

## Summary of Mercury Policy Meetings in Geneva for the F&T GMP

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On behalf of the Fate and Transport Partnership of the Global Mercury Partnerships (GMP), we would like to provide our membership with an update on recent events and topics of interest. This is prompted by two important recent meetings, the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Global Mercury Partnerships meeting (PAG10) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference of Parties of the Minamata Convention (COP3) which were both held in Geneva Switzerland. The Global Mercury Partnerships met on Saturday, November 23, 2019 and the COP10 started on November 24, 2019. The GMP meeting was supported by funds from Norway and additional materials about the GMP meeting can be found at <https://web.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/partnership-advisory-group-meeting-10>.

This communication is an effort to bring the F&T Partnership membership up to date on the events, issues, and discussions surrounding the GMPs and the Minamata Convention (MC) in order for the F&T community to be able to be more engaged with and provide support to the implementation of the Convention. Another goal is to inform our membership about some basics about the Partnerships and Convention in order that we can all think of ways to become engaged. To that end, we have included a list of acronyms and terms (at the end of this communication) that may not be as familiar to those of us not involved in the world of the United Nations and the Convention. In addition, a document, *3. Report of GMP Activities*, is also attached which contains much more detail than this update on the activities of the GMP and also the last *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* which summarizes the last day of COP3.

The meetings covered discussions of a multitude of issues, many of which are directly relevant to those of us in the Fate and Transport Partnership. This update is merely a brief summary of the discussions held at the meetings. However, it is expected that the future role of the Partnerships will be increasing as the implementation of the Convention moves forward. Defining what that role is will be dependent on the membership of the partnerships.

### Global Mercury Partnership Meeting

This meeting was attended by about ~40 people including representatives from all the Partnerships, many UNEP staff, and staff of UNIDO, UNITAR, and GEF. Since many who have not participated in all the Partnership meetings may not be familiar with some of the players, the list of individuals who were involved in opening and running the meeting are listed in order of appearance:

- Rodges Ankrah, Co-Chair of Global Mercury Partnership, US Environmental Protection Agency
- Jacqueline Alvarez, Secretariat of the Global Mercury Partnership (UNEP)
- David Kapindula (Zambia), President of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention
- Rossana Silva Repetto, Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention
- Stephanie Laruelle, Secretariat of the Global Mercury Partnership (UNEP)
- Ken Davis, Secretariat of the Global Mercury Partnership (UNEP)

The overall objective of the meeting was to report on the Partnership activities of the past year and to discuss their roles going forward as the Convention is implemented. The agenda of the meeting is also attached. In fact, the GMP will also be publishing a newsletter that may contain

some of the same information as this update. The role of the partnerships has evolved with the treaty negotiations and now the implementation of the Convention.

#### *Reports by Government Organizations and NGOs*

*Claudia ten Have*, representative of the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention updated the group on national and regional activities involved in implementing the Convention, plans for 2020-21 around capacity building and technical assistance particularly any cooperation with the GMPs, and lastly, developments under the Specific International Programme under Article 13 of the Convention. In 2019, \$2 million were given out for 10 projects (out of 20 applications). Members of the Partnerships helped with the reviews of these proposals.

*Anil Sookdeo*, of the Secretariat of the General Environment Fund (GEF) spoke about the GEF7 which had a total of \$185 million to which applications were submitted December 2019. This was an increase from GEF6 for 2014-2018 which totaled \$146 million and funded the development of country MIAs and NAPs and included the GEF gold project. To date 35 of 70 NAPs have been complete. GEF7 will involve more support of implementation projects.

*Ken Davis*, of the UNEP Secretariat, reported on Artisanal Small Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) and the Planet Gold project which involve four implementing agencies and eight countries. There was a side event held on this project at the COP3.

*Jerome Stucki* of UNIDO reported on projects conducted in Mongolia and the Phillipines and their involvement in Planet Gold in collaboration with Natural Resources Defense Council. He also described UNIDO's role in developing NAPs in Africa and South America.

*Jacob Maag* of UNITAR reported on their agency's role in developing MIAs and NAPs along with the promotion of the Mercury Toolkit which David had developed. The Toolkit was discussed further at a side meeting of COP3.

*Melisa Lim* of the Basel Convention reported on the update of guidelines for the Hg waste/products phaseout. This is an area of interface with the Basel Convention which will develop an electronic system to track the transboundary movement of Hg waste.

