
Information submitted by the Government of Canada in response to the requests from the UNEP Secretariat on the report of the ad hoc group of experts on effectiveness evaluation (post COP1)

We would like to thank the UNEP Secretariat and the ad hoc group of experts for developing this report. It is clear that the face-to-face meeting in Ottawa, held with both monitoring and effectiveness evaluation framework experts, was productive. At this time, Canada has the following comments on the report.

General Comments

- The report provides useful recommendations from the expert group that specific efforts be undertaken to continue the work on effectiveness evaluation. Without prejudging any decision at COP2, Canada is of the view that the same group of experts that were nominated by regions to participate in this present ad hoc group of experts would be best placed to continue this work post COP2 until the monitoring plan and effectiveness framework are completed. This would help with the continuity and momentum of the work on effectiveness evaluation. Note that this comment excludes the nomination of effectiveness evaluation committee members, which Canada sees as a separate issue and process to conduct the actual evaluation.
- Canada wishes to reiterate that the Minamata Convention does not require each Party to conduct monitoring in their territory. As appropriate, monitoring on a regional basis may be sufficient to provide comparable data for global monitoring and for effectiveness evaluation.
- We find that the human biomonitoring information is appropriate, and that hair and cord blood are adequate samples in which to measure mercury. However, in studies done through Canada's Northern Contaminants Program (NCP), and in most studies by our Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) circumpolar colleagues, measures of mercury are usually taken in venous blood samples for all ages, with cord blood being taken occasionally, and hair samples taken rarely. There may be certain cultural differences with different tissue samples that may make hair or cord blood samples unfeasible in some cases. The Canadian Health Measures Survey (CHMS) takes blood samples and urine samples for our nationally representative mercury data.

Specific Comments

LEGEND (~~deletion~~; addition)

- Page 2, *"Inclusion of cord blood in a survey provides several additional advantages such as: demonstration of pre-natal exposure to mercury (cord blood analysis characterizes both exposure of a mother and a child to mercury during pregnancy): as mercury readily crosses the placenta, any positive maternal biomonitoring would presume fetal exposure. A possible quantitative association with health effects research would be an additional advantage.*

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- Page 3, in the sentence, “*There are reliable coefficients allowing comparability of results from the mercury measurements in hair and blood/cord blood*”, we suggest the addition of: “*reliable, although variable, coefficients*”
 - Page 3, “*WHO Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for: ... [m]onitoring of fish contamination (interpretation for human consumption)*”: in addition to fish data, consideration could also be given to marine mammals contaminant monitoring for populations who consume these mammals as part of their traditional diets.
 - Page 4-5, under the section titled “*Biota*”: there is a possible inconsistency between the ecological exposure and human exposure entries in that the latter examples would likely involve mainly retail samples.
 - Page 10, for the paragraph beginning with “*Data is available through Codex Alimentarius on mercury levels in certain fish species ...*”, we suggest the following changes: “*Data is available through the Codex Alimentarius Commission on mercury levels in certain fish species. They are in the process of establishing Maximum Levels Limits for methylmercury in certain a number of additional fish species as well as an associated sampling plan, which outlines requirements for sample preparation and analysis ~~which are to be accompanied by monitoring plans~~. This is expected to increase the data available.”*
 - Page 12, for the sentence, “*Additional data sources will include any additional data as gathered through the Codex Alimentarius process*”, we suggest changes as follows: “*Additional data sources will include any additional fish mercury data as gathered through the Codex Alimentarius Commission’s risk management process (Maximum Level development for retail fish species).*”
 - Page 12, with respect to, “*For human biomonitoring, sampling of scalp hair and cord blood is considered feasible and practical, including in terms of cost effectiveness*”: would cord blood be feasible for all study populations or, more likely, desirable only?

- Page 16, “*Recommendations from the expert group in relation to monitoring*”: we suggest the following revision to provide clarity regarding the scope of data to be collected.

Recommendations from the expert group in relation to monitoring

Outline of the types of data that could be comparable on a global basis, as well as their availability, as well as a draft plan that integrates comparable results for future monitoring

The Conference of the Parties should:

establish formal relationships with bodies who manage existing information through the secretariat;

request experts to develop of terms of reference for monitoring arrangements and for implementation of the proposed plan;

make a recommendation to the Global Environment Facility GEF on the needs to ~~cover the gaps~~ support the collection of essential data and facilitate sustainable input of monitoring information ~~into~~ for effectiveness evaluation

We look forward to further discussions on this topic at COP2.