



**United Nations  
Environment  
Programme**

Distr.: General  
15 July 2008

English only

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**Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Mercury**

Second meeting

Nairobi, Kenya

6–10 October 2008

Item 3 of the provisional agenda\*

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

**Statement prepared by the Western Asia subregion and the Islamic  
Republic of Iran at a regional preparatory meeting**

**Note by the secretariat**

The secretariat has the honour to provide, in the annex to the present note, the statement prepared by the Western Asia subregion and the Islamic Republic of Iran at a local consultation held from 16 to 18 June 2008 in Doha for the information of the Working Group at its second meeting.

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

## Annex

### Results of regional consultation on mercury

1. A regional preparatory meeting for the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Mercury was held in Doha from 16 to 18 June 2008. Discussions at the meeting focused on the issues and challenges posed by mercury, the elements of the mercury partnership programme and the forthcoming second meeting of the Working Group.

2. Participants agreed that there were three essential areas to consider in moving forward on mercury control: activities to be undertaken at the national, regional and international levels, respectively.

#### National activities

3. It was agreed that, at the national level, all relevant stakeholders, including authorities, the private sector and non-governmental organizations, should be involved in the development of measures to control mercury. Such authorities might include, but were not limited to, departments of environment, health, agriculture, industry, education, energy, oil and finance. Areas of relevance to mercury management may vary by country and additional areas should be added as appropriate. National partnerships were seen as significant in the control of mercury.

#### Regional activities

4. The exchange or sharing of relevant information and experiences between countries was described as important by participants, particularly in view of the differing levels of experience of countries in mercury management. It was noted that any agreement on mercury should include information sharing as an important aspect of its work.

5. Regional cooperation and coordination on all activities, in particular monitoring activities and measures to control the movement of mercury via customs controls, were described as key. It was agreed that existing coordination mechanisms within the region should be used to facilitate information exchange and improve mercury control.

6. Participants recognized the importance of involving regional offices, such as the UNEP Regional Office for West Asia, and regional organizations, such as the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment, in activities related to mercury management and control in the region.

7. Participants agreed on a number of elements, set out below, that were essential for a legally binding instrument to be successful and meet the needs of the region.

#### Global activities

8. The importance of partnerships at a global level, in particular to assist with resource mobilization and information exchange between countries with varying levels of experience in mercury management, was stressed. Participants recognized that some developing countries were sufficiently industrialized to have gained considerable experience in managing mercury, and that consideration should be given to the associated advantages and risks. The main benefit of international partnerships was seen to consist in their capacity to increase cooperation and coordination.

9. Notwithstanding the benefits of partnerships and other voluntary mechanisms, participants agreed that the preferred approach for the region was the development of a legally binding instrument on mercury. The benefits of such an instrument were seen to consist primarily in its ability to ensure the provision of information and assistance, which would not necessarily be delivered under a voluntary agreement.

10. Having agreed that the control of mercury should be undertaken through the establishment of a legally binding agreement, participants recommended key elements to be included in an agreement, as set out below.

## Recommendations

11. Participants recommended that the agreement must include:
    - (a) Provision of financial and technical support to countries, including technology transfer and information exchange relating to the management of mercury;
    - (b) Support for capacity -building;
    - (c) Development of enabling activities, including but not limited to, the development of inventories and action plans;
    - (d) Monitoring activities, to include not only levels of emissions, but also levels present in environmental media (air, water, soil, biota);
    - (e) Recommendations on the sound management of mercury-containing waste, including the provision of assistance to manage contaminated sites;
    - (f) Provision of information, including through a database setting out a list of mercury-containing products and a list of existing alternatives. Participants noted that there may be different concerns in the health sector and among industrial users regarding the acceptability of alternatives to mercury;
  12. Participants also recommended that an information management system developed by Qatar, the “Qatar mercury management information system”, should be considered for use as a model for mercury inventory development worldwide.
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