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**UN Environment Global Mercury Partnership  
Partnership Advisory Group, Eighth Meeting**  
Geneva, Switzerland, 22 September 2017

**Draft Report of the Eight Meeting of the Global Mercury Partnership  
Advisory Group**

**1. Opening of the meeting**

1. The eighth meeting of the Global Mercury Partnership Advisory Group (PAG) was held at the International Environment House 2, Geneva, Switzerland, on Friday 22 September 2017. The meeting was opened at 9 a.m. by Mr. Achim Halpaap, Chief of the Chemicals and Health Branch, UN Environment.

2. Mr. Halpaap welcomed the participants on behalf of UN Environment. He thanked the Co-Chairs and Partners of the Global Mercury Partnership that contributed to the entry into force of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. He announced PAG 8 as a celebratory meeting and stated that it represented an opportunity to define the strategic role of the Partnership with the entry into force of the Convention. He also noted that communications of results achieved by the Partnership should be considered in the discussion.

3. Mr. Halpaap introduced PAG Co-Chairs, Marianne Bailey (US Environment Protection Agency), who was elected at PAG 7 (March 2016, Jordan); and Mitch Cuna (Philippines), now serving in his last term (4th year) as Co-chair of the PAG.

4. Ms. Bailey started by thanking Mr. Halpaap for opening the meeting and welcomed again all participants. She reported she had the privilege of witnessing the formal establishment of the Global Mercury Partnership in 2007 and have seen it grow and expand into now eight Partnership areas.

5. Ms. Bailey stated that as the Partnership continues to work, it would be strategic in the voluntary approach to support the implementation of the Convention and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She noted the task for the meeting was to review the progress and future plans of the Partnership and its eight areas.

6. Mr. Cuna also welcomed the participants and highlighted the importance of the meeting to the Partnership as there was a need to brainstorm and discuss the way forward in the early implementation of the Minamata Convention.

7. He reported that he and Ms. Bailey, as Co-Chairs of the PAG, had prepared a “Thought starter on the role and potential strategy of the Global Mercury Partnership with entry into force of the Minamata Convention” set out in document UNEP(ED)/Hg/PAG.8/6. The paper outlined strategic and cross-sectoral approaches that suggested how collaboration across the Partnership areas and with other Partners could be enhanced.

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(ED)/Hg/PAG.8/1.

### (b) Organization of work

10. The meeting agreed to conduct its business from 9 am to 6 pm on Friday 22 of September 2017.

11. Mr. Cuna invited Desiree Narvaez from UN Environment, who was serving for last time as Secretariat of the Partnership, for some house-keeping announcements.

12. Ms. Narvaez thanked all Partners and stated that she will miss the work done by the Partnership. She thanked the government of Canada for their DSA support for some participants and proceeded to inform regarding the practical information for the meeting.

## **3. Review of the overall progress, focusing on revised priority actions in light of the Minamata Convention**

13. Ms. Bailey proceeded to introduce document UNEP(ED)/Hg/PAG.8/3, which is a report compiling the activities conducted by the Partnership areas, and invited Partnership area leads to briefly provide summaries of their activities, or highlight specific case studies and lessons learned.

14. The floor was then given to Ms. Lesley Sloss (International Energy Agency - Clean Coal Centre), Co-Lead of the Coal Combustion Partnership Area. Ms. Sloss introduced her Co-Lead, Mr. Peter Nelson (Macquarie University), and highlighted the activities taken by the Partnership area such as the BAT/BEP guidance document, the iPOG (a tool that helps coal-fired plants to

calculate their mercury emissions), the conduction of country studies, among others.

15. Ms. Sloss highlighted that although there is a mercury inventory toolkit for countries to do the Minamata Initial Assessments (MIAs), it was preferred to conduct individual studies to collect specific coal emission factors to use and produce a more accurate baseline. These studies were conducted in Russia, China, South Africa and India. She added that country-specific solutions were being provided for mercury control options.

16. Ms. Sloss then touched on emissions monitoring methods, where the Partnership has made available a toolkit provided by USEPA and are currently supporting it as a standardized method and the development of a guidance document.

17. Finalizing her presentation, Ms. Sloss stated that regarding communication and outreach, all of the documents from the Partnership area are available on the website.

18. In the question and answer session, one participant expressed her interest in the results of the coal combustion emission factors and if it could be incorporated in the current mercury inventory toolkit. Ms. Sloss then turned to Mr. Jakob Maag from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), an expert on the mercury inventory toolkit, and requested him to provide an answer to this question. Mr. Maag welcomed the idea of using the data collected by the Coal Combustion Partnership Area. He stated that they were currently working on updating the toolkit and would highly appreciate access to this information.

19. Mr. Cuna then proceeded to give the floor to Mr. Nicola Pirrone (National Research Council of Italy –Institute of Atmospheric Pollution Research) and David Evers (Biodiversity Research Institute), Co-Leads of the Mercury Air Transport and Fate Research Partnership Area.

20. Mr. Pirrone mentioned that the Partnership area had been very active, they have started a new project on mercury monitoring and data observation, they have been involved in meetings and conferences, they have contributed to chapter three and seven of the Global Mercury Assessment 2018, and they have the objective to develop a Global Monitoring System based on existing regional and global networks.

