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**Twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council/  
Global Ministerial Environment Forum**  
Nairobi, 21–24 February 2011  
Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda\*  
**Policy issues: state of the environment**

**Chemicals management, including mercury**

**Report of the Executive Director**

*Summary*

The present report provides information about the implementation of decision 25/5 of 20 February 2009 on chemicals management, including mercury. It is divided into three chapters corresponding to the three parts of decision 25/5 that request the Executive Director to report to the Governing Council: lead and cadmium; mercury; and final provisions (including United Nations Environment Programme support towards implementing the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management).

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\* UNEP/GC.26/1.

## I. Suggested action by the Governing Council

1. The Governing Council may wish to consider the adoption of a decision along the lines suggested below:

*The Governing Council,*

*Recalling* its decisions 18/12 of 26 May 1995, 19/13 of 7 February 1997, 20/23 of 4 February 1999, SS.VII/3 of 15 February 2002, 22/4 of 7 February 2003, 23/9 of 25 February 2005, SS.IX/1 of 9 February 2006, 24/3 of 9 February 2007 and 25/5 of 20 February 2009 concerning global policies related to chemicals management and the development of a strategic approach to international chemicals management,

*Acknowledging* the widespread concerns over the serious adverse effects of mercury on human health and the environment and the urgent need for international action,

*Acknowledging with appreciation* the progress made in finalizing the reviews of scientific information on lead and cadmium,

*Noting* the widespread concerns over the serious adverse effects of lead and cadmium on human health and the environment and the need for international, regional, national and local attention and action, as deemed necessary,

*Noting also* that the work on global policies related to chemicals management will be carried out as part of the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme, particularly the subprogramme on harmful substances and hazardous wastes, which, among other things, deals with mercury, lead and cadmium and the implementation of the environmental aspects of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management,

*Having considered* the report of the Executive Director on chemicals management, including mercury,<sup>1</sup>

### I

#### Lead and cadmium

1. *Acknowledges with appreciation* the progress and efforts made on lead and cadmium, including actions taken to finalize the reviews of scientific information on those metals,<sup>2</sup> in particular the actions taken to fill the data and information gaps in accordance with section II of decision 25/5 and other actions taken under the project addressing risks posed by exposure to lead and cadmium of the United Nations Environment Programme subprogramme on harmful substances and hazardous wastes;<sup>3</sup>

2. *Welcomes* the studies on the possible effects on human health and the environment of the trade of products containing lead, cadmium and mercury in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Asia and the Pacific;<sup>4</sup>

3. *Notes* that, because of their relatively short residence time in the atmosphere, lead and cadmium are mainly transported over local, national or regional distances, while their transport in solution and suspension by rivers contributes to their transfer to the marine environment;

4. *Also notes* that the export of new and used products containing lead and cadmium remains a challenge for developing countries and countries with economies in transition as they lack the capacity to manage and dispose of such products in an environmentally sound manner;

5. *Agrees* that further international, regional, national and local attention and action are needed to tackle the challenges posed by lead and cadmium and encourages further efforts by Governments and others to continue reducing the risks to human health and the environment from lead and cadmium throughout the life cycles of these substances;

6. *Acknowledges* the efforts made by Governments and others to tackle the risks posed by lead and cadmium, in particular to phase out lead from gasoline through the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles, the initial actions under the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead in Paints and other

1 UNEP/GC.26/5.

2 UNEP/GC.26/INF/11 and Add.1 and Add. 2.

3 UNEP/GC.26/INF/11/Add.5.

4 UNEP/GC.26/INF/11/Add.3 and Add.4.

initiatives and actions implemented within the United Nations Environment Programme, and urges Governments to continue participating in and contributing to these initiatives;

7. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue to promote and facilitate work in relation to the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles, the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead in Paints, and the initiative to coordinate global efforts to achieve the environmentally sound management of lead and cadmium batteries throughout their life cycles, while working in close cooperation and coordination with Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders;

8. *Also requests* the Executive Director, in coordination, with Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders as appropriate, and subject to the availability of resources, to continue and enhance activities on lead and cadmium by the United Nations Environment Programme as part of the international, regional, national and/or local attention and action on lead and cadmium, with such activities to include capacity-building and awareness-raising in relation to the information contained in the reviews of scientific information on lead and cadmium and the environmental and human health problems associated with exposure to these two metals;

9. *Invites* Governments and others in a position to do so to provide extrabudgetary resources to support the implementation of the present decision in relation to lead and cadmium;

10. *Requests* the Executive Director to present a report on progress in the implementation of the present decision to the Governing Council at its twenty-seventh regular session;

