

**Report of the Informal Consultation on the
“Global Partnership for Mercury Reduction in Products”
Eastland Park Hotel
Portland, Maine
The United States**

The first informal consultation of the “Global Partnership for Mercury Reduction in Products” took place on May 25, 2005 in the United States. The meeting was attended by representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, China, India, Mexico, the United States, the European Commission, the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation, environmental and health care non-governmental organizations, U.S. and European industry, and U.S. states' environmental agencies. The complete list of participants can be found by clicking [here](#).

The consultation on the “Global Partnership for Mercury Reduction in Products” was moderated by Charles Auer of the United States. The participants reviewed the 23rd decision of the UNEP Governing Council (the 2005 Governing Council Decision), which is available on the UNEP website at www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/partnerships, and discussed the opportunity provided by the Governing Council decision to form a partnership focused on the reduction and elimination of the use of mercury in products and production processes. The meeting was designed to initiate a discussion and lay the groundwork for the future launch of a partnership on products and production processes. The participants discussed the goals, objectives, and potential initial actions of the partnership in order to ensure that those countries which are able and interested in developing early pilot partnerships, as called for in the 2005 Governing Council Decision on Chemicals, can benefit from the views of the interested stakeholders. The informal consultation provided the basis for the partnership which will be further developed as pilot projects are developed and implemented.

Summary of the Discussion on Products

The informal consultation was structured around the [discussion paper](#), which is available on the UNEP web site (www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/partnerships). The group discussed draft goals and objectives, possible next steps to advance the mandate of the 2005 decision of the UNEP Governing Council, the relationship between the use of mercury in products and in production processes, and the definition of a partner as being an entity willing to contribute time, resources, or expertise to implement the partnership. Below is a summary of what the group discussed and agreed on as the basis for the initial stage of the partnership.

Goals

Participants emphasized the need for the goal language for the partnership to be more general, and similar to that found in the 2005 decision of the UNEP Governing Council. However, participants agreed that more specific language should speak to the needs of developing countries in need of assistance under the partnership. Participants also underscored the importance of identifying potential partners, interests, needs, and capabilities. Once such information is provided by national governments to UNEP, participants agreed that appropriate working groups could be developed within the partnership by matching up the interests, needs, and capabilities of interested partners.

Participants discussed the importance of carefully targeting the use of available resources and ensuring the involvement of developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

Reference to the language of the 2005 decision of the UNEP Governing Council was suggested as a general guide in understanding whom to involve in the partnership and how to proceed in the partnership-building process. The importance of having a developing country take a lead role in the partnership was also noted.

Objectives

After summarizing the discussion on goals, participants moved into the discussion of the objectives of the products discussion paper. As with goals, participants agreed that there needed to be more general language under objectives, ensuring that the partnership is open and transparent in terms of the interests of potential stakeholders. It was also agreed that a number of specific references should be included, such as transfer of technologies with respect to reducing mercury releases from product manufacturing, specifying both use and emission inventories, and including language that discussed limited use and eventual disposal of mercury in the future.

Initial Actions

Participants had a variety of suggestions for the initial actions section of the products partnership paper, including ensuring the appropriate role of the Secretariat in the partnership to facilitate information sharing between the partners and taking into account the difficulty for some countries to report to UNEP about export and import data on mercury if no baseline data is available, or if mercury use is unknown. It was noted that some countries have already pursued some mercury reduction initiatives, and that these actions could serve as examples for moving the products partnership forward, including through capacity-building assistance, which is one way that partners can support work of the partnership.

Action Items

Noting that the informal consultation had yielded the exchange of meaningful ideas and recommendations, the Global Partnership for Mercury Reduction in Products will need to undertake the following actions in order to move forward with the product partnership's goals and objectives:

- Revise language in discussion paper on products to allow for more flexibility in the broad range of activities partners can choose to commit to under the partnership;
- Encourage the identification of needs and resources by national governments, pursuant to the 2005 Governing Council decision; and
- Identify appropriate reporting mechanism(s) to share information on products, which could facilitate more effective collaboration among partners, as called for in the 2005 Governing Council decision.

The informal consultation was held by the United States, in cooperation with UNEP, and was open to all interested stakeholders. Information was posted on the UNEP website in advance of the meeting at: www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/partnerships . Future activities of the partnership will also be posted on the web site in the interest of full transparency. Participation in the partnership is welcome at any time. To get involved or to become a partner, please contact Denise Wright at wright.denise@epa.gov or the UNEP Mercury Program Secretariat.