

# Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme

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Twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council/  
Global Ministerial Environment Forum  
Nairobi, 5–9 February 2007  
Agenda items 4 (a), 5 and 6

Policy issues: state of the environment

Follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development:  
contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme  
to the forthcoming session of the Commission on Sustainable Development  
Implementation of the programme of work of the United Nations  
Environment Programme and the relevant decisions of the Governing Council

## Mercury

### Draft decision submitted by Canada

*The Governing Council,*

*Recalling* its previous decisions on mercury, particularly decision 23/9 IV of 25 February 2005,

*Also recalling* the 2002 Global Mercury Assessment,

*Acknowledging* the actions taken by Governments and others to reduce risks from mercury,

*Taking note* of the increased activities in the United Nations Environment Programme's mercury programme,

*Welcoming* the status report by the Executive Director<sup>1</sup> on mercury activities,

*Recognizing* the importance of mercury supply and demand issues,

1. *Reiterates* the conclusion stated in the Global Mercury Assessment that there is sufficient evidence of significant global adverse impacts from mercury and its compounds to warrant further international action to reduce the risks to human health and the environment from the release of mercury and its compounds to the environment;
2. *Acknowledges* the progress made within the mercury programme since 2005, including the establishment of and progress made under several partnerships, and the report of the Executive Director pursuant to decision 23/9 IV, paragraph 36;<sup>2</sup>
3. *Recognizes* that current efforts to reduce risks from mercury are not sufficient to address the global challenges posed by mercury;

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1 UNEP/GC/24/INF/17.

2 UNEP/GC/24/7 and UNEP/GC/24/INF/17.

4. *Urges* Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector to continue developing and implementing partnerships, in a clear, transparent and accountable manner, taking into account the elements listed in paragraph 29 of decision 23/9 IV, as one approach to reducing the risks to human health and the environment from the release of mercury and its compounds to the environment;

5. *Requests* the Executive Director to work with Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to establish a voluntary partnership to gather information on means to reduce risk that may be caused by an excess supply of mercury, such as:

- (a) Reduced reliance on primary mercury mining in favour of environmentally-preferable sources of mercury such as recycling;
- (b) Options and solutions for the long-term storage of mercury;
- (c) National and regional activities to improve data on imports and exports of mercury;
- (d) Market effects of the activities contemplated above;

6. *Emphasizes* the importance of improving global understanding of international mercury emission sources, fate and transport, the contribution made to such understanding by the relevant partnerships and the important need for enhanced knowledge and information to underpin priority-setting efforts at the national, regional and global levels to reduce mercury emissions and monitor progress in that regard;

7. *Requests* the Executive Director to develop further the United Nations Environment Programme mercury programme by continuing efforts to develop inventories, to issue risk communication, to develop and issue guidance and training materials, to publicize and administer the small grants programme and to promote technical and financial assistance activities, including but not limited to the partnership approach outlined in paragraph 4 of the present decision;

8. *Also requests* the Executive Director to take steps to ensure that work to reduce unintentional emissions of mercury from anthropogenic sources is aligned with existing international work, as appropriate;

9. *Further requests* the Executive Director to undertake an evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme global mercury programme and its outcomes, including the activities listed in paragraph 7 of the present decision;

10. *Requests* the Executive Director to update sections 11.3 and 11.4 of chapter 11 (“Options for addressing any significant global adverse impacts”) of the 2002 Global Mercury Assessment and to provide additional information on the existing instruments, both binding and non-binding, identified in section 11.4;

11. *Decides* to establish an Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on Mercury, which shall operate in accordance with the mandate set out in paragraph 14 of the present decision, to review and assess, in the context of agreed global objectives as set out, *inter alia*, in the annex to decision 22/4 V of 7 February 2003, options for achieving priority objectives, including partnerships, existing instruments and a new legally binding agreement on mercury;

12. *Decides* that the Open-Ended Ad Hoc Working Group on Mercury should be composed of representatives of Governments and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations consistent with applicable United Nations rules;

13. *Invites* Governments, in advance of the first meeting of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group, to identify priority objectives for the consideration of the Working Group at its first meeting;

14. *Decides* that the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group should, in accordance with paragraph 11 of the present decision:

- (a) Agree to priority objectives from among those set out in the annex to decision 22/4 V and from those identified by Governments pursuant to paragraph 13 of the present decision;
- (b) Take into account:
  - (i) The priority objectives;
  - (ii) The updated chapters requested in paragraph 10 of the present decision ;

- (iii) The evaluation requested in paragraph 9 of the present decision;
- (iv) The report on supply, trade and demand for mercury;
- (c) Prepare an analysis of those options that address, singly or in combination, the priority objectives identified in subparagraph (a);

15. *Requests* the Executive Director to make the necessary arrangements for the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group to meet as soon as possible and at least twice before the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum , including once before the Council/Forum's tenth special session;

16. *Requests* the Open-ended Working Group to provide a progress report to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its tenth special session, including recommendations for actions which can be initiated in advance of the Council/Forum's twenty-fifth session;

17. *Also requests* the Open-ended Working Group to present an analysis of options for addressing the priority objectives agreed by the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-fifth session;

18. *Urges* once again all countries to adopt goals and take national actions, as appropriate, with the objective of identifying exposed populations and ecosystems and reducing anthropogenic releases of mercury that affect human health and the environment;

19. *Requests* the Executive Director, in coordination with appropriate intergovernmental organizations and Governments, to ensure that adequate financing is provided to support the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group, in particular with regard to the participation of developing countries and of countries with economies in transition;

20. *Urges* Governments in a position to do so and other stakeholders to make contributions in order to support the implementation of the United Nations Environment Programme mercury programme, including the small grants programme, and the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group;

21. *Invites* the Global Environment Facility to support activities to reduce global releases of mercury and other chemicals of global concern in a manner consistent with the framework of the GEF Instrument and related strategies;

22. *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-fifth session.