## II

### Mercury

11. *Recalls* its agreement to further international action consisting of the elaboration of a legally binding instrument on mercury, which could include both binding and voluntary approaches, together with interim activities, to reduce risks to human health and the environment;

12. *Acknowledges* the progress made by the United Nations Environment Programme mercury programme since 2005, including the establishment of and progress made under partnerships and other initiatives;

13. *Also acknowledges* the progress made at its first two sessions by the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, supported by the Chemicals Branch of the United Nations Environment Programme Division of Technology, Industry and Economics as its secretariat, in preparing a global legally binding instrument on mercury;

14. *Encourages* all Governments to participate actively in the committee's remaining sessions in order that it completes its work, as mandated by the Governing Council, prior to the twenty-seventh regular session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, in 2013;

15. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue to support developing countries and countries with economies in transition to participate effectively in the committee's work;

16. *Welcomes* the efforts by the United Nations Environment Programme and its partners to take immediate action on mercury through the Global Mercury Partnership and urges all partners to continue their efforts to take immediate steps to reduce risks from mercury exposure;

17. *Urges* Governments and other stakeholders to continue to support and contribute to the Global Mercury Partnership;

18. *Reiterates* its request that the Executive Director, in consultation with Governments, update the 2008 report, "Global Atmospheric Mercury Assessment: Sources, Emissions and Transport," for consideration by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-seventh regular session;

19. *Emphasizes* the need for Governments to provide information, upon request and in a timely manner, for inclusion in the above-mentioned updated report;

20. *Requests* the Executive Director, as a priority action, to continue to provide the necessary support to the intergovernmental negotiating committee, the United Nations Environment Programme mercury programme and the Global Mercury Partnership as near-term activities to address mercury;

21. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue to facilitate close cooperation and coordination between the United Nations Environment Programme mercury programme and the Global Mercury Partnership and Governments, mercury-related activities under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and its Quick Start Programme, convention secretariats, including those of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector;

22. *Invites* Governments and others in a position to do so to provide extrabudgetary resources for the implementation of the present decision;

23. *Requests* the Executive Director to present a report on progress in the implementation of the present decision to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-seventh regular session;

### III

#### **Implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management**

24. *Welcomes* the progress made to date in implementing the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management;

25. *Notes* the efforts of the United Nations Environment Programme in implementing the Strategic Approach and the decisions of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, in particular through the activities of the Strategic Approach secretariat and those elements of the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme related to the environmental aspects of the Strategic Approach;

26. *Underlines* the importance of mainstreaming activities and the assessment of the economic and social costs of unsound chemicals management, including the cost of inaction and the implications for the health sector, together with the assessment of economic instruments that internalize the external costs related to chemicals, to be reflected in the first Global Chemicals Outlook report, to be published in early 2012;

27. *Urges* Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and others in a position to do so to contribute financially and in kind to the implementation of the Strategic Approach, including through the Quick Start Programme, the secretariat and the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme.

## II. Background

2. The present report has been prepared pursuant to Governing Council decision 25/5 on chemicals management, including mercury. The document provides background information to support the Governing Council's deliberations and is divided into three chapters corresponding to the three parts of decision 25/5 that require the preparation of reports to the Governing Council: lead and cadmium; mercury; and final provisions (including United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) support towards implementing the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management).

3. Attention is drawn to the following associated documents, which provide additional information relevant to the present report:

(a) UNEP/GC.26/5/Add.1: Chemicals management including mercury: Addendum: Summary of the outcome of the second session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury;

(b) UNEP/GC.26/INF/11: Informing discussions on the need for global action in relation to lead and cadmium;

(c) UNEP/GC.26/INF/11/Add.1: Informing discussions on the need for global action in relation to lead and cadmium: Addendum: Final review of scientific information on lead, along with its appendix on an overview of existing and future national actions, including legislation, relevant to lead;

(d) UNEP/GC.26/INF/11/Add.2: Informing discussions on the need for global action in relation to lead and cadmium: Addendum: Final review of scientific information on cadmium, along with its appendix on an overview of existing and future national actions, including legislation, relevant to cadmium;

(e) UNEP/GC.26/INF/11/Add.3: Informing discussions on the need for global action in relation to lead and cadmium: Addendum: Study on the health and environmental effects of the movement of products containing lead, cadmium and mercury in Latin America and the Caribbean;

(f) UNEP/GC.26/INF/11/Add.4: Informing discussions on the need for global action in relation to lead and cadmium: Addendum: Study on the health and environmental effects of the movement of products containing lead, cadmium and mercury in Asia and the Pacific;

(g) UNEP/GC.26/INF/11/Add.5: Informing discussions on the need for global action in relation to lead and cadmium: Addendum: Other activities by the United Nations Environment Programme related to lead and cadmium;

(h) UNEP/GC.26/INF/12: Overall progress of the United Nations Environment Programme Global Mercury Partnership from January 2009 to June 2010.