21. He also said that there is a new GEO Flagship project on Global Mercury Observation Systems which seeks to assess the major patterns of mercury transport, fate, impact on the ecosystem and human health. He highlighted this will contribute to the SDGs.

22. Mr. Evers added that the Partnership is working on the development of a biomonitoring toolkit which can serve as a quantitative and standardized method to identify human exposure and the biological mercury hotspots. This could help prioritize actions to achieve a greater impact on human health.

23. He also shared information from the Syracuse University on assessing contaminated sites and the approaches that could be taken through demonstration projects in Peru and Senegal.

24. Ms. Bailey then invited Mr. Philippe Fonta (World Business Council for Sustainable Development), lead of the Cement Industry Partnership Area, to take the floor.

25. Mr. Fonta mentioned they have constantly been working since the last PAG meeting. He reported they had finalized the guidance documents for controlling mercury emissions developed by Cement Sustainability Initiative (CSI) and how these can be complimentary to the Minamata Convention BAT/BEP guidance. He mentioned the guidelines have been shared worldwide with the trade and manufacturers associations.

26. He then added they were also working with UN Environment on the mercury inventory toolkit and providing support regarding the mercury emissions from the cement industry. He stated that instead of using the default coefficient factors in the toolkit, many of their members have suggested developing a different methodology for the cement industry to obtain a more accurate database and CSI was looking at the next steps.

27. In the following question and answers session, one participant asked if the Partnership area was planning to look from a local perspective to the mercury in dust coming from the cement industry and the impact on the nearby communities. Mr. Fonta stated he would discuss it with the members of the Partnership area to see if it could be something they could take action on.

28. In response to another participant question, Mr. Fonta stated that all of the information collected is transparent, following an agreed protocol, and published on the CSI website. He also added that the aim of the CSI is to make sure the information provided on mercury emissions is accurate.

29. Another participant asked regarding the geographical distribution of the members of the Partnership area and if there are discrepancies among countries with the data on mercury emissions collected through studies of the Partnership area and the data collected with the mercury inventory toolkit. Mr. Fonta mentioned that there are 24 members distributed internationally among the different regions. Moving to the second question, Mr. Fonta stated they only had a discrepancy reported in Germany since this was the only country where a study was conducted, he added that it was expected to happen among other countries as well. Following Mr. Fonta's reply, Mr. Maag asked for the floor to briefly comment that the toolkit could be adjusted to national conditions and encouraged to make coordinated outputs and inputs measurements in the facilities which could enhance estimates.

30. Mr. Cuna then invited Mr. Thomas Groeneveld (USEPA) to take the floor and share the activities undertaken by Products Partnership area.

31. Mr. Groeneveld stated that the Partnership area will enhance the work done in outreach education and capacity building materials. He also mentioned that Mr. Michael Bender, from the Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWW), would share more information regarding related projects.

32. Mr. Groeneveld explained that USEPA and the Partnership area had been discussing the addition of a Co-Lead to the Partnership area. On a side note, he also mentioned that USEPA was developing a regulation that would require reporting to create an inventory of mercury supply, use, and trade in the United States. As part of this effort, USEPA published an initial inventory report in 2017; USEPA is required to publish an update to the inventory report every three years. He hoped this information could also be valuable to the products Partnership area as an example of model legislation implementation.

33. Mr. Bender then took the floor to present a brief overview of a country checklist developed by the ZMWW for phasing out mercury-added products. The checklist had four basic elements: stakeholder engagement strategy, situation assessment, capacity building and strengthening, and key project deliverables. He added that during a workshop conducted in Nairobi, the checklist allowed countries to develop roadmaps to phase out mercury in products.

34. Mr. Bender shared that China struggles financially to produce mercury-free alternatives for the health sector and that manufacturers are currently producing 120 million mercury thermometers. He added that this outlines the need to assist countries in developing strategies for the transition to mercury-free products.

35. He concluded his presentation by encouraging countries to include roadmaps to phase out mercury-added products in the MIAs.

36. A participant asked if there was evidence of diversion of mercury imported for products going into other sectors. Mr. Bender passed the floor to Mr. Maag who had recently conducted a study on mercury supply in the Africa region. Mr. Maag reported that mercury imported for registered products would not be a significant source of the supply to artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM). Following Mr. Maag's reply, Mr. Bender added that there had been discussions whether mercury imported for dental amalgam could be diverted into the ASGM sector.

37. Another participant highlighted the cost differences between mercury-added products and alternatives and asked if these cost differences were considered in the project. Mr. Bender mentioned that consultants were hired for the project and researched on the cost-effectiveness. He mentioned that as more countries increased the demand for alternatives, the prices become more competitive over time.

38. Mr. Bender also added that customs coding did not differentiate mercury-added products from the alternatives and suggested that this was a topic to further look into.

39. Ms. Bailey then proceeded to give the floor to Mr. Rodges Ankrah (USEPA), Co-Lead of the Chlor-Alkali Partnership Area.