#### Partnership Reports

##### **1. Mercury releases from coal combustion: Lesley Sloss / Peter Nelson**

Lesley and Peter reported on activities of the partnership which included a meeting of the Asia Pacific working group. They mentioned the projects funded by the US State Department in Indonesia and India on water conservation, waste utilization emissions monitoring and multi-pollutant reduction strategies. They discussed challenges in bringing in new partners to their partnership.

##### **2. Mercury air transport and fate research: Dave Evers / Sergio Cinnirella & Alessandra Fino on behalf of Nicola Pirrone**

Dave described the discussions being conducted by the Effectiveness Evaluation ad hoc committee with regard to monitoring of atmospheric Hg and biota. He listed several existing data platforms (e.g. Integrated Global Observing System for Persistent Pollutants, IGOSP; GEO Flagship, GOS<sup>4</sup>M) that could be used to house monitoring data that would be generated by in the process of implementing Article 21 (Effectiveness Evaluation) of the Convention. Sergio described in greater detail the GEO Flagship platform which is supported by 12 partner organizations and has 5 main hubs. Dave also

described a current biota monitoring database that provides a framework for a Global Hg Biota Monitoring and also the chapter on biota in the Global Mercury Assessment. Sylvia Sander from the International Atomic Energy Commission also offered to the F&T Partnership their capability to support laboratory intercalibration. Celia Chen (Dartmouth College) from the US, Sandy Steffen from Canada, and Kevin Bishop from Sweden were members of the F&T Partnership also attending the meeting.

**3. Mercury releases from the cement industry: Claude Lorea**

Claude discussed the dissemination of information on monitoring and the involvement of the Global Cement and Concrete Association (<https://gccassociation.org/>).

**4. Mercury-cell chlor-alkali production: Ozunimi Iti**

Ozunimi discussed the commitment to convert to Hg free technologies by 2025 and the intent to work with the Waste Management Partnership. Issues around interim storage were also mentioned.

**5. Mercury supply and storage: Ana García/Judith Torres**

Challenges were discussed pertaining to the availability of good data on quantities, preventing illegal traffic, identifying countries developing non-ferrous mining, and the contribution of oil and gas in East Asia. Oil refining and cleaning of natural gas as sources of Hg were also discussed.

**6. Mercury waste management: Misuzu Asari**

This partnership has 101 partners and had a face to face meeting in the last year. There is an effort to develop a catalog of technologies associated with waste management. They are working on information sharing via a mailing list, dissemination of technological information, and areas to enhance outreach.

**7. Artisanal and small-scale gold mining: Jerome Stucki, Ludovic Bernaudat, and Susan Keane** represented the partnership. Susan discussed the participation of the partners in Planet Gold and their involvement in providing technical assistance in the development of NAPs. There has also been efforts to work with downstream buyers (e.g. Futura) to promote cleaner supply chains. Solutions will require affordable alternatives and possibly centralized processing of ore. The next ASGM project supported by the GEF will be Gold Plus.

**8. Mercury in products: Thomas Groeneveld, Elena Lymberidi, and Peter Maxson (Concorde East/West Sprl) presented for the Partnership.** The co-chairs discussed the need for a harmonized nomenclature for products; for example, the difficulty in distinguishing Hg-added vs non-Hg added products and the numbering systems of the World Customs Organization process for HS (Customs) codes. Elena of Zero Mercury discussed the phase out of Hg added products and the concern about this phase out expressed by many countries in the MIA process.

### Additional Topics and Discussions

*Other sources of Mercury:* Michael Bender of Mercury Policy Project also discussed a lesser known use of Hg in propulsion of satellites and Peter discussed the potential but little studied presence of Hg in gas and oil. The investigation done on the latter suggests that more needs to be done to quantify this use but there needs to be greater transparency from industry. Ken Davis informed the group about the significant sources of Hg to the atmosphere from processing

of non-ferrous metals (Pb, Zn, Cu, Al, Hg, Au). Releases from this sector constitute the largest source after ASGM and emissions of 326 tons comprise 15% of emissions, the third highest source.

*Minamata Initial Assessments:* A summary of activities to date was provided by Ken Davis. A total of around 110 countries are conducting official MIAs as funded by the GEF. Of these, around one-third have been submitted to the Secretariat's office as finalized. The other two-thirds are in various stages of completion, but all are projected to be finished by COP4.

