



Distr.: General
31 July 2006

English only



**United Nations
Environment
Programme**

Lead and Cadmium Working Group
First meeting
Geneva, 18–22 September 2006

**Mandates of the United Nations Environment Programme
relevant to lead and cadmium**

Note by the secretariat

1. The Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has already adopted a number of decisions relevant to lead and cadmium, the most recent being decision 23/9 III which called for the reviews of scientific information on lead and cadmium which are under discussion at the first meeting of the Lead and Cadmium Working Group. The present document provides an overview of the mandates of UNEP relevant to lead and cadmium, to facilitate the Working Group's work.

I. Mandates specific to lead

2. In 2001, at its twenty-first session, the Governing Council, emphasizing the importance of accelerating the process of eliminating the unsafe uses of lead, adopted decision 21/6, which called upon Governments that had not yet done so to eliminate the use of lead in gasoline. The decision reads as follows:

“Decision 21/6 Lead in gasoline

The Governing Council,

Recalling the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, adopted by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session in 1997,¹ in which the Assembly emphasized the importance of accelerating the process of eliminating the unsafe uses of lead, including the use of lead in gasoline, worldwide (paragraph 31 of the Programme),

Concerned about the health risks to humans, especially children, caused by exposure to lead in gasoline,

¹ General Assembly resolution S-19/2, annex.

Acknowledging the important role and responsibility of industry and other stakeholders in the chemicals area,

1. *Calls upon* Governments who have not yet done so to eliminate the use of lead in gasoline;

2. *Urges* Governments, intergovernmental organizations, the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety and civil society to participate actively in assisting national Governments in this phase-out, including by making available information, technical assistance, capacity-building, and funding necessary to enable developing countries, especially least developed countries and countries with economies in transition, to take an active part in the phase-out.”

3. In 2003, after having considered progress in achieving its goal to eliminate the use of lead in gasoline, including a survey conducted in 2002 on the status of Government efforts to phase out lead in gasoline, which demonstrated that actions had been initiated in most regions and that, except for most countries on the African continent, the markets were evidently moving towards unleaded gasoline, the Governing Council adopted decision 22/4 III, again calling upon Governments that had not yet done so to act urgently to eliminate the use of lead in gasoline and also to act urgently on the commitment of the World Summit on Sustainable Development to phase out lead-based paint and lead in other sources of human exposure. The decision reads as follows:

“Decision 22/4: Chemicals

III

Lead

The Governing Council,

Recalling its decision 21/6 of 9 February 2001, on lead in gasoline, reaffirmed in decision SS.VII/3 of 15 February 2002, calling upon Governments to eliminate the use of lead in gasoline and urging Governments, international organizations, the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety and civil society to participate actively in assisting national Governments in such a phase-out, including making available information, technical assistance, capacity-building and funding necessary to enable developing countries to take an active part in the phase-out,

Recalling also the commitment in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development² to reduce respiratory diseases and other health impacts resulting from air pollution, with particular attention to women and children, by supporting the phasing out of lead in gasoline and in lead-based paints and other sources of human exposure, working to prevent, in particular, children’s exposure to lead, and strengthening monitoring and surveillance efforts and the treatment of lead poisoning,

Noting efforts undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme to assist in the phase out of lead in gasoline, including the partnership initiative bringing together Governments, industry, international organizations and non-governmental organizations worldwide to facilitate a wider use of cleaner fuels, including the elimination of lead,

Noting with appreciation the efforts of the Technical Working Group of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, to develop technical guidelines for the environmentally sound management of waste lead-acid batteries,

Expressing its appreciation to the Governments that have taken action to eliminate the use of lead in gasoline,

Having considered the report of the Executive Director on progress in phasing out lead in gasoline (UNEP/GC.22/2, chap. II.E),

² *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development*, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002 (United Nations publication Sales No. E.03.II.A.1) chap. I resolution 2, annex.

1. *Encourages* Governments, relevant organizations and other stakeholders to apply the technical guidelines, as appropriate, for ensuring the environmentally sound management of these lead-containing wastes;
2. *Calls upon* Governments that have not yet done so to act urgently to eliminate the use of lead in gasoline;
3. *Urges* Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to work with the private sector to identify effective ways of reducing exposures to lead and to strengthen monitoring and surveillance efforts and the treatment of lead poisoning;
4. *Also calls upon* Governments to act urgently on the commitment of the World Summit on Sustainable Development to phase out lead in lead-based paint and other sources of human exposure, to prevent exposure to lead, in particular children's exposure to lead, and to strengthen monitoring and surveillance as well as treatment of lead poisoning;
5. *Requests* the Executive Director, in cooperation with other members of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, in particular with the World Health Organization, as well as with other partners, including the private sector, to assist Governments, through information exchange and capacity-building, in their efforts to phase out lead in gasoline, lead-based paint and other sources of human exposure, to prevent exposure to lead and to strengthen efforts for monitoring and surveillance as well as treatment of lead poisoning;
6. *Appeals* to Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society to participate actively in assisting national Governments in their efforts to prevent and phase out sources of human exposure to lead, in particular the use of lead in gasoline, and to strengthen monitoring and surveillance efforts as well as treatment of lead poisoning, by making available information, technical assistance, capacity-building, and funding to developing countries and countries with economies in transition;
7. *Requests* the Executive Director to provide additional resources for the implementation of the present decision to cover its core infrastructure costs."

4. Activities to give effect to decision 22/4 III, other than those to phase out leaded gasoline, were constrained by a lack of funding and staff resources within UNEP in 2004–2005. Since 2001, UNEP has played a key role in phasing out leaded gasoline worldwide. UNEP took the lead in developing an action plan for the phase-out of leaded gasoline in Africa, which has contributed to the introduction of clean fuels in the region. As a result of the efforts of UNEP in that regard, working with such key partners as the World Bank, Governments and the private sector, sub-Saharan Africa is on track to achieve its target of making the region free of leaded petrol. Further work is under way to support phase out in other regions too.

II. Mandates specific to lead and cadmium

5. In 2001, the Governing Council in its decision 21/5 on mercury assessment agreed to consider, at its twenty-second session, whether there was a need for assessments of other heavy metals of possible global concern.
6. In 2003, the Governing Council in its decision 22/4 V on the mercury programme decided to consider, at its twenty-third session, what further action might be taken with regard to other heavy metals, for example lead and cadmium.
7. In 2005, the Governing Council in its decision 23/9 III on lead and cadmium requested UNEP to undertake a process to develop the two reviews of scientific information on lead and cadmium which are under discussion at the first meeting of the Lead and Cadmium Working Group. The decision reads as follows:

“Decision 23/9: Chemicals management

The Governing Council,

III

Lead and cadmium

15. *Reaffirms* its decision 22/4 III of 7 February 2003 on lead;
 16. *Requests* the Executive Director to undertake a review of scientific information, focusing especially on long-range environmental transport, to inform future discussions on the need for global action in relation to lead and cadmium;
 17. *Encourages* Governments and other stakeholders to increase contributions in order to facilitate the timely implementation of the work required by the present decision;
 18. *Requests* the Executive Director to report on implementation of the present decision as it relates to lead and cadmium to the Governing Council at its twenty-fourth session;”
8. Sufficient funding and staff resources are available in 2005–2006 to implement fully decision 23/9 III. As called for in the decision, UNEP will report on implementation of the decision as it relates to lead and cadmium to the Governing Council at its twenty-fourth session, to be held in February 2007. The reviews of scientific information on lead and cadmium will be provided to the Governing Council as background information in English only.