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**Preparation of a global legally binding
instrument on mercury**

**Options for delivery of technical assistance and
capacity-building: examples from multilateral environmental
agreements and other organizations**

Note by the secretariat

1. At its meeting in Bangkok from 19 to 23 October 2009, the ad hoc open-ended working group to prepare for the intergovernmental negotiating committee on mercury agreed on a list of information that the secretariat would provide to the committee at its first session to facilitate the committee's work. Among other things, the secretariat was requested to provide a note on options for the delivery of technical assistance and capacity-building. The options were to be based on examples from multilateral environmental agreements, including the use of regional and other centres such as those of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, and on previously prepared assessments, updated to take into account issues of particular relevance to mercury.

2. The current note responds to that request by providing an overview of mechanisms for delivering technical assistance and capacity-building under various multilateral environmental agreements and organizations. In preparing the note the secretariat has made use of several previously prepared assessments and reports. They include a feasibility study on regional and subregional centres for capacity-building and technology transfer (UNEP/POPS/COP.1/27) prepared for consideration by the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention at its first meeting.

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3. The mechanisms for delivering technical assistance and capacity-building described in the present note include those of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer; the Basel Convention; the Stockholm Convention; the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade; the national cleaner production centre programme of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the regional offices of UNEP; and the collaborating centres and regional offices of the World Health Organization (WHO).

I. Delivery of technical assistance and capacity-building under relevant multilateral environmental agreements and organizations

A. Basel Convention

4. Paragraph 1 of article 14 of the Basel Convention states:

The Parties agree that, according to the specific needs of different regions and subregions, regional or sub-regional centres for training and technology transfers regarding the management of hazardous wastes and other wastes and the minimization of their generation should be established. The Parties shall decide on the establishment of appropriate funding mechanisms of a voluntary nature.

5. Pursuant to the above mandate regional centres for delivering technical assistance have been established under the Basel Convention in Argentina, China, Egypt, El Salvador, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Samoa, Senegal, Slovakia, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

6. The core functions of the Basel Convention regional centres are training, technology transfer, information dissemination, consulting and awareness-raising. The centres carry out these core functions by:

- (a) Developing and conducting training programmes, workshops, seminars and associated projects on the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes, the transfer of environmentally sound technology and the minimization of hazardous waste generation, with specific emphasis on training trainers and promoting the ratification and implementation of the Convention and its instruments;
- (b) Gathering, assessing and disseminating information on hazardous and other wastes to parties, including through the promotion of public awareness;
- (c) Identifying, developing and strengthening mechanisms for the transfer of technology for the environmentally sound management and minimization of hazardous wastes;
- (d) Collecting and disseminating to parties information on new or proven environmentally sound technologies and know-how relating to environmentally sound management and minimization of the generation of hazardous and other wastes;
- (e) Regularly exchanging information relevant to the Basel Convention and networking at the national and regional levels;
- (f) Organizing meetings, symposiums and missions in the field and carrying out joint projects in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); UNEP; UNIDO; the United Nations Institute for Training and Research; WHO; the secretariats of other multilateral environmental agreements, in particular the Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions; industry bodies; and non-governmental organizations;
- (g) Providing assistance and advice to parties and non-parties on preparation for negotiations;
- (h) Encouraging best approaches, practices and methodologies for environmentally sound management and minimization of the generation of hazardous and other wastes through pilot projects;

(i) Carrying out fund-raising within the context of the Convention's resource mobilization strategy.

7. The coordinating centres of the Basel Convention, in addition to the previously mentioned core functions of the regional centres, are also expected to ensure regional coordination and information exchange and to conduct activities on a regional (as distinct from subregional) basis.

8. Initially, the centres operated without any independent legal capacity and were typically housed in government ministries or academic institutions. At its sixth meeting the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention requested the Secretariat to regularize the legal status of the centres and to establish their independence formally by concluding framework agreements for the operation of the centres with the Governments that hosted them.

