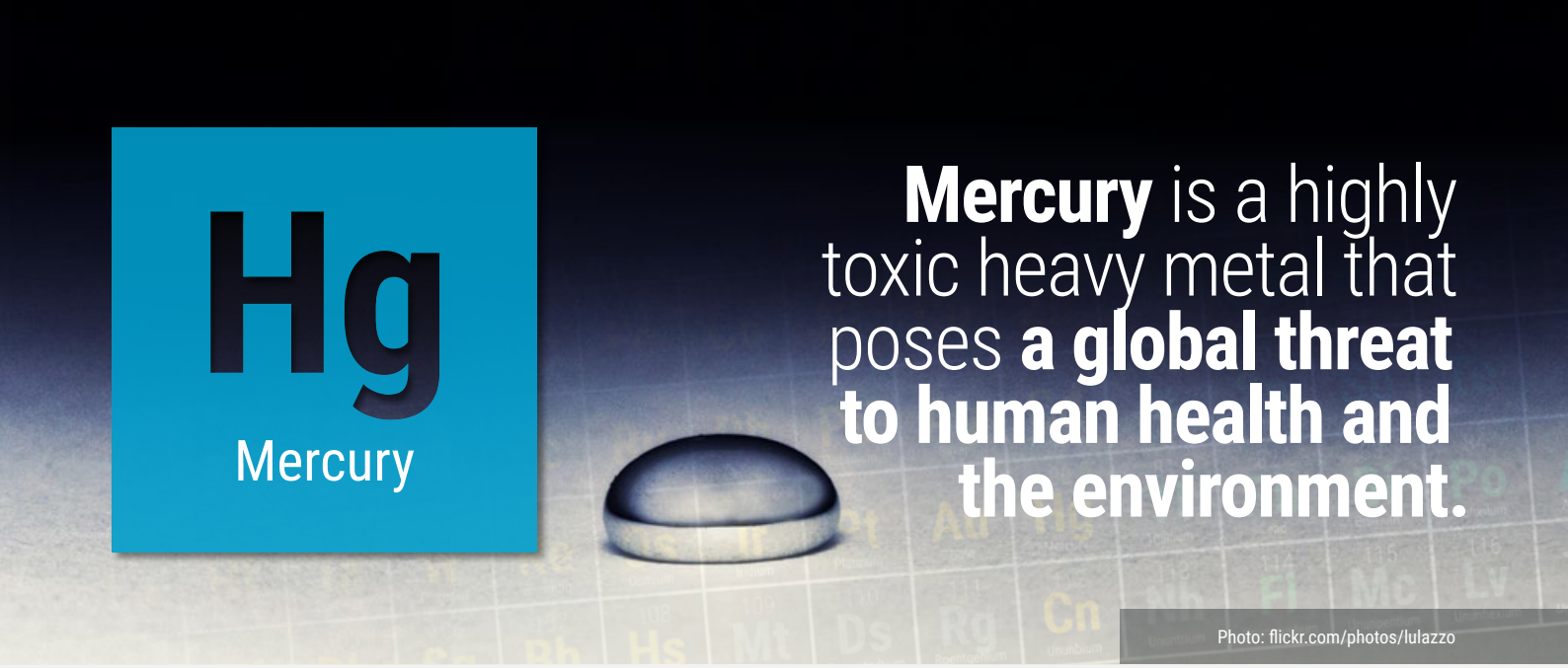

Mercury is a highly toxic heavy metal that poses **a global threat to human health and the environment.**

Photo: flickr.com/photos/lulazzo

Mercury is one of the top 10 chemicals of major public health concern, according to WHO. Released to the environment from a variety of human activities, it is transported around the globe and bioaccumulates in the food chain. Mercury pollution affects human health and the environment, even in remote locations. People are exposed to mercury primarily through eating contaminated fish or breathing mercury vapor directly. Mercury harms the nervous system, heart, kidneys, and other systems of the body. Children, infants and fetuses are at the highest risk because of their developing nervous systems.