40. Mr. Ankrah reported the Partnership area had been putting efforts to identify the remaining facilities in need of conversion. He highlighted

financing as one of the major challenges to convert to mercury-free technologies. The Partnership had been trying to find financing opportunities to help plants to convert, which requires the elaboration of a good business case.

41. He also discussed a joint project with the supply and storage and waste management Partnership areas in Peru, where there are two chlor-alkali plants using mercury. This project has received much support from the government of Japan and the government of Peru and also from the Partnership areas involved. The major challenge highlighted by Mr. Ankrah was the engagement with the companies.

42. He concluded by stressing the need to conduct an in-depth study of the remaining facilities that need to convert with the aim to establish a strong case study for financing and also highlighted the need to improve the communication internally and externally. Lastly, he thanked the World Chlorine Council (WCC) for their contribution to the Partnership Area.

43. One participant raised a question regarding decommissioning of the conversion of the chlor-alkali facilities. Mr. Ankrah answered they are currently at the stage of engaging with the facilities and finding what their needs are. He said that following this, they will look at the stage of addressing decommissioning of the facilities.

44. Another participant commented that the remediation on site and off site can be very expensive and this could be used to elaborate the need for decommissioning. Mr. Ankrah agreed with the participant's point and also added that with the Minamata Convention entry into force there is the need to comply with the switch.

45. A participant from WCC added some remarks regarding the previous questions. He mentioned that the key challenge is the pay back period to the facilities converting which is up to twenty years. He also mentioned that WCC shares the individual experience of member companies and adds that experience to the core of guidance and recommendations that are available. He concluded by mentioning that in Europe it is now mandatory to solidify mercury waste and added that information regarding companies that provide this treatment is listed on the WCC website.

46. Another participant raised the question of how replicable was the conversion to mercury-free alternatives, specifically regarding the technology and skills needed, in developing countries. Mr. Ankrah mentioned that this depended a lot on the facilities themselves and it was more of a case by case study to identify their specific needs.

47. Mr. Cuna thanked Mr. Ankrah and Mr. Riccardo Savigliano (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) for their contribution to the Partnership area.

48. He then proceeded to invite Ms. Ana Garcia Gonzales (Government of Spain) and Ms. Judith Torres (Government of Uruguay), Co-Leads of the Supply and Storage Partnership Area to take the floor and report on their activities.

49. Ms. Torres reported the Partnership area had been involved in meetings and also organized a meeting with the Chlor-Alkali Partnership Area to facilitate knowledge transfer. She highlighted that another challenge with the conversion of chlor-alkali facilities is to provide the storage of the mercury waste.

50. She explained a project on stabilization and solidification technologies done with mercury waste from chlor-alkali facilities in Uruguay to ensure appropriate storage for the waste. The Partnership area also reviewed the UN Environment document "Summary of Supply, Trade, and Demand Information on Mercury". Lastly, they also participated in GEF project meetings in Argentina to facilitate the implementation of the Minamata Convention.

51. Ms. Garcia then took the floor and thanked the Chlor-Alkali Partnership Area and the Waste Management Partnership Area for inviting them to participate in a joint meeting. She highlighted the need to collaborate among Partnership areas and suggested to also join efforts with the Mercury Products Partnership Area which could enhance the effectiveness of the projects undertaken by the Partnership.

52. A participant commented on the need to promote enforcement of regulations. She stated that facilities hesitate to invest in new technologies if they do not see an investment or interest from governments.

53. Ms. Bailey moved forward with the agenda and invited Mr. Masaru Tanaka (Research Institute of Solid Waste Management Engineering, Japan) Lead of the Waste Management Partnership Area, to briefly summarize the activities undertaken by the Partnership area.

54. Mr. Tanaka mentioned the number of Partners had been increasing and currently there are 80 Partners and eighteen ongoing projects targeting contaminated sites, mine tailings, healthcare wastes, waste products, and multiple types of mercury wastes. He also stated that the Partnership put forward informal efforts on mercury waste thresholds and requirements. Additionally, he said the Partnership area had been supporting the elaboration of the document "Global Mercury Waste Assessment" by UNEP-IETC, to be published later in the week.

55. Mr. Tanaka reported that current management of mercury waste is a big issue and not properly conducted around the world. He suggested to promote a movement towards a zero waste generation and regarding the 3 "R" initiative of reducing, reusing and recycling. He added that integrated waste management is essential and a lifecycle approach will be the objective of this Partnership area.

56. A participant commented that the cement sector also supports the 3 "R" principles. However, under appropriate guidance, the cement industry is capable of using all the waste which does not leave any mercury residue. Another participant added that currently there is a global movement towards zero waste and this could represent an opportunity to include mercury waste management in the implementation of zero waste villages. The concept of circular economy and its applications in hazardous waste was mentioned by another participant. He suggested the Partnership Area use this concept and,

possibly, provide guidance on its implementation. Lastly, a participant asked if there was information available on the effectiveness of the waste treatment facilities to see how much mercury is captured.

57. Mr. Tanaka highlighted the role of the cement industry in waste reduction and recycling. He mentioned that in Japan there were 30 million tonnes treated annually in the cement industry. He also stressed the need for a strategy for mercury waste management, taking into account the risks, costs, and energy resources usage.

