

**Meeting of the bureau of the intergovernmental negotiating committee on mercury and preceding informal consultation with the INC2 office holders  
Geneva, 28-30 March 2011**

Intersessional work between the second and third sessions  
of the intergovernmental negotiating committee

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1. At its second session, the intergovernmental negotiating committee requested the secretariat to arrange intersessional regional consultations to assist Governments in their preparations for further discussion of the draft text at the third session. Preparations for these regional consultations are under way, with the following proposed dates:
    - Central and Eastern Europe countries, Belgrade, 3 - 4 September 2011 (held back to back with a meeting of the SAICM Open ended Working Group at the request of the region);
    - African countries, Nairobi or Ouagadougou, 12 - 16 September 2011 – (a three day consultation, held in conjunction with a two day training on negotiations delivered by the Division of Environmental Law and Conventions);
    - Latin American and Caribbean countries, Panama, 21 - 23 September 2011;
    - Asian and Pacific countries, Japan, 26 - 28 September 2011 (with the opportunity for sub-regional consultations on Sunday 25 September, as needed);
    - European Union, Brussels, 3 October 2011.
  2. These meetings are very close together, with limited flexibility in dates. The timings have been chosen to ensure that the new draft text is available in the languages needed for each consultation, while also allowing sufficient time after the regional meetings for follow-up national consultations as required.
  3. Programmes have not been developed for the regional consultations at this stage, however, it is anticipated that presentations from the secretariat would focus on the draft text and other materials requested by the negotiating committee, and that the maximum time possible would be allocated for regional discussion. Should there be interest in presentations on other mercury-related issues (such as technical issues and ongoing activities in the region) there may be capacity to make such presentations, if requested well in advance. However, it should be noted that there will be limited secretariat presence at each of the regional consultations. The agendas for each consultation will need to be developed and finalized by the bureau members and regional coordinators for each region.
  4. Guidance from the bureau members and regional coordinators are sought on two main issues. Clarification of these points will assist the secretariat in preparing for the consultations, and also allow the secretariat to publish information on the planned consultations.
    - Q1. Is the proposal for limited presentations from the secretariat, allowing maximum time for discussion a suitable basis for the preparation of a draft agenda for each of these consultations, or is a more extensive and continuous secretariat role envisaged?
    - Q2. Should the regional consultations be open to participation by all stakeholders for the whole meeting, or is there a need to limit participation in some parts of the consultation. If limitations to participation are anticipated, it would be useful for planning and information purposes to have some idea of the scope of such limitations (bearing in mind the possible attendance at the regional consultations by NGOs, press, industry, the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiating committee and the secretariat).
  5. The chair of the negotiating committee will undertake additional bilateral or group consultations as opportunities arise, for example on the occasion of the 19<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in May 2011.
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