### **III. Activities by the United Nations Environment Programme pursuant to section II, on lead and cadmium, of decision 25/5**

4. The Governing Council, in section II of its decision 25/5, requested UNEP to finalize the reviews of scientific information on lead and cadmium,<sup>5</sup> taking into account the latest available information in line with decisions 24/3 of 9 February 2007 and 23/9 of 25 February 2005, and to report to the Governing Council at its twenty-sixth session with a view to informing discussions on the need for global action in relation to these two metals. The information set out below is provided in accordance with that request.

#### **A. Finalization of the reviews of scientific information on lead and cadmium**

5. All Governments and members of the Lead and Cadmium Working Group with new or additional information responding to the data and information gaps identified in the draft final reviews of scientific information on lead and cadmium (versions of November 2008), were requested to submit that information to the Chemicals Branch of the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics. In total, 17 submissions were received from Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations.<sup>6</sup> The draft final reviews of scientific information on lead and cadmium, together with their relevant companion documents, were amended and circulated to the Working Group members. The final reviews of scientific information on lead and cadmium, and their companion documents (versions of November 2010), incorporating the Working Group's final comments, are before the Governing Council as documents UNEP/GC.26/INF/11 and Add.1 and Add.2

6. A need to examine the global flow of lead and cadmium in products was identified as a data and information gap in the draft final reviews of scientific information on lead and cadmium (version of November 2008). In response to this, documents UNEP/GC.26/INF/11/Add.3 and Add.4 present the results of studies, prepared with support by the Nordic Council of Ministers and the assistance of Grupo GEA and the International POPs Elimination Network, on the possible effects on human health and the environment of the trade of products containing lead, cadmium and mercury in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Asia and the Pacific, respectively.

#### **B. Other United Nations Environment Programme activities relating to lead and cadmium**

7. A number of Governing Council decisions reaffirm international interest in reducing the risks to human health and the environment posed by lead and cadmium.<sup>7</sup> UNEP is responding to these decisions through a dedicated project on addressing risks posed by exposure to lead and cadmium under the harmful substances and hazardous waste subprogramme of the programme of work for 2010–2011. The project's objective is to reduce the human-caused uses of lead and cadmium in key

5 UNEP/GC.25/INF/23 and INF/24.

6 Available from [www.chem.unep.ch/Pb\\_and\\_Cd/default.htm](http://www.chem.unep.ch/Pb_and_Cd/default.htm).

7 Section III of decision 22/4, section III of decision 23/9, section III of decision 24/3 and section II of decision 25/5.

products and industry sectors that give rise to particular exposure concerns. Key components of the project are:

- (a) Promoting the elimination of lead-based additives in vehicle fuels;
- (b) Promoting the phase-out of lead in paint;
- (c) Reducing the risks to human health and the environment posed by lead and cadmium throughout their life cycles and promoting the use of lead-free and cadmium-free alternatives, for instance in toys and paint;
- (d) Informing intergovernmental discussions on the need for global action in relation to lead and cadmium.

8. The Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles has achieved great success in the global elimination of leaded gasoline since its launch at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. While most developing countries and countries with economies in transition used leaded gasoline in 2002, today only six countries are doing so, and in small amounts; the complete global elimination of leaded gasoline is within reach during the coming biennium. Over the past biennium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Montenegro, Serbia, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uzbekistan eliminated leaded gasoline (as at the end of January 2010).

9. The Partnership, with its clearing house based at UNEP headquarters, has continuing or planned activities in the remaining six countries using leaded fuels (Afghanistan, Algeria, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iraq, Myanmar and Yemen). Awareness has been raised in all six countries (with the exception of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, where the Partnership has been invited to conduct a national workshop in the first quarter of 2011) through national and subregional activities on the benefits of eliminating leaded gasoline. A recent global study by California State University shows that the benefits to society of phasing out leaded fuels are much larger than previously believed. For example, global elimination is estimated to prevent over 1.2 million premature deaths per year. The financial benefits are also significant: close to \$100 billion annually for Africa alone.

10. At its second session, held in Geneva from 11 to 15 May 2009, the International Conference on Chemicals Management endorsed the establishment of a global partnership to promote the phase-out of the use of lead in paint as an important contribution to the implementation of paragraph 57 of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. UNEP and the World Health Organization were invited, within their respective mandates and available resources, to serve as the secretariat of the global partnership, the overall goal of which is to prevent children's exposure to lead via paint and to minimize occupational exposures to lead in paint. The broad objective is to phase out the manufacture and sale of paint containing lead and, eventually, to eliminate the risks from such paint.