58. Mr. Cuna then invited Ms. Susan Keane (Natural Resources Defense Council), Mr. Ludovic Bernaudat (UN Environment), and Mr. Jerome Stucki (UNIDO), Co-Leads of the Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) Partnership area.

59. Mr. Stucki reported that they had very active Partners and the activities were divided into three groups. The first one was the support of the governments with the MIAs and the National Action Plans (NAP) for the ASGM sector. He mentioned some of the projects conducted focused on governance, capacity building, and formalization.

60. Referring to the second group of activities, which consisted of elimination of worst practices and the promotion of mercury-free alternatives, Mr. Stucki informed that Partners were working with mining companies in Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru in helping them to design mercury reduction plans and providing technical assistance for safe amalgamation and the use of retorts. The Artisanal Gold Council (AGC) was also mapping gold and mercury supply chains in Guinea, Ghana, and Burkina Faso. He added that PACT had been working in Zimbabwe by helping reduce mercury and raising awareness of its hazards.

61. He finally addressed the third group of activities consisting of exploring innovative market-based approaches. Some of the activities conducted were the feasibility assessment to reduce mercury use in the sector and identification of investors.

62. Ms. Keane commented that the activities highlighted by Mr. Stucki were just a sample of the work done by the Partnership area and invited participants to refer to the document UNEP(ED)/Hg/PAG.8/3 for further information.

63. She also added that the Partnership had also completed the NAP guidance and it was going to be proposed for formal adoption at COP 1 of the Minamata Convention. Additionally, she informed that they were going to be very active at COP 1 with the implementation of an ASGM booth and the conduction of a knowledge lab organized around the creation of NAPs.

64. Mr. Bernaudat reported the success of the creation of GEF GOLD programme, which planned to conduct projects related to the formalization of the sector, access to the market, technology transfer, and knowledge management in eight countries. He concluded by informing that the activities will be able to start next year.



65. In response to a question raised by a participant on whether there were any countries that had completed the NAPs, Ms. Keane stated that currently no country had yet finalized a NAP but there were many undertaking them.

#### **4. Updates on activities of the Global Mercury Partnership secretariat on communication and outreach**

66. Introducing the next item on the agenda of the meeting, Mr. Cuna stated that the Secretariat had endeavored to enhance the impact of the Partnership by facilitating communication between areas and with the broader stakeholder community. He highlighted the efforts made by the Secretariat to improve communication and outreach by delivering a new website and visual identity for the Partnership.

67. Ms. Bailey proceeded to introduce Mr. Kenneth Davis, with the Secretariat of the Partnership, to present updates and progress made on the Partnership communication and outreach.

68. Mr. Davis started by stating that communication is essential to any organization, and in terms of the Partnership, communication was the main tool they had to accomplish the goal of reducing and eliminating mercury pollution.

69. Mr. Davis then proceeded to present the communication activities with external audiences. He reported regarding the website first, as the most important communication asset which compiled relevant resources and publications per Partnership area serving public and Partners themselves. He also explained that the website went through a migration to a new content management system which allowed them to update the website by adding a new page for Partners and making it more attractive. He then proceeded to report on the statistics of the website which showed a good amount of visitors and engagement. He encouraged Partners to help in keeping the website updated by sharing new resources and publications with the Secretariat. Lastly, he mentioned there was another migration in the near future and with additional resources it could represent an opportunity to further improve this communication tool.

70. Another improvement achieved was the new visual identity. Mr. Davis mentioned that with the contribution of ZOI Environment Network a logo had been developed for the Partnership. He added that only Partners could use the logo and referred participants to the meeting document UNEP(ED)/Hg/PAG.8/4 for additional guidelines

71. Moving on to communication activities with internal audiences, Mr. Davis informed that a list of the registered Partners was constantly updated and shared with the Partnership area leads with the purpose of encouraging communication among Partners.

72. He mentioned that, although they require significant resources, in-person meetings were very important to the Partnership. He congratulated and recognized the Partnership areas that hosted in-person meetings since the last PAG.

73. Mr. Davis concluded his presentation by pointing out a few recommendations for the Partnership area leads to facilitate communication within the Partnership. Regarding the e-mail list, he asked to regularly update it, to use it for sharing information, and also suggested to consider an e-mail list serve. He encouraged Partnership areas to organize teleconferences where the Secretariat was interested to participate, and suggested to work towards updating the business plans.

74. In the questions and answers session, a participant complimented the work reported by the Secretariat. She suggested that according to previous discussions of the PAG, there was the idea to link the work of the Partnership with the MIAs. She wanted to know if it could be possible to create promotional material to be handed out to the agencies implementing the MIAs.

75. Mr. Davis reported that regarding the MIAs implemented by the UN Environment, they were also presenting the work and resources of the Partnership. He agreed that sharing information materials with other agencies would be a good communication approach.

76. A comment was raised by a participant who stated that communication was crucial to inspiring action. He added that there was a need for more statistical information regarding health in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the work of the Partnership.

77. In response to comments made by other participants, Mr. Davis agreed that the Partnership is playing a crucial role in making the Minamata Convention one the most successful multilateral agreements. Mr. Davis also stated that web site analytics included information on what countries the web site visits came from.