*International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant:* A summary of the 14<sup>th</sup> ICMGP Krakow Poland was provided by Sandy Steffen, and Lesley Sloss discussed engagement of the GMP at the upcoming 15<sup>th</sup> ICMGP in Capetown South Africa. Suggestions were made for recruitment of attendees from the Global South and perhaps providing funds for attending the meeting.

*Cross cutting issue between partnerships:* Breakout discussions were formed to discuss how partnerships can work more closely together.

*Communication and Outreach:* There is interest in developing and testing better methods for outreach collectively among the Partnerships by increasing communication and face-to-face meetings. Stephanie Laurelle, who now replaces Ken Davis as the GMP UNEP staff member, spoke about the creation of a Mercury Partnership Newsletter which will follow this update at a later time.

*GMP Leadership:* The proposal of Rodges Ankrah of USEPA and Teeraporn Wiriwutikorn of Thailand to be Co-chairs of the GMP was accepted.

### **The Third Conference of Parties**

COP3 was attended by about 1000 individuals who included delegates from the interested and involved nations, observers like those of us at non-governmental organizations, government agencies, and academic institutions. The meeting ran for 5 days and concluded on November 29th. The last day of the meeting of COP3 is summarized in the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* (attached) and it also contains a nice summary of the history of the events of the MC for those who have not followed it. The Effectiveness Evaluation (EE) breakout meeting or contact group was co-chaired by Katerina Šebková (Czech Republic) and Teeraporn Wiriwutikorn (Thailand) and focused on the Article 21 of the Convention. The summary of the discussion of EE can be found on p. 7 of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* from which some highlights are quoted here. At the opening of the meeting, the MC Secretariat "introduced the report of the *ad hoc* technical expert group for effectiveness evaluation (UNEP/MC/COP.3/14. Add.1), which includes policy questions relating to proposed indicators, monitoring indicators, proposed institutional arrangements, and the first evaluation cycle." The Co-Chairs of the technical expert group on effectiveness evaluation, Šebková and Mohammed Khashashneh (Jordan), "presented elements of the report, highlighting monitoring arrangements, mercury data, and data availability."

Much of the discussion in the meeting (contact group) for EE focused on this report. In terms of environmental monitoring, issues of contention included the variables to be monitored which include air, biota, and seawater. The main outcome most relevant to the F&T Partnership is that the decisions of contact group for EE were not agreed upon. An early morning compromise on the last day of the meeting reduced the scope of the decision on EE. In its final decision (UNEP/MC/COP.3/ CRP.20) with regard to EE, the COP, *inter alia*:

- welcomes the report on the proposed framework for the effectiveness evaluation and monitoring under the Convention and complementing information by the technical expert group;
- invites parties to submit views on the indicators; and
- requests the Secretariat to compile those views before COP4.

The decision further requests the Secretariat to advance the work by securing services to draft:

- guidance on monitoring to maintain harmonized, comparable information on mercury levels in the environment; and
- reports set out in the framework with the exception of the emissions and releases report, the monitoring report, and the modelling report.

The reduction in scope of this decision was a disappointment to many who felt it was a missed opportunity. The effect of this decision is that no EE will be implemented in the near future and further decisions on this will not happen until the next COP4 in 2021.

**Attachments:**

*Agenda of GMP meeting*

*3. Report of GMP Activities*

*Earth Negotiations Bulletin*

## **Glossary**

ASGM (Artisanal Small-scale Gold Mining)

Basel Convention -

GEF (Global Environment Fund)

GMA (Global Mercury Assessment)

GMP (Global Mercury Partnerships) were formed in XXX initially to support the development of an international instrument on mercury.

Mercury Toolkit – an approach used to compile sources of mercury and magnitude of Hg use, released and emitted in each country to get an estimate of total amount of Hg for a specific year

MIA (Minamata Initial Assessments)

NAP (National Action Plans)

Planet Gold Project – project funded by the GEF to reduce the use and release of Hg in the environment ([www.planetgold.org](http://www.planetgold.org))

SIP (Special International Programme) provides funds that can be applied directly to projects within individual countries.

UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme)

UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization)

UNITAR (United Nations Institute for Training and Research)

USEPA (United States Environmental Protection Agency)