9. Basel Convention regional centres are constrained by the lack of a mechanism under the Convention for financing their operations. Funding is available from host countries and parties to the Convention, but is limited. In effect, then, each centre must secure its own funds for both specific projects and for general operations. The need to raise funds constitutes one of the major challenges facing the centres. There are, however, successful examples of fund-raising by the centres.

10. The centres have in the past played a role in implementing activities in cooperation with other conventions. Many have worked with the secretariats of the Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions and the Geneva Environment Network to organize meetings and training workshops.

11. At its ninth meeting, in 2008, the Conference of the Parties concluded that the centres could play an important role in implementing activities related to other chemicals and wastes instruments, including the Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. In addition, in the light of the discussions on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Conference decided to consider and adopt at its tenth meeting a workplan for strengthening the regional centres, including a strategic framework that would assist in developing strategies for the financial sustainability of the centres and a set of indicators to measure their performance.

B. Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol

12. The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer obliges parties to phase out the production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances according to an agreed timetable. The Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol helps developing countries to comply with their phase-out obligations by providing financial and technical assistance in the form of grants or concessional loans. The work that the Multilateral Fund finances on the ground in developing countries is delivered primarily through four implementing agencies (UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO and the World Bank), all of which have contractual agreements with the Executive Committee responsible for overseeing the operation of the Fund, and through agencies of donor Governments.

13. As an implementing agency UNEP provides capacity-building assistance to countries to enable their compliance with the Montreal Protocol. UNEP delivers this assistance through a programme called the Compliance Assistance Programme, which is implemented through the UNEP regional offices. The programme features direct compliance assistance by expert staff and seeks to strengthen the capacity of developing countries through regional networking of national ozone units and through information clearing-house services that reinforce the direct assistance and help countries to make informed decisions about implementing ozone-friendly policies and employing alternative technologies.

14. The Multilateral Fund provides financial support to enable each developing country to establish and maintain a national ozone unit within a selected government ministry. The national ozone unit is responsible for monitoring, managing and implementing the national strategy to comply with the Montreal Protocol. One way in which national ozone units receive support is through regional networking with other national ozone units, a unique mechanism that has become an integral part of the implementation of the Protocol. Regional networking provides a regular, interactive forum for officers from the national ozone units to exchange experiences, develop skills and share knowledge with their counterparts from both developing and developed countries. Through meetings, e-mail forums and continuing dialogues, networking helps to ensure that the national ozone units have the information, skills and contacts required for managing national ozone-depleting substance phase-out activities

successfully. UNEP facilitates the operation of 10 regional and subregional networks involving 147 developing countries, along with 14 developed countries and the European Commission.

15. The regional networks are managed by regional network coordinators based in the UNEP regional offices. The coordinators foster the exchange of information between the national ozone units, organize regional meetings of the units and generally enhance national efforts to meet Protocol obligations. There are one or two regional network coordinators in each regional office, depending on the number of countries in the region. A network and policy manager and an information manager, located in the UNEP office in Paris, ensure the exchange of intra-network experiences and consistency of advice across countries. Paris-based UNEP staff members responsible for the UNEP OzonAction programme also act as a link between the Multilateral Fund and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) (which provides funding for certain activities under the Protocol) and the regions.

16. The Compliance Assistance Programme team includes 25 full-time-equivalent professional staff members worldwide, who provide countries with advisory and support services related to policy, refrigerant management, customs training, combating illegal trade, methyl bromide phase-out, halons and information exchange. The members of the team have extensive knowledge and experience regarding their regions. The team contributes much to national, regional and sectoral phase-out plans and programmes. It also works with other implementing agencies and bilateral agencies to support and facilitate their work in the regions.

