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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
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(Thirty-sixth session, Geneva, 13-16 September 2004)
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

**WORKSHOP ON MERCURY: NEED FOR FURTHER INTERNATIONAL
ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS**

Report prepared by the Chairman of the Expert Group on Heavy Metals
in consultation with the secretariat

1. A workshop on mercury was held from 29-30 March 2004 in Brussels. It was organized by the Nordic Council of Ministers (NMR) and the Swedish Environmental Research Institute (IVL), in collaboration with representatives of Nordic environment agencies and ministries and in cooperation with the European Commission. The workshop focused on the regional environmental and health problems from emissions and releases of mercury, and consideration of initiatives taken at the global level. The workshop drew on prior work under the Convention in the preparation for the review of the 1988 Protocol on Heavy Metals, including the work of the Expert Group on Heavy Metals, and was in line with the work under the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The aims were to identify whether there was a need for future international action to reduce the negative impacts of mercury on human health and the environment and to provide input into the European Commission's forthcoming strategy on mercury. The workshop aimed, moreover, to assess whether existing regulations and legislation regarding mercury products and processes and the trade, treatment and storage of mercury and mercury waste were sufficient, or whether a legally binding agreement was necessary.

Documents prepared under the auspices or at the request of the Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution for GENERAL circulation should be considered provisional unless APPROVED by the Executive Body.

2. More than 100 experts from the following countries participated: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America. Representatives of the European Commission were present as was a member of the secretariat. UNEP and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) were also represented. Several industrial and non-governmental organizations were represented. Presentations, as annexed, may be accessed at: <http://www.ivl.se/nytt/konferenser/mercury/>.

3. Participants at the workshop expressed various views on the local, regional and global nature of the environmental problems of mercury. While the European Commission had not yet drawn up its strategy on mercury, it was noted that there was particular concern regarding the estimated 15,000 tons of mercury that would become available after the phasing-out of chlor-alkali plants in Europe.

4. The results of the workshop, which will be summarized in a final report on the IVL website, indicated that there was a need for various international actions for reducing mercury in the environment, including:

(a) Assistance and financing for developing countries and countries with economies in transition to reduce the negative impacts of mercury and mercury products;

(b) Better information on trade in mercury and mercury products, both legal and illegal;

(c) A clearing house on mercury abatement strategies;

(d) Solutions for non-mercury mining techniques;

(e) Efforts to reduce mercury emissions from the coal sector;

(f) Improved emission inventories of mercury;

(g) An effects-based approach and the use of critical load maps and exceedances that identify mercury-sensitive areas in Europe.

5. Although it was generally acknowledged that mercury should be reduced, there was no consensus on whether an international agreement was the best way to achieve this, or on what the geographic scope or contents of such an agreement might be.

6. The workshop concluded that its results could provide useful input to the European Commission's strategy on mercury, the revision of the Protocol on Heavy Metals and the forthcoming meeting of the UNEP Governing Council in February 2005.

Annex

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME^{1/}

<u>Session 1: Ongoing activities and mercury assessments</u>	Rapporteur: Alf Lundgren, Swedish National Chemicals Inspectorate (KemI)
A European strategy for mercury – status report	Herbert Aichinger, EC, Directorate General - Environment
Summary of the UNEP Global Mercury Assessment Report and current UNEP activities	Aase Tuxen, UNEP
Summary of the EC position paper on mercury	Nicola Pirrone, National Research Council Institute for Atmospheric Pollution, Italy (CNR IIA)
Mercury management in Canada	Grace Howland, Environment Canada
<u>Session 2: Environmental distribution and health effects</u>	Rapporteur: Dieter Jost, Federal Environment Agency, Germany (UBA)
The Arctic mercury problem	Simon Wilson, Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP)
The Mercury project of the Arctic Council's Action Plan for Elimination of Pollution in the Arctic	Jacob Maag, COWI Consultancy, Denmark
Atmospheric mercury - emissions, transport, depositions	Oleg Travnikov, Meteorological Synthesizing Centre - East
Mercury in long-range transboundary air pollution: toward effects-based control strategies	Kjell Johansson, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
Examples from recent EU-funded research on mercury	Jozef Pacyna, Norwegian Institute for Air Research (NILU)

^{1/} Presentations are available at: <http://www.ivl.se/nytt/konferenser/mercury/>.

Session 3: The mercury market

Regulatory and other incentives for limiting export and trade of mercury

Rapporteur: Aase Tuxen, UNEP

Ulf Öberg, Öberg Associates

Production and use of mercury, the mercury market

Peter Maxson, Concorde

Taking mercury out of commerce and use
Breaking the global cycle

Michael T. Bender, Mercury Policy
Project/Ban Mercury Working Group

Substitution of mercury in products and processes

Henri Heron, Danish Environmental
Protection Agency / Petra Ekblom,
Swedish National Chemicals
Inspectorate

Mercury in small-scale gold mining

Marcello Veiga, UNIDO

Mercury and the European chlor-alkali industry

Arseen Seys, Eurochlor

Session 4: Abatement of emissions
and waste management

Rapporteur: Jozef Pacyna, NILU

Mercury in the European coal energy sector

Jan van der Kooij, Union of the
Electricity Industry (Eurelectric)

Mercury abatement in coal combustion

Sally Shaver, United States
Environmental Protection Agency

Performance of mercury emission controls
for power plants

George Offen, Electric Power
Research Institute (EPRI)

Mercury emissions from the production of manganese
and secondary steel

Tor Faerden, Norwegian
Environmental Protection Agency

Managing surplus mercury in the United States

David Lennet, Natural Resources
Defense Council

Treatment and safe storage of mercury waste

Stina Lundberg, Swedish
Environmental Protection Agency