

**Decisions adopted by the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council/
Global Ministerial Environment Forum, Nairobi, 21-24 February 2011**

Advance copy

3. Chemicals and waste management

The Governing Council,

Recalling the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development⁷ and internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals,

Recalling also 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

⁷ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.H.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. 1, resolution 2, annex.

policies related to chemicals management and the development of a strategic approach to international chemicals management,

Recalling further its decisions 24/5 of 9 February 2007 and 25/8 of 20 February 2009 on waste management,

Acknowledging the widespread concern over the serious adverse effects of hazardous substances and wastes on human health and the environment,

Noting that work on chemicals and waste management will be carried out as part of the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme, particularly the subprogrammes on harmful substances and hazardous wastes and on resource efficiency,

Recognizing the need to take into consideration countries' differing circumstances, developmental priorities and capacities, including technical and financial capabilities,

Confirming that waste management poses a serious challenge, especially for developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and stressing the need for international organizations to undertake enhanced, more focused and coordinated actions to fill current gaps in the support given to efforts by developing countries,

Noting the significance of partnerships underpinned by conclusive scientific evidence,

Mindful of the work under 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, in addition to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury,

Aware of the need to ensure coherence and complementarity and avoid duplication of activities,

Mindful of the concern of African countries regarding the continued export of products and wastes containing hazardous substances to those countries,

Taking into account that most of the vulnerable populations exposed to hazardous substances live in developing countries and countries with economies in transition,

Acknowledging with appreciation the response of the Joint Environment Unit of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to the deaths of children from lead poisoning in Nigeria and other countries,

Having considered the reports of the Executive Director on chemicals and waste management,⁸

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Lead and cadmium

1. *Acknowledges* the progress and efforts made on lead and cadmium, including actions taken to finalize the reviews of scientific information on those metals,⁹ 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;¹⁰
2. *Also acknowledges* the need for additional work to fill information gaps;
3. *Notes* that there remains a need for a continued focus on reducing the risks posed by lead and cadmium;
4. *Takes note* of 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;¹¹

⁸ UNEP/GC.26/5 and UNEP/GC.26/8.

⁹ UNEP/GC.26/INF/11/Add.1 and UNEP/GC.26/INF/11/Add.2.

¹⁰ UNEP/GC.26/INF/11/Add.5.

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

5. *Also takes note* of the key scientific findings and the identified data gaps of the 2010 final review of the scientific information on lead and of the 2010 final review of the scientific information on cadmium;

6. *Acknowledges* the efforts made by Governments and others to tackle the risks posed by lead and cadmium, in particular to phase out the use of lead in gasoline through the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles, the initial actions under the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead in Paints, regional and national legal actions to limit the content of lead and cadmium in, among other things, toys, jewellery, batteries, electric and electronic equipment and vehicles, and other 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 and the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead in Paints 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 activities on lead and cadmium at all levels, especially in developing countries, particularly in Africa, and countries with economies in transition, including activities such as 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, the initiative to coordinate global efforts to achieve the environmentally sound management of lead and cadmium batteries throughout their life cycles, and the deepening of the scientific basis of existing studies;

9. *Notes* that further action is 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, in particular to children and other vulnerable populations, and to the environment from lead and cadmium throughout the life cycles of these substances, including action to promote the use of lead-free and cadmium-free alternatives, where appropriate, and recognizing the specific environmental, economic and social conditions of developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

10. *Urges* Governments and private entities to take measures to promote the environmentally sound management of products, wastes and contaminated sites containing lead and cadmium;

11. *Requests* the Executive Director, subject to the availability of resources and building on existing structures, to initiate a partnership on lead and cadmium in cooperation with Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

12. *Also requests* the Executive Director, coordinating with stakeholders as appropriate, to include available information in the clearing-house mechanism of the secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management on the possibilities to replace lead or cadmium with less hazardous substances or techniques and on techniques for emission abatement from reviews, subject to the availability of resources and for a test period of two years, and encourages Governments and others to submit such information to the clearing-house mechanism;

13. *Invites* the International Conference of Chemicals Management to take into account, at its third session, the information provided in the scientific reviews on lead and cadmium and to consider how the risks from those metals should be reduced at the national, regional and global levels;

14. *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;