17. As a first step towards meeting its obligations under the Montreal Protocol, each party prepares and adopts a national strategy, known as the country programme. In preparing their country programmes the parties benefit from the regional networks in a number of ways. They can draw on the lessons learned and best practices of others. They can also make use of model legislation, which, with the assistance of the regional network coordinators, can be adjusted to national circumstances to produce national legislation that can be drafted and approved more swiftly than it normally would be and that can be harmonized with the laws of the other countries in the regions.

18. Efficiency is gained by basing the regional network coordinators in the UNEP regional offices, which serve as centres of operations and provide administrative and institutional support to the coordinators and the regional networks. Operating from the UNEP regional offices allows the coordinators to collaborate and cooperate with other conventions and organizations with relative ease.

19. Developed countries have played a prominent role in the establishment and operation of the regional networks. The Government of Sweden has supported the development and activities of the regional network in South-East Asia and the Pacific, which, founded in 1992, was the first regional network to be established. Other developed country Governments have likewise contributed through direct participation in other networks.

20. The experience of the Montreal Protocol shows the value of establishing ownership by Governments and developing policies and institutional frameworks to support the implementation of technical activities that are necessary to enable parties to meet their obligations under a multilateral environmental agreement.

21. The UNEP regional offices promote intergovernmental policy dialogue and regional cooperation, increase national capacity for environmental management and response to emergencies, raise awareness and enhance information exchange, and translate global policies into regional action. They offer insights, key linkages and a good understanding of the best procedures to follow for the delivery of technical assistance in a given region.

22. The Montreal Protocol experience suggests a possible model for the effective delivery of technical assistance. In this model UNEP regional offices could coordinate the efforts of subregional centres and national focal points. The subregional centres could provide technical assistance to subsets of countries within each region. The regional centres would maintain a coordinating role in respect of information exchange, links to donors and the financial mechanism and the development of regional workplans to address priority capacity-building and technology transfer issues identified by the countries in the regions.

C. Rotterdam Convention

23. The Rotterdam Convention is primarily an instrument that promotes the sharing of information and facilitates national decision-making on future trade in the chemicals that it covers, while the Stockholm Convention and the Montreal Protocol function through control measures intended to phase out use and prevent the unintentional release of specific chemicals. The focus of technical assistance

under the Rotterdam Convention therefore differs from the focus of such assistance under the latter two instruments.

24. Article 16 of the Convention, on technical assistance, provides that parties shall, taking into account in particular the needs of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, cooperate in promoting technical assistance for the development of the infrastructure and the capacity necessary to manage chemicals to enable implementation of the Convention. Thus, the article provides that parties with more advanced programmes for regulating chemicals should provide technical assistance, including training, to other Parties in developing their infrastructure and capacity to manage chemicals throughout their life cycle.

25. The Rotterdam Convention, in contrast to the Basel and Stockholm conventions, does not call for the use of regional centres to deliver technical assistance. A programme for the regional delivery of technical assistance has nevertheless been developed, of which cooperation with the regional offices of FAO and UNEP is a vital component. In addition the Conference of the Parties, in its decision RC-1/14 on regional delivery of technical assistance, invited the Basel Convention regional centres and regional coordinating centres to participate in the regional delivery system to make full use of synergies between the centres and between the two conventions. In accordance with the outcome of the discussions on synergies between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, in the future the coordinated use of the regional centres of the Basel and Stockholm conventions will provide an important mechanism for strengthening the regional delivery of assistance for the implementation of all three conventions.

26. The programme of technical assistance currently in place for the Rotterdam Convention was developed in response to needs identified by parties and builds on previously undertaken technical assistance activities, in particular the development of national plans and strategies for the implementation of the Convention and the needs and priorities identified therein. The goal has been to develop activities that are tailored to the specific needs of individual countries or small groups of countries, with a focus on those actions specific to each party that it deems necessary to enable it to implement the Convention fully. The programme marks a move away from regionally-based training to activities targeted at individual countries or small groups of countries relating to specific aspects of the Convention. It places a greater responsibility on Governments to define their own technical assistance needs and to be proactive in seeking assistance to meet those needs.

