



**NGO Proposals for a Global Mercury Strategy  
at the 2007 UNEP Governing Council Meeting  
\* Working Draft \* November 8, 2006**

Mercury is highly toxic, causing damage to the nervous system at even low levels of exposure. It is concentrated through the food chain - especially in fish - collects in humans and wildlife, and is particularly harmful to the development of unborn children. Mercury travels long distances through the atmosphere across national boundaries and has contaminated global food supplies at levels posing a significant risk.

It is therefore clear that since present measures are not sufficient to adequately reduce risks from mercury, further coordinated actions must be undertaken at global level, including but not limited to the following:

1. Work should start towards a global binding instrument on mercury, as soon as possible.
2. The findings of the trade report conducted for UNEP should be utilised. Based on this, concrete actions should be taken as follows.
3. Global Mercury Demand Reduction
  - a. A global **mercury use reduction goal** of 50% by 2012 and 70% by 2017, as compared to 2005, should be established.
  - b. Mercury reduction goals should be achieved through the following means:
    - i. Enactment of legislation phasing out the use of hazardous substances in **electrical and electronic equipment** in all countries with a significant electronic products manufacturing base;
    - ii. Ending the use of mercury in the production of **button cell batteries**;
    - iii. Phasing-out most production of mercury **fever thermometers**, and minimizing the production of other **non-electronic mercury-containing measuring equipment**. International institutions, governments, health care institutions and other large purchasers of medical equipment should facilitate the transition in the developing world to non-mercury fever thermometers through their purchasing power and the development of appropriate regulatory frameworks.
    - iv. Ensuring that **mercury-containing products and mercury-using processes** restricted in industrialized countries are not sent to developing countries;
    - v. Phasing out use of the **mercury-cell chlor-alkali process** as soon as possible. To facilitate this conversion to non-mercury technologies, a financial assistance plan for developing nations should be prepared by UNEP for the 25<sup>th</sup> Governing Council meeting in 2009.
    - vi. Developing a roadmap for the increased use of mercury-free technologies in **small-scale and artisanal gold mining**, including the establishment of a sector-specific demand reduction goal for this sector of 50% by 2017 as recommended by Global Mercury Project of UNIDO, achievable largely by eliminating the use of mercury in the processing of whole ore.
4. Global Mercury Supply Reduction
  - a. A **hierarchy of mercury supply sources** should be established for use in commerce, favoring mercury from byproduct production and the recycling of wastes and products over mercury from primary mining and decommissioned chlor-alkali plants. Primary mining is the least preferred mercury supply source because it creates new mercury and is a significant source of emissions.
  - b. Excess mercury supply should be prevented from entering into global market consistent with this hierarchy through the following means:
    - i. **Restrictions of mercury exports** from developed nations;
    - ii. Including mercury into the Rotterdam Convention on **the Prior Informed Consent** Procedure;
    - iii. **Alternative development to replace primary mining** where it is still conducted;
    - iv. Establishing a working group to develop recommendations for the coordinated diversion from commerce and **management of mercury from closing chlor-alkali facilities**; and
    - v. Identifying options for increasing **mercury by-product production** from zinc smelting and industrial gold production, and simultaneously obtaining mercury emission reduction co-benefits.
5. Financial Assistance

Developed countries should provide **new and additional financial resources** to support these activities in developing nations, and GEF should create a financial assistance mechanism to support global mercury activities consistent with the above proposals.