11. While organizational arrangements for the partnership, now called the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead in Paints, are being finalized, current activities and progress include:

- (a) Outreach to potential contributors to the Global Alliance;
- (b) First organizational meeting of the Global Alliance held in Geneva from 26 to 28 May 2010, to develop overall goals and objectives for the initiative and to formulate workplans for priority focal areas;
- (c) Establishment of an interim advisory group to discuss cross-cutting issues, to promote actions consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the Global Alliance and to monitor progress;
- (d) Development of outreach and communication materials.

12. Further to these efforts, the Chemicals Branch of the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics has been working with other partners to establish an initiative to coordinate global efforts to achieve environmentally sound management of lead and cadmium batteries throughout their life cycles in ways that minimize significant adverse effects on human health and the environment. Potential partners from Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders have expressed interest in working with UNEP on the initiative.

13. As part of the United Nations response to the deaths of children from lead poisoning in Zamfara state, Nigeria, the Joint UNEP/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Environment Unit undertook a mission to investigate the concentrations of lead in groundwater, surface water and soil. The study was conducted by the Unit in September and October 2010, at the

request of the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Health and the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Nigeria. Its aim was to provide scientific information to support decision-making and priority-setting by the authorities and other stakeholders. The Government of the Netherlands provided four technical experts and a mobile laboratory. The exposure to lead was thought to be caused by the processing of lead containing gold ore. During the processing, children were exposed to dust containing lead while the left-over wastes often stayed in villages, creating multiple exposure routes. The Unit's findings indicated that lead contamination in soil was more widespread than in water, although in some cases wells contained water with lead levels more than 10 times the World Health Organization standard. The Unit noted that the crisis was far from over as many deaths had not been reported and recommended an urgent study of food pathways and a focus on safer mining practices.

14. In October 2010, the Unit cooperated with the Hungarian National Directorate-General for Disaster Management to monitor the catastrophic release of a large volume of red sludge from the rupture of a tailings dam at an alumina processing plant. The red sludge, which flooded the villages of Kolontár, Devecser and Somlóvásárhely, was the by-product of aluminium processing. Neither the Unit nor UNEP was requested to provide direct assistance.

15. Document UNEP/GC.26/INF/11/Add.5 provides additional information on the above-mentioned UNEP activities relating to lead and cadmium.

### **C. Funding for the implementation of the decision**

16. As at 1 September 2010, pledges and contributions made in 2009–2010 to support the finalization of the scientific reviews on lead and cadmium and UNEP activities relating to lead and cadmium, including the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead in Paints, had been received from the Governments of Spain, Switzerland and the United States of America, amounting to approximately \$337,716. Funding was also made available from the Nordic Council of Ministers, amounting to some \$82,850, to support the development of the above-mentioned studies on the possible effects on human health and the environment of the trade of products containing lead, cadmium and mercury in Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia and the Pacific.

17. Additional contributions amounting to some \$264,600 from the Environment Fund and the Government of Norway trust fund have been allocated to the project on addressing risks posed by exposure to lead and cadmium under the UNEP subprogramme on harmful substances and hazardous waste.

18. In 2009–2010, the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles received contributions from the ExxonMobil Corporation, the FIA Foundation and the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association amounting to \$376,500 to support specific national and subregional events to phase out leaded gasoline. In addition, the Partnership received \$1,533,734 in general support, to be used to support clean fuel and vehicle activities in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, including leaded gasoline phase-out, from the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the European Union, the Government of the Netherlands, TNT and the Asian Clean Fuels Association. This brings the total amount received by the Partnership since its inception in 2002 to \$9,768,669.

### **D. Issues relating to lead and cadmium to be considered by the Governing Council at its twenty-sixth session**

19. In the light of section II of its decision 25/5, the Governing Council may wish to consider further, on the basis of the final reviews of scientific information on lead and cadmium and the continuing UNEP activities related to lead and cadmium, the need for further international, regional, national and local attention and action, as deemed necessary, in relation to these two heavy metals, while encouraging further efforts by Governments and others to continue reducing the risks to human health and the environment from lead and cadmium throughout their life cycles.

20. The Governing Council may also wish to consider the needs of developing countries and countries with economies in transition for assistance in undertaking such efforts, while encouraging UNEP to continue its activities in relation to lead and cadmium. In doing so, the Governing Council may wish to take into consideration the progress achieved to date by UNEP and request that it report to the Governing Council at its twenty-seventh regular session, in 2013, with a view to evaluating further progress.