27. Developing countries and countries with economies in transition identified a lack of adequate infrastructure for the regulation or management of industrial chemicals as one of their key challenges. Accordingly, as part of the programme of work for the regional and national delivery of technical assistance for the biennium 2009–2010, a new area of work for the Secretariat has been elaborated that will focus on the legal, regulatory and administrative infrastructures and frameworks required to support national multisectoral industrial chemicals management programmes. In this context the secretariat is proposing ways to assist parties to address cross-cutting needs associated with foundational chemicals management.

D. Stockholm Convention

28. Paragraphs 2–4 of article 12 of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants state:

2. The Parties shall cooperate to provide timely and appropriate technical assistance to developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition, to assist them, taking into account their particular needs, to develop and strengthen their capacity to implement their obligations under this Convention.

3. In this regard, technical assistance to be provided by developed country Parties, and other Parties in accordance with their capabilities, shall include, as appropriate and as mutually agreed, technical assistance for capacity-building relating to implementation of the obligations under this Convention. Further guidance in this regard shall be provided by the Conference of the Parties.

4. The Parties shall establish, as appropriate, arrangements for the purpose of providing technical assistance and promoting the transfer of technology to developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition relating to the implementation of this Convention. These arrangements shall include regional and subregional centres for capacity-building and transfer of technology to assist developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition to

fulfil their obligations under this Convention. Further guidance in this regard shall be provided by the Conference of the Parties.

29. At its first meeting, the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention adopted the guidance on technical assistance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies set forth in the annex to decision SC-1/15 and requested the Secretariat to report on progress in the application of the guidance at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties. According to this guidance, priority consideration should be given to the provision of technical assistance relevant to:

- (a) Development, updating and implementation of the national implementation plans called for in article 7 of the Convention;
- (b) Review of available infrastructure, capacity and institutions at the national and local levels and the potential to strengthen them in the light of the Convention;
- (c) Training for decision makers, managers and personnel responsible for issues related to the Convention in:
 - (i) Persistent organic pollutant identification;
 - (ii) Technical assistance needs identification;
 - (iii) Project proposal writing;
 - (iv) Legislation development and enforcement;
 - (v) Development of an inventory of persistent organic pollutants;
 - (vi) Risk assessment and management of polychlorinated biphenyls, dioxins and furans;
 - (vii) Evaluation of social and economic impacts;
 - (viii) Development of pollutant release and transfer registers;
- (d) Development and strengthening of research capacity at the national, subregional and regional levels, including:
 - (i) Development and introduction of alternatives to persistent organic pollutants, with special emphasis on reducing the need for specific exemptions;
 - (ii) Training of technical personnel;
- (e) Development and establishment of laboratory capacity, including the promotion of standard sampling and analysis procedures for the validation of inventories;
- (f) Development, implementation and enforcement of regulatory controls and incentives for the sound management of persistent organic pollutants;
- (g) Identification and disposal of persistent organic pollutant wastes, including transfer of environmentally sound technologies for the destruction of such wastes;
- (h) Identification and promotion of best available techniques and best environmental practices;
 - (i) Identification and remediation of sites contaminated with persistent organic pollutants;
 - (j) Development and updating of a list of technologies that are available to be transferred to developing country parties and parties with economies in transition in accordance with paragraph 4 of article 12 of the Convention;
- (k) Promotion of awareness-raising and information-dissemination programmes, including awareness-raising among the general public, of issues related to the Convention;
- (l) Identification of obstacles and barriers to the transfer of technology and identification of the means to overcome them;
- (m) Effectiveness evaluation, including monitoring of levels of persistent organic pollutants.