78. To finalize this section of the meeting, Mr. Davis mentioned that communicating with the general public was very important and there was a need for a strategy on how to balance the different types of audiences.

## **5. Mercury-related activities of the Partners in addition to the work of the Partnership areas**

79. Turning to agenda item 5, the Co-Chair, Ms. Bailey mentioned that in addition to the work by the Partnership areas, there were Partners who had implemented activities supporting more than one Partnership area. She added that this could be an additional basis for the strategy of the Partnership with entry into force of the Minamata Convention.

80. She then proceeded to give the floor to Mr. Bernaudat and Mr. Davis on behalf of UN Environment. Mr. Cuna clarified that although UN Environment serves as the Secretariat of the Global Mercury Partnership, it is also a Partner, and as such, activities to be presented are the contribution of the Chemicals and Health Branch of UN Environment to the Partnership.

81. Mr. Bernaudat reported that UN Environment is working with the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals

(IOMC) group on mercury where agencies can better visualize which countries are currently implementing MIAs. Currently, UN Environment has 53 countries working with the mercury inventory toolkit which can choose between two levels. Level one is a simplified version and level two is a more comprehensive version and adjustable to specific national conditions. He mentioned that they were working on improving level one and in the future, they will try to identify regional emission standards for countries that face the same conditions.

82. After informing that currently 23 countries were receiving support for NAPs implemented by UN Environment, Mr. Bernaudat gave the floor to Mr. Davis for further information regarding the global component of the NAP.

83. Mr. Davis stated that the global component was an initiative to support countries developing NAPs by providing assistance, technical support, and guidance. He shared that through this component, they were able to hold an African regional workshop on NAPs and baseline estimates, and to develop a video on worst practices to encourage best practices. He also mentioned that currently, they are working on finalizing a toolkit in collaboration with AGC for the NAPs, working with MAPX to build a platform for NAP countries to manage special data, working on a formalization toolkit, and developing an illustrated guide to mercury-free ASGM practices.

84. He then proceeded to present a recently published report “Global Mercury Supply, Trade, and Demand Report 2017”. He encouraged participants to read it and mentioned that the report was an update of a 2006 version which contained engaging graphics showing the sources, trade flows, and end uses of mercury.

85. Mr. Davis reported that they were currently working on the “Global Mercury Assessment 2018”, an update of the 2013 version, and said that some of the new sections covered by this update were the estimated quantification of releases to water and an assessment of mercury levels in biota and humans. He also informed that a preliminary draft of the document was available for comment on the website and encouraged participants to review it and provide feedback.

86. To conclude, Mr. Davis shared information regarding a GEF project that started in 2015 for global monitoring of human exposure and environmental concentration of mercury and strengthening the capacity for its analysis. He added that they were going to finish this project at the end of this year and there was going to be a final workshop in December to showcase the results.

87. The floor was then given to a participant who referred to the “Global Mercury Supply, Trade, and Demand Report 2017”. He mentioned that mercury production had increased in the last five years and much of this production is for the ASGM sector, which should be recognized as a priority. He also added that existing data collection mechanisms were not sufficient for what it was needed.

88. Mr. Cuna then proceeded to give the floor to Ms. Melissa Lim, Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions.

89. Ms. Lim stated that under the work of the Basel Convention, they were able to provide support to the Partnership. She reported that technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of mercury waste were recently updated.

90. She added that they also focused on ways to enhance the capacity of countries to comply with the requirements of the Basel Convention regarding mercury waste. They recently organized a workshop on the environmentally sound management in Uruguay with the collaboration of the Basel Convention Regional Center and they have initiated follow up projects in some Latin American countries.

91. Lastly, she added they had been working in developing a chemicals and waste platform to assist countries in implementing the BRS Convention and the Minamata Convention. She mentioned that the BRS Secretariat was committed to the Global Mercury Partnership and looked forward to continuing their work together.

92. Moving to the next presentation, Ms. Bailey gave the floor to Mr. Maag (UNITAR) to report on the mercury-related activities.

93. Mr. Maag mentioned that UNITAR had been supporting 46 countries through various programs. He said that one of these was the ratification support project, funded by the Swiss Government, which complemented the MIA work. This project had supported 22 countries and so far 9 of them had ratified the Convention.

94. Additionally, Mr. Maag also shared that UNITAR had worked towards building capacity in executing MIAs. They have provided training in the delivery of inventories, legal gap assessments, infrastructure assessment, identifying priorities, awareness raising, among others. He added that UNITAR had been working with UNIDO (ten countries), UNDP (six countries) and UN Environment (three countries) for the MIAs.

95. In relation to the execution of NAPs, he reported on the development of an electronic data management tool to collect quantitative data and record pictures to document ASGM sites.

96. He then presented a project on socio-economic research methodology and pointed out that targeting ASGM and reducing its mercury releases required consideration of social conditions. He informed that the results of this project will be shared with the ASGM Partnership area to complement this activity. He mentioned that this project would help to guide appropriate ASGM legislation within a country.

97. In collaboration with UN Environment Global Mercury Partnership, Mr. Maag reported that they had been working on a toolkit for ASGM formalization. He highlighted that governments are experiencing challenges with the ASGM sector and this toolkit aimed to help during the NAP development and the implementation of the Minamata Convention.