## **IV. Activities by the United Nations Environment Programme pursuant to section III, on mercury, of decision 25/5**

21. In section III of its decision 25/5, the Governing Council agreed to further international action consisting of the elaboration of a legally binding instrument on mercury, which could include both binding and voluntary approaches, together with interim activities, to reduce risks to human health and the environment. The Executive Director was requested, as a priority action, to provide support to an intergovernmental negotiating committee with the mandate to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, the UNEP mercury programme and the Global Mercury Partnership as near-term activities to address mercury. Information on further international action on mercury is provided below.

### **A. Negotiations on a legally binding instrument on mercury**

22. By paragraph 26 of its decision 25/5, the Governing Council requested the Executive Director to convene an intergovernmental negotiating committee with the mandate to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, commencing its work in 2010 with the goal of completing it prior to the twenty-seventh regular session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, in 2013. As requested, the Chemicals Branch of the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics is serving as the committee's secretariat and preparing the analytical and summary reports necessary for its work.

23. To prepare for the committee's work, in particular to discuss its negotiating priorities, timetable and organization, and as requested by the Governing Council in paragraph 32 of decision 25/5, the Executive Director convened an ad hoc open-ended working group, which met from 19 to 23 October 2009 in Bangkok. The meeting provided an opportunity to prepare for a rapid start to the negotiations. The working group agreed on draft rules of procedure to be recommended to the committee, in addition to work to be undertaken by the secretariat in preparation for the committee's first session, including compiling options for the instrument's structure and descriptions of options for substantive provisions.

24. The committee's mandate, taking into account, among other things, the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, is to develop a comprehensive and suitable approach to mercury, including provisions:

- (a) To specify the objectives of the instrument;
- (b) To reduce the supply of mercury and enhance the capacity for its environmentally sound storage;
- (c) To reduce the demand for mercury in products and processes;
- (d) To reduce international trade in mercury;
- (e) To reduce atmospheric emissions of mercury;
- (f) To address mercury-containing waste and remediation of contaminated sites;
- (g) To increase knowledge through awareness-raising and scientific information exchange;
- (h) To specify arrangements for capacity-building and technical and financial assistance, recognizing that the ability of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to implement some legal obligations effectively under a legally binding instrument is dependent on the availability of capacity-building and technical and adequate financial assistance;
- (i) To address compliance.

25. In addition, the intergovernmental negotiating committee, in its deliberations on the instrument that it develops, should consider the following:

- (a) Flexibility in that some provisions could allow countries discretion in the implementation of their commitments;
- (b) Approaches tailored to the characteristics of specific sectors to allow transition periods and phased implementation for proposed actions, where appropriate;
- (c) Technical and economic availability of mercury-free alternative products and processes, recognizing the necessity of the trade of essential products for which no suitable alternatives exist and to facilitate environmentally sound management of mercury;

- (d) Need to achieve cooperation and coordination and to avoid unnecessary duplication of proposed actions with relevant provisions contained in other international agreements and processes;
- (e) Prioritization of the various sources of mercury releases for action, taking into account the necessity for developing countries and countries with economies in transition to achieve sustainable development;
- (f) Possible co-benefits of conventional pollutant control measures and other environmental benefits;
- (g) Efficient organization and streamlined secretariat arrangements;
- (h) Measures to address risks to human health and the environment as a consequence of anthropogenic mercury releases;
- (i) Any other aspects that the intergovernmental negotiating committee would like to consider relevant to mercury control.

26. The mercury negotiations process will involve five sessions of the committee, with the last to be held prior to the twenty-seventh regular session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, in February 2013.

27. The committee's first session, which was hosted by the Nordic Council of Ministers, was held in Stockholm from 7 to 11 June 2010. The committee launched its negotiations by considering all the issues identified for inclusion in the instrument by the Governing Council, and had a first open and frank discussion of the options to address each of them. Significantly, the committee mandated the secretariat to prepare, based on the views expressed by Governments during the session and in submissions to be provided afterwards, a document setting out the draft elements of a comprehensive and suitable approach to mercury, for consideration at its second session.<sup>8</sup>

28. The committee's second session, which is hosted by the Government of Japan, will be held in Chiba from 24 to 28 January 2011. A report on the outcome of the session will be made available to the Governing Council as document UNEP/GC.26/5/Add.1.