30. To facilitate the provision of technical assistance to parties, the secretariat has developed a programme to promote capacity-building that includes a series of regional and subregional awareness-raising and training workshops with the aim of assisting parties in the implementation of their obligations under the Convention.
31. As called for in paragraph 4 of article 12 of the Convention, the Conference of the Parties has developed and implemented arrangements establishing regional and subregional centres for capacity-building and transfer of technology to assist developing country parties and parties with economies in transition to fulfil their obligations under the Convention. Terms of reference for such centres were adopted by the Conference of the Parties through decision SC-2/9, together with criteria for evaluating their performance. According to their terms of reference, which incorporate by reference the criteria for technical assistance set out in decision SC-1/15, the centres should tailor the technical assistance that they provide to meet parties' specific needs with the aim of enabling them to implement their obligations under the Convention. Further, those needs should be identified by the parties themselves, including in particular through the priorities set out in their national implementation plans.
32. Specific terms of reference for the selection of the regional and subregional centres were adopted by the Conference of the Parties through decision SC-3/12. The terms of reference require the regional and subregional centres to demonstrate expertise in capacity-building or technology transfer and have highly qualified technical personnel with recognized competence in one or more of the areas listed in decision SC-1/15. The centres should be sited so as to serve a definite group of parties in a specific region or subregion, although a centre with particular areas of expertise may serve parties from outside the region in which the centre is located.
33. In accordance with decision SC-3/12, nominations of institutions to serve as Stockholm Convention regional centres were to be submitted through the regional representatives of the bureau of the Conference of the Parties. A total of 12 nominations were received. The Secretariat, in consultation with the bureau, verified whether the nominated centres met the criteria set out in the decisions SC-1/15 and SC-2/9.
34. In May 2009, the Conference of the Parties in decision SC-4/23 endorsed 8 of the 12 nominees as Stockholm Convention regional and subregional centres for capacity-building and the transfer of technology in Brazil, China, the Czech Republic, Kuwait, Mexico, Panama, Spain and Uruguay, to serve for a period of four years. Two of the endorsed centres are also Basel Convention regional centres. Nominations of additional centres may be considered at future meetings of the Conference of the Parties.
35. The centres have all developed work programmes for 2010–2011. They include work on monitoring, diagnosis, technical analysis, information gathering and identification of techniques for the elimination and disposal of persistent organic pollutants. The Conference of the Parties will evaluate the performance and sustainability of the centres and review their status at its fifth meeting.
36. In accordance with the outcome of the discussions on synergies between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, in the future coordinated use of the regional centres of the Basel and Stockholm conventions will provide an important mechanism for strengthening the regional delivery of assistance for the implementation of all three conventions.
37. The delivery of technical assistance under the Stockholm Convention has been facilitated by access to a financial mechanism. GEF is, on a provisional basis, the principal entity entrusted with administering the mechanism and has provided assistance to countries for projects to implement the Convention, particularly in respect of the development of national implementation plans. Funding under the fourth GEF replenishment has been aimed at investment actions that respond to the priorities identified in parties' national implementation plans and at promoting demonstrations of management practices and technologies for the management and destruction of persistent organic pollutants. Many projects are at various stages of development and implementation in such areas as disease vector control mechanisms to minimize or eliminate the use of persistent organic pollutants; regional forums on best available techniques and best environmental practices and industry initiatives on the management, removal and destruction of polychlorinated biphenyls; and obsolete pesticide destruction technologies.
38. Finally, article 9 of the Convention stipulates that the Secretariat shall serve as a clearing-house mechanism for information on persistent organic pollutants, including information provided by parties, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. Pursuant to this, the secretariat has established a clearing-house mechanism for the exchange of information, including on sound measures for and valuable experiences in implementing the Convention. The clearing-house mechanism assists in the provision of information, allowing informed decisions to be taken by countries and other

stakeholders on how to reduce or eliminate the release of persistent organic pollutants into the environment. In its second phase, the clearing-house mechanism will consolidate a global network of information providers, users and institutions seeking to share information and expertise on persistent organic pollutants. This mechanism will be a valuable tool in support of effective delivery of technical assistance to developing country parties and parties with economies in transition, to assist them to develop and strengthen their capacity to implement their obligations under this Convention.

