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**Intergovernmental negotiating committee  
to prepare a global legally binding  
instrument on mercury**

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**Preparation of a global legally binding  
instrument on mercury**

**Information supplied by the secretariat of the Strategic  
Approach to International Chemicals Management**

**Note by the secretariat**

The secretariat has the honour to provide, in the annex to the present note, an information note prepared by the secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management on activities under the Strategic Approach relevant to risks posed by mercury. The paper is provided in response to a request by the ad hoc open-ended working group to prepare for the intergovernmental negotiating committee on mercury at its meeting in Bangkok from 19 to 23 October 2009. The note is presented as received and has not been formally edited.

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\* UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.1/1.

## Annex

### **Information supplied by the secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management**

#### **I. Background information on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management**

1. The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) is a policy framework to promote chemical safety around the world. SAICM was adopted by the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) in Dubai on 6 February 2006 after a three-year consultation. Originally called for by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the development of SAICM was endorsed by Heads of State and Government at their summits in Johannesburg in 2002 and New York in 2005. SAICM comprises the Dubai Declaration expressing high-level political commitment to SAICM and an Overarching Policy Strategy which sets out its scope, needs, objectives, financial considerations, underlying principles and approaches and implementation and review arrangements. Objectives are grouped under five themes: risk reduction; knowledge and information; governance; capacity-building and technical cooperation; and illegal international traffic. The Declaration and Strategy are accompanied by a Global Plan of Action that serves as a working tool and guidance document to support implementation of SAICM and other relevant instruments and initiatives.

2. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 is a key political commitment underlying the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy. The latter document incorporates as the overall objective of SAICM the Johannesburg Plan's aim of achieving the sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle so that, by 2020, chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment.

3. SAICM is distinguished by its multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder character, engaging representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations from sectors such as agriculture, environment, health, industry and labour. A key group providing support for the implementation of SAICM are the seven participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), all of whose governing bodies have formally recognized SAICM. The organizations are the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the International Labour Organization (ILO); the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); UNEP; the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR); the World Health Organization (WHO). In addition, two observer organizations participate in the IOMC and have also engaged actively in the SAICM process: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank.

#### **II. Mercury under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management**

4. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and by extension the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy, envisages that achieving the goal of sound chemicals management by 2020 will entail actions at all levels, including specifically to promote reduction of the risks posed by heavy metals that are harmful to human health and the environment. In the Global Plan of Action of the Strategic Approach, promoting reduction of risks from mercury so that they are minimized is recognized as a priority and mercury is identified as a leading candidate for assessment and related studies, such as for the development and use of safe and effective alternatives. The Global Plan includes a work area that covers mercury, under which it calls for consideration of a full range of options for further action on mercury, including the possibility of a legally binding instrument, and for immediate action to reduce the risk to human health and the environment posed by mercury in products and production processes

5. Among the financial arrangements envisaged to support implementation of SAICM is a "Quick Start Programme" (QSP) which aims to provide rapid access to resources in the range of \$50,000 to \$250,000 per project for initial enabling activities. The QSP Trust Fund is currently financing 100

projects valued at over \$20 million in more than 80 countries. These include four mercury-related projects valued at approximately \$250,000 each, namely a project in Uruguay to promote the sound management of mercury in products; projects relating to artisanal small scale gold mining in Cambodia and the Philippines and in Bolivia and Peru; and a regional project involving a campaign to minimize domestic sources of mercury in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. Further support from the Trust Fund for mercury projects will be possible until the conclusion of the QSP in 2013. It remains to be decided by the International Conference on Chemicals Management whether a follow-on scheme will be established. If so, such a scheme or a non-SAICM equivalent could be considered as one element in a package of financial mechanisms to support the implementation of the future mercury instrument.

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