29. The dates and venues for the committee's remaining sessions are tentatively scheduled as follows, taking into account the offers to host these sessions that were made during the committee's first session:

Third session:	31 October–4 November 2011, Ouagadougou;
Fourth session:	June 2012, Uruguay;
Fifth session:	4–8 February 2013, Geneva or Brazil;
Diplomatic conference:	2013, Japan.

30. Current estimates of the costs for each session stand at between \$1,050,000 and \$1,100,000, depending on the session's location and venue. The total costs of the committee's five sessions and the diplomatic conference are therefore estimated at some \$6.5 million. These costs will be met by financial or in kind contributions from Governments, including those who have offered to host sessions. This does not include local costs associated with holding the meetings outside a United Nations headquarters location, such as the cost of hiring the meeting venue, which are to be covered by the host Government or organization. In addition, other costs will be incurred in relation to secretariat staff and staff travel, expert assistance in the preparation of documents, communications, outreach activities and Bureau and regional preparatory meetings. These additional costs are estimated at some \$6 million for the period 2010–2013.

31. The Governing Council, in paragraph 29 of decision 25/5, requested the Executive Director, for the purpose of informing the committee's work, to conduct a study, in consultation with the countries concerned, on various types of mercury-emitting sources, in addition to current and future trends of mercury emissions, with a view to analysing and assessing the costs and effectiveness of alternative control technologies and measures. That report will be made available to the committee at its second session.

<sup>8</sup> The full report of the session is available on the UNEP mercury negotiations website at [www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/Mercury/Negotiations/INC1/tabid/3324/language/en-US/Default.aspx](http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/Mercury/Negotiations/INC1/tabid/3324/language/en-US/Default.aspx).

32. By paragraph 33 of the decision, the Governing Council also requested the Executive Director to support developing countries and countries with economies in transition to participate effectively in the work of the ad hoc open-ended working group and the committee.

33. Various regional consultations have been organized at the request of the regional groups to provide such support to Governments in preparing for the negotiations. These consultations have been made possible thanks to donors' financial contributions. Regional meetings to prepare for the negotiations were held for the African region in Nairobi from 17 to 19 August 2009, for the Asian and Pacific region in Beijing from 24 to 26 November 2009, for the Central and Eastern European region in Lodz, Poland, from 7 to 9 December 2009 and for the Latin American and Caribbean region in Kingston on 10 and 11 March 2010. In addition, a subregional meeting for Arab-speaking countries was held in Alexandria, Egypt, on 15 April 2010.

34. An additional intersessional regional meeting to prepare for the committee's second session took place for the Latin American and Caribbean region in Panama City from 23 to 26 November 2010, at that region's request. A regional consultation for the African region will take place in Chiba on 22 January 2010.

35. Provisions have also been made for the regional groups to meet immediately before each committee session and to limit the number of side events during the sessions to ensure maximum opportunities for the regions to consult.

36. Lastly, the Governing Council, in paragraph 30 of its decision 25/5, recognized that the committee's mandate might be supplemented by further Governing Council decisions.

## **B. Interim activities to reduce risks to human health and the environment from mercury**

37. By paragraph 20 of decision 25/5, the Governing Council commended the Executive Director and members of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership for their progress in developing and implementing the Partnership as a vehicle for immediate action on mercury and welcomed the progress made by the Partnership in creating an overarching framework for immediate action in the priority areas identified in section IV of decision 24/3.

38. Overall interest in the Partnership is strong. Since 1 January 2009, membership has grown from 23 official partners to a total of 70 as at 1 June 2010. The Partnership comprises 15 Governments, 4 intergovernmental organizations, 31 non-governmental organizations and 20 others. Many of the non-governmental organizations are regional or global in nature and include numerous national associations.

39. A report to the Executive Director from the Partnership Advisory Group of the Global Mercury Partnership on overall progress during the period from January 2009 to June 2010 is available as document UNEP/GC.26/INF/12. The report provides detailed information on Partnership activities in its seven areas of operation: artisanal and small-scale gold mining; mercury-cell chlor-alkali production; mercury air transport and fate research; mercury in products; mercury releases from coal combustion; mercury waste management; and mercury supply and storage. Examples of such activities include the preparation of draft good practices for the management of mercury releases from waste, for which Japan is acting as lead, the compilation of a global inventory of mercury-cell chlor-alkali facilities, coordinated by the United States, and the development of a glossary of terms relating to mercury storage, coordinated by Germany.

40. During 2009–2010, in addition to its direct support for the Global Mercury Partnership, UNEP translated the mercury awareness-raising package entitled "Mercury – a priority for action" into French and Spanish; developed a synopsis document entitled "Mercury knowledge and gaps in the African region"; supported the expansion of the Mercury Watch database maintained by the Artisanal Gold Council; and supported the development and publication of the advocacy document on artisanal and small-scale gold mining entitled "Squeezing gold from a stone".