98. Another important continuing activity he mentioned was the Mercury Platform and MercuryLearn in cooperation with UN Environment. The Mercury Platform is meant to raise awareness and has an interactive forum for discussion, while the MercuryLearn is a comprehensive learning course to help parties use the inventory toolkit. Additionally, they also had a chemicals and waste platform which contained cross-cutting information regarding BRS Convention and the Minamata Convention and also shows the preferred lifecycle approach.

99. The floor was then given to Mr. Jerome Stucki from UNIDO.

100. Mr. Stucki reported that UNIDO was also supporting different countries for MIAs and NAPs. He announced that in China they will start a project on vinyl chloride monomer (VCM) to discourage the use of mercury catalysts. He added that eight countries have supported the Swiss-funded projects, with different focuses such as working in waste management, legislation and ratification, and elimination or stabilization of mercury products. They have also been conducting regional meetings.

101. He informed there was a GEF project working on waste, with one recently completed in Mongolia where they worked towards increasing capacity in identifying, monitoring, and remediating contaminated sites, additionally they also established an interim storage facility for mercury waste and hazardous waste. He added that in Tunisia there was an ongoing project where they were doing mercury inventories, complementary assessment on chlor-alkali plants where they had successfully converted to membrane technology.

102. Lastly, he announced that the GEF GOLD project is in the preparatory phase and it was hoped to be launched in the next year. Under GEF GOLD UNIDO has projects planned in Mongolia, Philippines, and Burkina Faso.

## **6. Role and Strategy of the Partnership with Minamata Convention Entry into Force**

103. Turning to item six of the meeting, Ms. Bailey reflected on the negotiations of the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the key role of the Partnership in supporting the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC), and stressed the importance of continued support of the Partnership in implementing the Convention. She reported that the Co-Chairs of the PAG, Mr. Cuna and herself, prepared a thought starter on the role and potential strategy of the Partnership with the entry into force of the Convention which is set out in document UNEP (ED)/Hg/PAG.8/6.

104. Ms. Bailey shared a summary of overall accomplishments of the Partnership, such as the recognition as a key mechanism for the delivery of immediate action on mercury, the pivotal role in the development of the Convention, catalyzing action towards ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention, raising awareness on the risks of mercury pollution and ways to reduce it, developing sector-based technical guidance documents and tools, providing technical support on mercury reduction projects, and contributing to key scientific and technical publications. As examples, she mentioned the draft guidance on ASGM NAPs and the Process Optimization

Guidance for coal-fired plants. She also added that individual Partners had implemented various activities benefiting from the network of experts in the Partnership.

105. Regarding the role of the Partnership after the entry into force of the Convention, Ms. Bailey suggested that it will need to take into account the timeframes set out in the Minamata Convention as the Partnership considers delivery of technical support, capacity building, and technology transfer. She mentioned that Partnership areas might address emerging, or poorly understood, sources of mercury use and emissions. She highlighted that the Partnership and the Minamata Convention contribute to the broader sustainability agenda.

106. Additionally, Ms. Bailey presented possible thematic areas for consideration of sectoral and cross-sectoral approaches. These possible areas were: 1) Mercury emissions and releases, 2) Products, processes, and waste management, 3) Research, development and monitoring, and 4) ASGM. She noted there are opportunities to improve the way Partnership works to achieve a better outcome across Partnership areas. She mentioned that they could also address areas that have not been fully covered by the Partnership such as non-ferrous metal production.

107. To conclude, Ms. Bailey raised the topic of securing funds for the Partnership. She addressed some of the funding issues raised by participants during the meeting and proposed some ideas to access funds for the Partnership activities. She encouraged partners to consider accessing funding sources with the GEF in line with COP guidance, the Special International Programme (SIP), and the Special Programme. She added that the Secretariat of the Partnership could assist in coordinating fundraising activities and provide further advice. She invited participants to explore further options and share information with the rest of the Partnership.

108. The floor was then given to Ms. Jacqueline Alvarez from UN Environment. She expressed her contentment to work with such a distinguished group of experts and shared the vision presented by the Co-Chairs in the thought starter document. She then invited Partnership areas to proceed with small group discussions to consider the future role of the Partnership, cross-area activities, coordination of activities, implementation of the Minamata Convention, and interaction with financial mechanisms.

109. Ms. Narvaez informed that Partnership areas were grouped for the small group discussions as follows: 1) ASGM area; 2) Fate and transport area; 3) Products, chlor-alkali, supply and storage, and waste management areas; and 4) Coal emissions and cement industry areas.

110. In response to a comment raised by a participant, Ms. Alvarez mentioned that details of the financial mechanisms from the Minamata Convention, such as who is eligible to apply for the funding, were pending the decisions from COP1. She encouraged participants to think about further options and possibilities to access funds for the activities of the Partnership.

111. To address another comment regarding the implementation of the Minamata Convention, Ms. Alvarez agreed that the Partnership could help in its implementation, however, the Partnership was established by the UNEP Governing Council, and the mandate did not expire with the entry into force of the Convention. She highlighted that the goal of the Partnership is much broader and, within this goal, it can support the implementation of the Convention.

