libya, Morocco

(Africa); Indonesia, Myanmar, North Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, (Asia).

10. Rodges mentioned the possibility of having a country from the Mediterranean region or from North Africa. He also mentioned that the USEPA is working on South American countries like Colombia and Peru that have the regulatory framework and institutional drives to execute projects. In addition, these countries have considerable mercury stocks that need to be managed such as from ASGM.

11. Eisaku mentioned that GEF projects like the **National Action Plans for ASGM could be entry points for a joint project.**

12. Ana stated that a project in Uruguay addressed the mercury waste characterization of the area of a chlorine-soda facility; it was detected that there were large amounts of waste with low mercury content and small volume of waste with high content of mercury. Subsequently and in collaboration with two centers in Spain, the stabilization and solidification of these two types of waste was successfully carried out, the final result was compact solid monoliths; leaching tests of these monoliths showed very low values of mercury and, according to Uruguayan legislation, they could be disposed of in industrial landfills. **UNEP secretariat to follow up with Judith on the possibility of a project proposal in Uruguay**.

    Ana commented that several of the mentioned non-WCC countries (Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Syria) are Parties of the Barcelona Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea (UNEP convention). A Regional Plan on Mercury (annexed) , which is legally binding and addresses issues covered by the Minamata Convention, has been adopted under the framework of this Convention (Land Based Sources of pollution Protocol- LBS). Ana is familiar with the work of the Barcelona Convention and could check with colleagues in the secretariat that is based in Athens to gather information about projects or activities being planned or carried out in relation to this mercury plan.

13. As to projects under UNIDO, no information is available if UNIDO is executing projects on chlor alkali. **UNEP secretariat to verify.**

14. As to information and knowledge sharing, the group affirmed that the global inventories of chlor alkali (WCC and non-WCC) are a good source especially on the amount of mercury that needs to be disposed. **Rodges reiterated the need for closer coordination in identifying other approaches or tools to identify non-WCC plants.**

15. **On the technological options for stabilization and solidification, the WCC has compiled a list of companies which is available on the website. Desiree said that the companies may need to validate the information posted by WCC**. Ana reminded that the latest Basel guidelines for the environmentally sound management of mercury waste point to technological options that are recommended by the Basel technical working group**. Ana asked the waste management partnership area on the status of the best practice document on**

mercury waste management where contributions were made by partners. **UNEP secretariat to follow up on the best practice document.**

16. **Eisaku requested the co-chairs present to reach out to partners and others who may have additional information on stabilization and solidification technologies**. Takafumi informed that the operations of Nomura Kohsan is still at the laboratory stage.

17. Marianne highlighted that the tools for a joint project are available such as the technological options. In terms of financing possible projects, donors could be sourced to leverage funds for efforts under the Barcelona Convention or on the USEPA work on Colombia and Peru.

18. **Rodges offered to put together a concept note for a proposal on a joint project and activities. Ana offered to help while Takafumi will confer with Mick Saito. Once the concept note is agreed, resources for the proposal will be discussed.** Marianne commended the 3 PA co-leads for their commitment and willingness to work together on a concrete country project.

19. Eisaku reminded on the other suggested joint action points in the synergy paper. Desiree indicated that on the suggestion to have working groups on the themes (information sharing, technological options, regulatory framework and financing), these could be formed once the project proposal concept is in place and on a need/ad-hoc basis. Membership could be drawn from the 3 PAs.

20. Noting no other issues, Marianne thanked the 3 co-leads and expressed support for their joint efforts. She recognized the hard work of the co-leads under the Partnership which is voluntary amidst their fulltime jobs. Eisaku thanked Marianne for chairing a productive meeting.