41. Three studies, commissioned by UNEP to examine the projected mercury supply and demand situations during the period 2010–2050 in Asia and the Pacific,<sup>9</sup> Latin America and the Caribbean,<sup>10</sup>

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9 Available at [www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=h2jiw-CKCA0%3d&tabid=3552&language=en-US](http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=h2jiw-CKCA0%3d&tabid=3552&language=en-US).

10 Available at [www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/storage/LAC%20Mercury%20Storage%20Assessment\\_Final\\_1July09.pdf](http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/storage/LAC%20Mercury%20Storage%20Assessment_Final_1July09.pdf).

and Eastern Europe and Central Asia<sup>11</sup> have been completed. The reports identify the likely excess of supply over demand within the coming decade in each region studied. The first two reports form the basis of regional projects to examine possible options for the storage of excess mercury. Two reports, entitled “Development of options analysis and pre-feasibility study for the long-term storage of mercury in Asia and the Pacific”<sup>12</sup> and “Options analysis and feasibility study for the long-term storage of mercury in Latin America and the Caribbean,”<sup>13</sup> have been drafted by regional experts and discussed at meetings of participating countries from each region.

42. With regard to the management of mercury wastes, UNEP has assisted Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, Pakistan and the Philippines to prepare inventories using the toolkit for the identification and quantification of mercury releases and to prepare national mercury waste management plans. A final results workshop for all participating countries was hosted by the University of Aberdeen and provided technical support for the project. In addition, UNEP commissioned a report on technical and economic criteria for processing mercury-containing tailings to provide guidance on how to assess the feasibility of reprocessing mine wastes containing mercury.

43. With assistance from the Government of Denmark, an entry-level version of the toolkit has been prepared. A workshop to provide training in its use was held in Panama in October 2010 for representatives of 14 Central and South American countries. The workshop also provided an opportunity to field-test the entry-level version against inventories previously prepared by some countries using the full toolkit. Results of the workshop are encouraging and will lead, it is hoped, to further support for countries in undertaking assessments of their mercury releases.

44. UNEP has initiated subregional projects in South-East Asia and South America with support from the Quick Start Programme of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management to build the capacity of participating countries to tackle the human health and environmental challenges arising from the use of mercury in artisanal and small-scale gold mining. The projects seek to support consultative, multi-stakeholder consideration of the complex development issues inherent in artisanal and small-scale gold mining and to develop national plans to achieve mercury reduction. A global forum to discuss approaches to artisanal and small-scale gold mining was held in Manila from 7 to 9 December 2010.

45. UNEP, with funding from the European Union and with technical assistance from the United States Environmental Protection Agency, is working with four countries to understand their unintentional emissions of mercury from coal combustion for electrical power generation. Analyses of the most important coal resources combined with assessment of the most commonly used technologies for combustion and pollution control are helping to improve emissions estimates and to identify options for emission reductions. At the same time, UNEP is working with the Clean Coal Centre of the International Energy Agency to prepare a guide on how coal-fired power stations can reduce mercury emissions by optimizing existing systems. This work also provides important sector-based information that facilitates the preparation of the study on mercury sources and emissions trends requested by the Governing Council in paragraph 29 of Governing Council decision 25/5, as described above.

### **C. Funding for the implementation of the decision**

46. In follow-up to the adoption of decision 25/5, UNEP circulated an invitation to Governments to support, both financially and technically, the implementation of the decision.

47. In 2009, pledges and contributions to the mercury and other metals trust fund were received from the Governments of the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States, amounting to \$3,285,315. Separate funding was made available late in 2008 for the UNEP mercury and other metals programme from the European Commission for a study on mercury releases from coal, amounting to €1 million together with a grant for mercury negotiation activities of €160,000.

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11 Available at [www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ZuvmqniJlb4%3d&tabid=4505&language=en-US](http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ZuvmqniJlb4%3d&tabid=4505&language=en-US).

12 Available at [www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=qR3UPFOyHQQ%3d&tabid=3552&language=en-US](http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=qR3UPFOyHQQ%3d&tabid=3552&language=en-US).

13 Available at [www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/Portals/9/Mercury/Documents/supplystorage/Final\\_Draft\\_LAC%20Hg%20Options\\_Chile.pdf](http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/Portals/9/Mercury/Documents/supplystorage/Final_Draft_LAC%20Hg%20Options_Chile.pdf).