112. Ms. Bailey added that the Partnership had more flexibility regarding their role to achieve its set goal. She mentioned that the Partnership can be responsive to the COP needs by providing tools and information requested.

113. Support to move forward was pointed out by another participant and encouraged the PAG to be positive and productive in order to provide the best input for discussion. He added that they should still have these discussions although it is not possible to know the decisions to be made at COP1.

114. Mr. Cuna then invited all participants to break into the four-small group discussions to continue the dialogue on this topic. The guiding questions provided to the participants were: 1) How can the Partnership best respond to the needs of the countries and stakeholders in the implementation of the Minamata Convention?; 2) How can the Partnership best facilitate and coordinate the activities of the Partners?; 3) How can Partnership areas cooperate with each other?; 4) What specific activities can the Partnership develop to assist in the implementation of the Convention?; and 5) How can the Partnership interact with the financial mechanism of the Convention?

115. Once the groups had finalized their discussions, Mr. Cuna invited each groups' rapporteur to take the floor and share the main highlights of the dialogue addressing the guiding questions.

On ASGM: To answer question number 1, it was suggested to facilitate communication with others outside of the ASGM sector in order to better inform what is happening in the ASGM world. Other suggestions were creating meeting opportunities among stakeholders, the decentralization of the Partnership with a focus on regional and national levels, integration of the Partnership into existing platforms. Question 2, 3 and 4 were answered under the following points. It was proposed to update the database of information gathered regarding the different ASGM initiatives that are happening in countries outside of the GEF scope and share it with stakeholders. They recommended the creation of an online platform where Partners could upload their activities directly and the creation of a newsletter addressed to interested stakeholders. It was also suggested to provide support on topics related to the legal framework. Additionally, they advocated to continue and improve the roster of experts and make them with a focus at the national level. The ASGM Partners highlighted to raise awareness of best practices, technologies, and formalization. They noted that although there is a lot of information, some countries struggle to access it, therefore they suggested to simplify the message to different stakeholders. There was a need to improve the national communication strategies within a country to better disseminate information. Regarding question number 5, it was suggested for a Partner to take the lead and to submit a project proposal where other Partnership areas could participate and work together once the funds had been accessed.

On the fate and transport area: For question number 1, they suggested to provide advice in research and development, monitoring, and capacity building in technical areas they had expertise in. They also considered the possibility of engaging delegates through MIAs and identified Articles 9, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, and 22 as highly relevant to the Partnership area. Moving to question 2, they agreed that increasing communication would be helpful to the coordination of activities of the Partnership area. They were hoping to develop projects and requested the Secretariat in helping to facilitate them. In question number 3, the PAG was considered very important for transferring information across the different Partnership areas. They proposed that the fate and transport area could help providing data monitoring assistance, statistical design of projects, and data management to other areas of the Partnership. Regarding question number 4, the development of a global mercury observation system was highlighted. The area can advise on emerging issues regarding mercury. It was suggested to look at previous Conventions on what worked and what did not work as guidance. They also considered a cloud-based interoperable system for a mercury knowledge platform would be a preferred approach. In regards to the last question, the Partnership area found difficult to elaborate on the issue and it suggested to address it once the COP1 had finalized.

On products, chlor-alkali, supply and storage, and waste management areas: Starting with question 1, the group encouraged more active projects with larger audiences, the use of media and web, and consider to start translating materials into other languages. It was proposed to specifically target the outreach tools to different sectors. They recommended coming forward with effective and practical explanations for various audiences. There needs to be an understanding of the specific needs of a country and balance it with the resources the Partnership has access to. Moving to question 2, it was suggested to coordinate the activities of the Partnership with an emphasis in the urgency of the Convention deadlines and the needed steps to comply. They also requested Partners to inform whether their activities should be attributed to the Partnership which can help to provide accurate information across the different areas. For question 3, and similar to the points raised by the previous groups, they suggested the need to focus on geographical regions, specific needs, and the lifecycle approach for some of these issues. They requested the Secretariat to track and share the different activities by the Partnership areas and compile them to improve internal communication among Partners. Regarding question 4, there was an idea to create effective and applicable standards, parameters, and other measures that would not require additional legislative processes. It was suggested to revise customs coding of the products, to identify co-benefits, added-value, how the small family of mercury can contribute to larger families such as climate change, and identify non-Partners institutions that can contribute expertise and share the word. For the final question, they agreed to reach out to SIP and GEF for the financial mechanisms issues.

On coal emissions and cement areas: To answer the first question, this group suggested to enhance the awareness and capacity building to those stakeholders who have limited knowledge. They identified gaps within the Partnership, such as non-ferrous metals and contaminated sites, and encouraged brainstorming to address this issue, perhaps another Partnership area would be needed or it could be merged with existing ones. They recommended considering the lessons learned from other



Conventions and to advertise the co-benefit effects of mercury reduction strategies. Additionally, to focus on the Minamata Convention and beyond, since the Partnership is a voluntary approach it could look beyond the legal and regulatory framework of the Convention and look at new areas for action. For question number 2, they recommended to provide a model on how to calculate or measure data of mercury control emissions and to develop a database of activities and technologies to be carried out by Partners. It is important for each Partnership area to reach out to all its Partners on a regular basis. Moving to question 3, they agreed that it was important to take a holistic approach and to not only displace the problem but to find a solution, i.e. mercury from products area are displaced to waste management area. It was suggested to consider a cross-media approach to include mercury reduction throughout the whole value chain. For question number 4, they supported to coordinate with implementation agencies for practical opportunities and to continue providing support in countries with the implementation of BAT/BEP. Finally, for question 5, they supported the development of specific projects that could be integrated under a global umbrella programme where funding could be available, identifying co-financing opportunities, and in-kind contributions by Partners.