E. UNEP network of regional chemicals and wastes cluster coordinators in the UNEP regional offices

39. Environmental problems are often regional or subregional in scale, and thus require regional solutions that take into consideration regional geography, environmental conditions and cultural heritage, traditions and practices. The UNEP regional offices play a crucial leading role in the delivery of UNEP global programmes through initiating, coordinating and catalysing regional and subregional cooperation and action in response to environmental problems and emergencies. UNEP has regional offices for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and West Asia, located in Nairobi, Bangkok, Geneva, Panama City, Washington, D.C. and Manama, respectively.

40. UNEP has recently established the post of Regional Chemicals and Wastes Cluster Coordinator. Three such coordinators have already been appointed; one for Africa, one for Central and Eastern Europe and one for Latin America and the Caribbean. Recruitment of a fourth for Asia and the Pacific is expected to be completed shortly. The coordinators, based in the UNEP regional offices, will support the Governments in their regions on issues related to chemicals and wastes by providing a two-way communication link between national contact points and those involved in regional activities on the one hand and the secretariats of chemicals- and wastes-related conventions and programmes on the other hand, and by supporting the delivery of capacity-building and technical assistance activities jointly organized by the latter. The coordinators will support an integrated approach to the sound management of chemicals at the regional level, including through the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions and activities of the Chemicals Branch of the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics and the secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.

F. UNIDO/UNEP national cleaner production centre programme

41. The UNIDO/UNEP national cleaner production centre programme aims at building national cleaner production capacities, fostering dialogue between industry bodies and Governments and enhancing investments in the transfer and development of environmentally sound technologies. Since the programme's launch in 1994, some 50 national cleaner production centres and national cleaner production programmes have been established in 42 countries.¹

42. The services provided by the centres include:

- (a) Raising awareness of the benefits and advantages of cleaner production;
- (b) Demonstrating that cleaner production works through in-plant cleaner production assessments and demonstration projects. Through in-plant demonstrations, a centre can show that the concept of cleaner production can be applied to any industrial sector and that waste avoidance can be profitable;
- (c) Training local experts and building local capacity for cleaner production. Training in cleaner production methodology is an essential cleaner production centre activity in the effort to build local expertise and capacity. Training may take place in-plant, as part of in-plant demonstration projects; or outside, through workshops and seminars for specific target groups;
- (d) Helping to obtain financing for cleaner production investments. Some centres are also focusing on developing core capacity in the promotion of cleaner production investment projects to facilitate the transfer of cleaner production technologies to developing countries. This activity is closely

¹ Armenia, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, India, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

linked to the in-plant assessments. In these countries national experts are being trained to identify and formulate cleaner production investment projects;

(e) Disseminating technical information. One key advantage of being part of an established international network is greater access to the latest cleaner production information. National cleaner production centres are able to obtain and share cleaner production information nationally and internationally.

43. Local host organizations provide infrastructure and support mechanisms for the centres' operations. For successful capacity-building, it is crucial that partnerships be formed with local organizations that are willing to invest resources in promoting cleaner production. Host institutions must satisfy the following selection criteria:

(a) Proven good cooperation with industry organizations, especially with small and medium-sized enterprises;

(b) Expertise in environment-related matters, preferably cleaner production;

(c) Good relations with the Government and the main national players in cleaner production;

(d) Adequate organizational structure and capacity to host a national cleaner production centre;

(e) Existing information system on relevant industries and access to industrial establishments;

(f) Demonstrated ability to motivate staff to promote the cleaner production concept;

(g) Ability to contribute to the national cleaner production centre.

44. A modality-of-operation agreement has been signed by each host institution, under which UNIDO is to specify the inputs to be provided by the institution and the activities to be undertaken by the national cleaner production centre.