48. As at 1 September 2010, pledges had been received for 2010 from the Governments of Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the United States amounting to \$2,213,249. Funding of approximately \$82,850 was also made available by the Nordic Council of Ministers. Additional funding is to come from the Governments of Canada, Denmark, Germany and Sweden, but those contributions had not been formalized as at 1 September 2010. The Government of France has contributed the costs of a Junior Professional Officer, who began work in July 2010, for a period of two years, and has also indicated its intention to provide financial support for mercury activities. The Nordic Council of Ministers met all local costs for the hosting of the intergovernmental negotiating committee's first session, in Stockholm, as will the Government of Japan for the committee's second session, in Chiba.

#### **D. Issues relating to mercury to be considered by the Governing Council at its twenty-sixth session**

49. In the light of paragraph 30 of its decision 25/5, the Governing Council may wish to consider further the need to supplement the mandate of the intergovernmental negotiating committee, which began its work in 2010, with the aim to complete that work before the twenty-seventh regular session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, in 2013.

50. In doing so, the Council may also wish to take into consideration the present progress report, the progress report on the implementation of decision SS.XI/8, relating to the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes under agenda items 4 (a) and 4 (f) (document UNEP/GC.26/11), and the discussions on options for realizing further synergies within the chemicals and wastes cluster under agenda item 4 (c) (UNEP/GC.26/3).

#### **V. Support by the United Nations Environment Programme for the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management**

51. The Governing Council, in section IV of its decision 25/5, requested the Executive Director to present a report on progress in the implementation of the decision to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh regular sessions. The information set out below relating to activities by UNEP pursuant to section I of the decision, on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, has been produced pursuant to that request.

52. By paragraph 3 of decision 25/5, the Executive Director was requested to strengthen support for implementation of the Strategic Approach and its secretariat and facilitate more robust efforts in developing countries and countries with economies in transition to ensure the sound management of chemicals, in particular by ensuring that projects and programmes discussed under the Quick Start Programme were processed and implemented in an expeditious manner. UNEP was encouraged to play a leading role in assisting the implementation of the Strategic Approach.

53. By paragraph 8 of the decision, Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and others in a position to do so were urged to contribute financially and in kind to the implementation of the Strategic Approach, including through the Quick Start Programme, the secretariat and the UNEP programme of work.

54. UNEP plays a leading role in the implementation of the Strategic Approach by hosting its secretariat and implementing its environmental aspects.

55. The secretariat is responsible, among other things, for facilitating the operation of the Quick Start Programme. As at October 2010, over \$25 million had been made available to the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund, which was supporting approximately 100 projects. The projects are being implemented by 89 Governments and 10 civil society organizations and involve activities in 88 countries, including 42 least developed countries and small island developing States. In late 2009 and early 2010, the secretariat organized a round of regional meetings to follow up on the outcomes of the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, held in Geneva from 11 to 15 May 2009. The secretariat has also developed a strategy for strengthening the engagement of the health sector and has established arrangements for reporting on the implementation of the Strategic Approach.

56. UNEP activities on the implementation of the environmental aspects of the Strategic Approach are based on the programme of work for 2010–2011, which have taken into account the resolutions of the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its second session, in particular those on

financial and technical resources for implementation and on emerging issues (II/3 and II/4, respectively). Work directly related to resolution II/3 on financial and technical resources for implementation consists of activities on the mainstreaming of sound chemicals management into national development policies, assessment of the cost of inaction (which also will feed into the Global Chemicals Outlook report currently being drafted), preparation of guidance on legal and institutional infrastructures (including the use of economic instruments) and activities on the environment and health linkage. Work directly related to the decision on emerging issues relates to chemicals in products, where UNEP is the main organization, and lead in paints, where UNEP is working in partnership with the World Health Organization.

57. With regard to chemicals in products, resolution II/4 C invited UNEP to take the lead in the implementation of a project aimed at promoting the availability of and access to information on chemicals in products in the supply chain and throughout their life cycles. After an initiation and scoping phase the project is in an analytical phase for the study of stakeholders' information needs and gaps in existing information for four product sectors (construction materials, toys, electronics and textiles) that have been prioritized for in-depth study by Strategic Approach stakeholders. The next phase will be initiated through an international workshop to be held in Geneva from 16 to 18 March 2011, where elements for the recommendations on information on chemicals in products to the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its third session will be identified. These elements will be developed and draft recommendations formulated for initial consideration at the meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, to be held in Belgrade in August 2011.

58. Progress in relation to all five emerging issues identified by the International Conference on Chemicals Management will be reported on at the meeting of the Open-ended Working Group and to the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its third session, in Geneva in May 2012.

59. The activities mentioned above have been initiated thanks to contributions from Governments and the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund. Further funding is, however, needed for future implementation of the activities.

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