



United States Department of State

Bureau of Oceans and International  
Environmental and Scientific Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20520

UNEP Chemicals  
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May 23, 2006

Dear Dr. Younes:

This letter is in response to your March 31, 2006 letter on the mobilization of resources in support of mercury partnerships with respect to the United Nations Environment Program's (UNEP) Governing Council decision (23/9). As you are aware, in response to the Governing Council decision 23/9, the United States Government, and in particular the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has been a leader in this effort, initiating action on partnerships in several sectors and collaborating with a range of partners. We expect that the work we are undertaking with our partners will help build the necessary capacity for developing countries and countries with economies-in-transition to take further action on this pollutant, including identifying and implementing successful approaches to reduce human exposure to mercury and promoting information and technology transfer to characterize better and address the global mercury problem at national, regional, and global levels.

In addition to providing technical expertise to the partnerships, the United States (U.S.) has been a major financial supporter of the UNEP Mercury Program and the Mercury Partnership efforts. The U.S. has provided over two and half million dollars in funding for mercury partnerships and related work. These contributions have been essential in initiating partnerships that cover Products, Chlor-alkali facilities, Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining, and Coal Combustion, as well as initiating our Fate and Transport research and inventory-related work. Below is a discussion of the partnerships in which EPA is engaged along with a summary of the fund raising aspects of the associated activities.

#### Mercury Reduction in Products

On May 25, 2005 an informal international consultation was held in Portland, Maine, U.S. for interested parties to discuss ideas for a global partnership to reduce mercury use in products. Participants in this consultative meeting included representatives from the governments of Argentina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, China, India, Mexico, and the European Union, the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), state government in the U.S., non-governmental organizations, and the World Bank. Funding for the meeting was provided by the U.S. Travel support for Argentina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, and India was provided by the U.S. contribution to UNEP. Travel support for Mexico was provided by the CEC. Since then, several activities under the partnership have developed. The U.S. worked with the Governments of Canada and Mexico and the CEC through the CEC Mercury Task Force, to fund and host a capacity-

building workshop on reducing mercury use in products in the Americas. Funding for the workshop and travel for country representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, and some state governments, academia, and environmental non-governmental organizations in North Americas was provided by the U.S. contribution to UNEP for mercury partnerships and the CEC.

Through a bilateral agreement and funding support from the U.S., the U.S. and China are working together on a healthcare pilot project to reduce mercury use and wastes at two hospitals in Beijing, China. The EPA, China's State Environmental Protection Administration and Health Ministry, and Health Care Without Harm, a non-governmental organization (NGO), will work together on this hospital project with the goal to significantly reduce air and water releases of mercury throughout these hospitals in one year. EPA hopes that SEPA will use the pilot to create a similar training program for hospitals throughout the country at the end of 2007. The U.S. is also working with Burkina Faso and UNEP by providing funding to UNEP to conduct an initial mercury life cycle assessment for products as a first step in that country's efforts to characterize and reduce mercury use. Additionally, the U.S. is in the initial stages of developing several potential projects at this time including emissions and products inventory projects and healthcare projects similar to the China project mentioned above. The U.S. has initiated engagement with several potential partners, including other governments, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), and Health Care Without Harm, to discuss their interest and mechanisms for developing and implementing these projects.

#### Mercury Reduction in the Chlor-Alkali Sector

The May 25, 2005 informal international consultation held in Portland, Maine, U.S., also discussed ideas for a global partnership to reduce mercury use in chlor-alkali facilities via use of best practices, shifts to non-mercury cell technology, and other steps. Since then, the U.S. has coordinated closely with industry associations globally and several governments to develop and implement pilot projects over the next three years. The global industry association, the World Chlorine Council (WCC), joined the partnership and expressed interest in working in, inter alia, Russia, India and Mexico to encourage mercury use and release reductions through better reporting and technical exchange on best practices. WCC mobilized its members in Russia and Mexico, in particular, to collaborate with EPA and UNEP in conducting workshops and site visits for Russian facility managers. WCC provided in-kind travel support and expertise to these efforts and is maintaining a website of resource information and workshop materials. The Government of Canada has also provided funding for the Russian work in the context of the Arctic Council and travel funding for Mexico.

