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

First meeting

Bangkok, 12–16 November 2007

Item 5 of the provisional agenda\*

**Report on activities under the UNEP mercury programme****Technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management  
of mercury wastes**

1. Following requests made by a number of developing countries for specific guidelines on the handling of mercury wastes, the Chemicals Branch of the United Nations Environment Programme's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (UNEP Chemicals) prepared an information document for consideration by the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal at its eighth meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 27 November to 1 December 2006. At that meeting, the Conference of the Parties agreed to include a new focus area on mercury and asbestos wastes under the Strategic Plan for implementation of the Basel Convention and also agreed that technical guidelines should be developed for the handling of these wastes.

2. The Secretariat of the Basel Convention and UNEP Chemicals cooperated in the development of draft technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of mercury wastes. The draft guidelines were submitted to the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention at its sixth session held in Geneva from 3 to 7 September 2007. At that session, the Open-ended Working Group welcomed the collaboration between the Basel Convention Secretariat and UNEP Chemicals, took note of the draft technical guidelines and encouraged Parties and others to contribute to the further development of the draft technical guidelines for consideration by the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention at its ninth meeting to be held in June 2008. The Working Group also invited donors and partners to contribute financially and technically to the capacity-building and technical assistance programme to reduce and prevent pollution from mercury wastes.

3. The report of the Open-ended Working Group on the work of its sixth session can be found on the Basel Convention website at <http://www.basel.int/>. The draft guidelines are also available on the website. Comments on the draft guidelines are welcomed and should be submitted directly to the Secretariat of the Basel Convention by no later than 30 November 2007.

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