UN environment programme

What we do

Global Mercury Partnership

The United Nations Environment Programme coordinates the **Global Mercury Partnership**, a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder network that focuses on immediate actions to reduce the harmful effects of mercury pollution.

GLOBAL MERCURY PARTNERSHIP

Government

Industry

NGOs

Academia

The Partnership gathers over 190 stakeholders from governments, industry, NGOs, and academia committed to protecting human health and the environment from the impacts of mercury, and to reducing global environmental releases of mercury. Established in 2007, the Partnership was instrumental in building momentum for the negotiation and rapid adoption of the Minamata Convention.

Today, the Partnership is focusing its work on ensuring timely and effective implementation of the Minamata Convention as well as on offering information, capacity-building, and awareness-raising in support of global action on mercury.

Country Support

Support to countries on ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention, adopted in 2013 to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury.

Access to Information

Providing technical information such as: the Global Mercury Assessment, Global Mercury Supply, Trade and Demand Report, Mercury Monitoring, and the Mercury Inventory Toolkit.

Mercury Monitoring

UNEP-led and GEF-funded project created scientific bases for monitoring of mercury in air and in humans at global, regional and national/local levels. A databank of laboratories analysing mercury has also been developed and populated on a voluntary basis. This serves as an open access repository of laboratories, to assist countries and stakeholders to have a tool for seeking international analytical capacities.

Results:

38 labs	**from all UN regions sent their results** for the first round of the inter-laboratory assessment of labs analysing mercury
12 countries	**participated in a pilot** study for mercury in biotic and abiotic matrices
210 labs	**registered in the mercury laboratory databank**, developed by UNEP and the GEF Project out of which 182 labs have quality control and 152 labs have a quality assurance program
5 manuals	**standard operating procedures and protocols** and 6 national survey protocols have been **prepared**

Impact

Since UNEP published its first Global Mercury Assessment in 2002, **awareness of mercury pollution and its impacts has steadily increased on the world stage**, culminating with the entry into force of the Minamata Convention.

114 countries have ratified the Minamata Convention since 2013 (as of 12 November 2019).

Mercury use in several sectors, such as chlor-alkali production and most types of mercury-added products, **is already decreasing.**

Increased technical quality of the National Action Plans to reduce mercury use from artisanal and small-scale gold mining, as well as Minamata Initial Assessments, due to the technical assistance, tools, and trainings provided by UNEP.

190 members of the **Global Mercury Partnership.**

111 countries have used, or are using the **UNEP Mercury Inventory Toolkit** to set their national priorities as a part of their Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA) projects.

35 countries are **benefiting from UNEP's guidance materials**, technical assistance or trainings in the development of their National Action Plans for reducing mercury use from artisanal and small-scale gold mining.

30 percent **of the mercury funds** in the last full replenishment cycle of GEF (GEF6) **were for projects implemented by UNEP.**

UNEP country support:

25
countries

UNEP is supporting 25 countries in the **development of their National Action Plans** to reduce mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining.

62
countries

UNEP is supporting 62 countries in the **development of their Minamata Initial Assessments**, including providing assistance and training in the use of the UNEP Mercury Inventory Toolkit.

US$ 45
million

UNEP leads the planetGOLD programme, a US$ 45 million collaborative effort to develop innovative models for supporting artisanal and small-scale gold miners improve their livelihoods while reducing mercury use.

About UNEP

UNEP is the leading global voice on the environment. It provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. UNEP works with governments, the private sector, civil society and with other UN entities and international organizations around the world.

About the Chemicals and Health Branch

UNEP Chemicals and Health Branch works to minimize the adverse effects of chemicals and waste on human health and the environment. Chemicals are integral to almost all sectors of society, bringing important benefits in areas from medicine and agriculture to consumer goods, clean technologies and poverty alleviation. While chemicals and waste are major contributors to world economies, their sound management is essential to avoiding risks to human health and ecosystems as well as substantial costs to national economies.