116. Mr. Cuna then proceeded to open the floor for discussions bearing in mind the guiding questions and focusing on the synergies among areas.

117. Ms. Bailey noted that there was a lot of discussion on internal and external communication. She asked for some specific ideas to make sure information from the Partnership is disseminated at the national level.

118. Some of the ideas raised by the participants were to take advantage of UN focal points in countries and focal contacts at governments and to reach out to the regional centers of the BRS Conventions. Another participant added that they were working towards developing a global mercury knowledge platform which can work as an interactive mechanism to transfer information to users at a national level. It was also suggested to help governments by developing national strategies, tools, and methodologies for countries to implement themselves. Finally, it was noted to consider the UN Environment and UNIDO National Cleaner Production Centers.

119. Ms. Bailey asked participants to provide thoughts regarding co-benefits and also the synergies across different Partnership areas.

120. One participant added that the Fate and Transport area had the advantage of having many scientist Partners and in regards to global analysis data they can assist other Partnership areas in the scientific analysis level, with a similar approach of mapping generations. Another participant added that they needed to improve the interaction with the MIAs and the key focal points for different countries.

121. Regarding the different approaches that could be taken with respect to the funding available, Ms. Bailey mentioned that the knowledge management component of the GEF GOLD project will be undertaken by the Partnership area leads of the ASGM area, in collaboration with other partners. She encouraged participants from different Partnership areas to consider a similar approach.

122. A participant commented that in the GEF GOLD programme, the knowledge management component was led by the ASGM area who has been appointed a key role in the implementation of the project.

123. Another participant added that SDGs could be used in fundraising efforts since some of the activities of the Partnership area have a broader contribution. Lastly, a participant added that the corporate social responsibility initiatives in the private sector could be looked at as a funding source.

124. Mr. Fernando Lugris, Chair of INC, was then invited by Mr. Cuna to take the floor. Mr. Lugris expressed his gratitude to be at the meeting and recalled the birth of the Partnership with the goal to start actions at an early stage worldwide, which was proven to be very effective. He congratulated and thanked the participants for building up the information that ultimately contributed to the development of the Convention.

125. Regarding the Convention, Mr. Lugris said it was a very important tool but as a dynamic tool and it needed to evolve in the future, therefore he looked forward to the next steps of the Partnership, the synergies, and new challenges they will take on board to push for the broader agenda and the Minamata Convention.

## **7. Other matters**

126. Mr. Eisaku Toda was then given the floor to provide information on the Minamata COP 1 exhibitions, knowledge labs, showcase events, thematic sessions, ministerial roundtables, MIA clinics, and other activities planned during the event.

127. Following this, Partnership area leads and the Co-Chairs were recognized for their contribution to the Partnership and were awarded a certificate of appreciation provided by the Mr. Jacob Duer (Principal Coordinator of the Minamata Interim Secretariat and SAICM Secretariat) and Mr. Lugris.

128. Ms. Bailey proceeded to thank all the participants and encouraged them to continue working together. She then acknowledged Ms. Narvaez and her work over the years with the Partnership and wished her all the best as she moved on with new challenges and goals in her career. Ms. Bailey continued to thank Mr. Toda, Mr. Davis, and Ms. Alvarez for all their hard work.

129. Mr. Cuna also took the opportunity to thank everyone involved in making the meeting possible and thanked the participants for attending and providing their valuable input up for discussion. He mentioned that with the implementation stage of the Minamata Convention, the Partnership will add more significance to its contribution to help reduce mercury pollution.

130. To finish the meeting, Mr. Duer congratulated the Co-Chairs for their work and recognized the contribution of the different Partnership areas since the start of the Partnership. He noted that COP1 of the Minamata Convention is also a celebration of the success of the Partnership and countries for taking on board the mercury agenda and the sustainable development agenda. He reported there were now 79 ratifying countries.

131. Regarding COP1, he informed that there were more than 1300 registered participants for the conference and 154 countries represented, which is a sign of the commitment towards the Convention. He acknowledged the importance of the future Partnership's work with the implementation stage of the Convention and persuaded Partners to play a proactive role in capacity building, technical assistance, and provision of scientific data. He congratulated the ASGM Partnership Area for accessing GEF funding and encouraged other areas to replicate this approach. Lastly, he thanked everyone again for their individual and collective efforts to make mercury history.

#### **8. Closure of the meeting**

132. Ms. Bailey thanked Mr. Lugris and Mr. Duer for their support and proceeded to declare the eighth meeting of the Partnership Advisory Group as closed at 6 pm on 22 September.