In Russia, EPA worked with the Russian Cleaner Production Center and Ruschlor, the Russian chlor-alkali industry association, on a workshop held in November 2005 that was hosted by Volgograd Caustic (one of the three remaining mercury-cell chlor-alkali plants in Russia), and on a follow up partnership project. As part of the follow up, WCC, EPA, and UNEP Chemicals organized a study tour of European chlor-alkali facilities in four countries. In India we are currently considering working, upon request of the

Ministry of Environment and Forests and through India's National Environmental Engineering Research Institute, to hold a workshop on options for financing and conducting conversions to mercury free technologies. In Mexico we worked through the international industry association for the chlor-alkali sector to conduct a workshop, which UNEP and their Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) attended. The WCC has provided the Mexico facilities with a technology mentor for two months in order to identify process improvements. These facilities are now considering options for conducting a mercury reduction demonstration projects at their facilities.

### Mercury Management in Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining

On June 15, 2005 an informal international consultation was held in Washington, DC, U.S. for interested parties to discuss ideas for a global partnership to reduce mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining. Since that meeting took place, the U.S. has continued to closely coordinate with existing successful efforts in this sector, including the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the World Bank's Communities and Small-Scale Mining (CASM) Program. We plan to fund and are scoping pilot projects in West Africa and the Amazon Basin to reduce mercury use and emissions in this sector, in coordination with UNIDO. In addition, we are preparing a mercury-specific web page for the CASM website, including documents in a variety of formats and languages which provide information on simple and cost-effective methods to reduce occupational and environmental exposure to mercury in artisanal mining. It is important to increase awareness of countries regarding this growing sector, in particular the potential for expansion of the UNIDO Global Mercury Project to additional countries, and the continued involvement of the CASM Program in the environmental aspects of small-scale mining.

### Mercury Control from Coal Combustion

U.S. efforts to address mercury control from coal fired power plants have focused on China and India, where mercury emissions from this sector are likely to be of great significance due to increasing use of coal as an energy source. As a first step, the U.S. partnered with China, Canada, and Japan to hold a workshop in Beijing, China in October 2005 on the measurement and control of mercury from coal fired power plants. Early consultation with potential partners on the objectives and approach to the workshop facilitated partner decisions to provide resources for the workshop. From the beginning, we have felt that collaborative efforts to address mercury from this sector should engage both environment and energy ministries. Within the U.S., EPA has worked closely with the Department of Energy to develop and fund work conducted in China. Through the U.S.-India bilateral agreement, the U.S. is also assisting India by providing funding for information that will improve the effectiveness of multipollutant controls.

### Mercury Air Transport and Fate Research

The U.S. initially took the lead in developing a global partnership on mercury air transport and fate research. The U.S. remains a partner in this global research partnership and has already committed to providing training and technical expertise to assist China

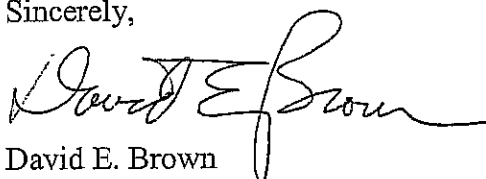
with the monitoring of atmospheric concentrations of mercury in China. Additionally, the U.S. will support the continuation of monitoring of atmospheric concentrations of mercury at Mauna Loa, Hawaii. Our partners in this effort from Italy and Japan are now taking a leadership role in advancing this important initiative, and we look forward to working closely with them to make progress in this important endeavor.

Mercury Air Transport and Fate Research Partnership members are in the process of proposing to UNEP a list of activities to be carried out, and are revising the discussion paper currently posted on the UNEP. Although the list is not yet complete, it appears that several stakeholders will be providing resources for various activities under this partnership.

The U.S. remains committed to providing technical and financial support for these Global Partnerships for Mercury Reduction. The U.S. contacts for future follow-up on the funding partnership are Jim Willis of EPA and John Thompson at the U.S. State Department. Mr. Willis can be reached by telephone at (202) 564-0104 or by e-mail at [Willis.Jim@epa.gov](mailto:Willis.Jim@epa.gov). Mr. Thompson can be reached at 202-647-9799 or [ThompsonJE2@state.gov](mailto:ThompsonJE2@state.gov).

The U.S. looks forward to UNEP bringing together donor support for on the ground mercury reduction initiatives and providing an ongoing leadership role in mobilizing resources in support of the mercury partnerships. We look forward to continuing our work with UNEP, Governments, intergovernmental organizations, and other stakeholders around the world to take the global partnership approach to an active and effective level of engagement. We will continue to work on these partnership efforts throughout 2006 and 2007 to ensure meaningful progress in reducing mercury's impacts by the next Governing Council meeting in February 2007 and beyond. If you have any questions on this submission or would like to discuss further, please contact me at (202)-647-9831.

Sincerely,



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