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**Review and assessment of options for enhanced voluntary measures
and new or existing international legal instruments**

**Issues to be addressed by Asia-Pacific countries on global
mercury management**

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to provide, in the annex to the present note, a paper on issues to be addressed by Asia-Pacific countries on global mercury management. The paper is provided for the information of the Working Group as submitted, without formal editing.

* UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/OEWG.2/1.

Annex**Issues to be addressed by Asia-Pacific countries on Global Mercury Management****Recognition of current conditions and issues of mercury management in Asia-Pacific countries**

1. According to the UNEP draft Report on Atmospheric Emissions of Mercury, global mercury emissions in 2020 would increase by about 25% compared to those in 2005 if the countries on the earth do not take appropriate actions.
2. Mercury emissions in Asia and Pacific are more than in any other regions in the world and may continue to increase. Asia-Pacific countries recognize that reduction of mercury emissions in this region would help to reduce global mercury emissions. Asia-Pacific countries recognize also that it is a tough and complex task involving economic, social, technical, and financial factors which need further studies regarding response measures for this region.
3. Major sources of mercury emissions are different from country to country, which include coal combustion facilities, production facilities of cement, non-ferrous metal, chlor-alkali, VCM and CFL/FTL, artisanal gold mining, and waste disposal and incineration facilities.
4. Asia-Pacific countries have taken/are taking actions to reduce mercury emissions such as conversion of industrial production processes, reduction in products containing mercury, and environmentally sound management of wastes. However, due to increase in economic activities in the region, mercury emissions are not indicating decreasing trend due to lack of financial resources and access to clean technology.
5. Asia-Pacific countries recognize the importance of taking appropriate actions in accordance with national circumstances and priorities to strengthen mercury management in order to reduce risks on human health and the environment from anthropogenic mercury emissions.

Priority actions in Asia-Pacific countries

According to the first meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group in November 2007, the specific actions to address the challenges posed by mercury are as follows; 1) Reduce the supply of mercury 2) Reduce the demand for mercury in products and processes 3) Reduce international trade in mercury 4) Reduce or eliminate atmospheric emission of mercury 5) Achieve environmentally sound management of mercury-containing wastes 6) Find environmentally sound storage solutions for mercury 7) Remediate existing contaminated sites and 8) Increase knowledge.

1. Priority actions in Asia-Pacific countries are as follows:
 - Increase knowledge
 - Environmentally sound management of mercury-containing waste
 - Reduction of amount of mercury containing products
 - BAT/BEP (disposal, storage, process conversion, end-of-pipe technologies etc.)
 - International cooperation and technology transfer
2. Coal combustion is one of the major sources of mercury emissions in Asia-Pacific and may require efficiency improvement in coal combustion and energy conversion for mercury emission reduction. Asia-Pacific countries recognize these measures have environmental co-benefits such as reduction in SO_x and particulate matters, and CO₂ in terms of energy efficiency improvement depending upon the technologies used.

3. It is likely that Asia-Pacific contributes to a large mercury demand for batteries and chlor-alkali industry and has significant artisanal gold/silver mining. Asia-Pacific countries recognize the importance of reducing mercury demands in these areas.
4. Medical sector may explore the possibility of using non-mercury alternatives.

Elements and options for mercury management framework

About the elements and options for mercury management framework, Asia-Pacific countries would like to bring up the following points:

1. There was a diversity of views regarding the need for international framework and the potential of countries to address mercury issues at the national level. Regardless of need for any international framework, international cooperation is necessary for dealing with the mercury issues.
2. The option that can have a wider participation would be the best.
3. Regarding any Legally Binding Instrument, several countries emphasized that there was a need to be specific about the scope (i.e. elements to be addressed in the LBI) before reaching to logical conclusion on LBIs.

Asia-Pacific countries identified the elements with priority and their common issues as follows:

Elements with priority

The elements which link to the “Priority actions” listed above have priorities.

Common issues

- Implementation feasibility should be examined from technical and financial points of view.
- Research and development including periodic mercury assessment would be required.

Necessity of mechanisms to support actions by developing countries

- Most of the countries in the Asia-Pacific are in developing stage, which have limited budget, manpower, and applicable technologies for mercury management. Securing financial resources, human resource development, technical assistance is indispensable for them to tackle mercury emission reduction. A global mercury management framework should include mechanisms to secure these resources for developing countries.
- Asia-Pacific countries identify filling knowledge gap as high priority, including strengthening of administrative capacity, for example, preparing a national mercury emission inventory, monitoring mercury levels in food, and conducting effective awareness-raising.
- Asia-Pacific countries also identify the introduction of technologies is necessary in the field of improvement of coal combustion and environmentally sound management of mercury-containing waste.
- Utilization of QSP Trust Fund of SAICM would be effective for securing financial resources to realize human resource development and technical assistance for mercury management. However, Asia-Pacific countries recognize that QSP Trust Fund, which provides financial resources up to USD 250,000 per project, has its sunset in 2011. It would need to be extended, and can provide financial resources to initiate projects for chemical management.