45. Host organizations and other local stakeholders make both financial and in-kind contributions to the centres, such as the secondment of personnel and provision of office facilities and equipment. Such arrangements have proved effective in building ownership of the activities in each country and have minimized operating costs. The programme has a relatively lean organizational structure. Each national cleaner production centre is directed by an experienced country national, is in nearly all cases hosted within a local organization, and receives guidance from a national advisory board or a combination of an executive board and an advisory committee. This allows the centres autonomy in their daily operations. These bodies solicit representation from the most important cleaner production stakeholders in each country, such as representatives of industrial organizations; ministries of industry, environment and economy; and education and research institutions. The national cleaner production centre director and local UNIDO and UNEP representatives are included. Individual companies are also represented occasionally.

46. A pool of experienced institutions has been established under the programme to assist the national cleaner production programme centres to achieve their objectives. These institutions, called reference, counterpart or partner institutions, are twinned with centres through counterpart institution arrangements, which specify activities to be performed by the counterparts to support the centres.

47. Under the national cleaner production centre programme annual meetings are organized to evaluate the programme's progress, to exchange experiences and to discuss future activities to be undertaken by the centres.

48. In 2007 and 2008 UNIDO, in cooperation with UNEP and the Governments of Austria and Switzerland, carried out an independent evaluation of the UNIDO/UNEP national cleaner production centre programme. The evaluation noted that the core element of the programme was the establishment and strengthening of local institutions to provide cleaner production services. The evaluation concluded that, in terms of establishing and strengthening institutions, the programme's approach had been appropriate for the situation in most developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The study also identified a number of areas for improvement. Currently, UNIDO and UNEP are working out a joint cleaner production programme strategy and activity programming to reinvigorate the national cleaner production centres and capitalize on synergies between the programme and other similar efforts.

49. Given the mandate of the national cleaner production centres to provide technical assistance to countries for preventing industrial pollution and for ensuring the safe manufacture of chemicals, there may be scope for future collaboration at the national level with the national cleaner production centres relating to implementation of the future mercury instrument.

G. WHO regional offices and WHO collaborating centres

50. WHO member States are grouped into six regions: Africa, the Americas, the Eastern Mediterranean, South-East Asia, the Western Pacific and Europe. Each region has a regional office, which works closely with country offices to define country-specific priorities. In addition, there is a network of WHO collaborating centres in each region.

51. A WHO collaborating centre is an institution designated by the WHO Director-General to form part of an inter-institutional collaborative network carrying out activities at the country, intercountry, regional, interregional and global levels in support of the mandate of WHO on international health work and its programme priorities. In line with the WHO policy and strategy on technical cooperation, a WHO collaborating centre must also participate in the strengthening of country resources in respect of information, services, research and training in support of national health development. A WHO collaborating centre can be a stand-alone institution or a department or laboratory within another institution or group of institutions engaged in reference, research or training activities.

52. Currently there are more than 800 WHO collaborating centres in over 80 member States working with WHO on areas such as nursing, occupational health, communicable diseases, nutrition, mental health, chronic diseases and health technologies. A global database (<http://www.who.int/collaboratingcentres/database/en/>) lists these collaborating centres and their designations. Some WHO collaborating centres are already carrying out work that is relevant to implementation of the Stockholm Convention, for example, in relation to the quality of pesticides for public health and the analysis of persistent organic pollutants in biological samples.

53. Institutions may be nominated as WHO collaborating centres by the institutions themselves, by Governments or by WHO regional offices and headquarters. WHO collaborating centres are designated for a period of up to four years. Designation is based on considerations such as geographical location and subject matter expertise. It may be renewed on the basis of satisfactory performance and a determination of the continued relevance of collaboration, taking into consideration the evolving needs and policies of WHO.

54. The use of a probation period during which institutions undertake test projects provides a means of ascertaining whether a given organization has the tools to carry out technical assistance in a particular region. While four years may appear short, the concept of a limited period of operation provides an opportunity to discontinue working with an institution that is serving as a centre if it does not perform adequately or if the priority needs of the region change.
