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# UNEP Mercury Programme: On-going/planned activities & UNEP Governing Council considerations

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European Commission International Mercury Conference

27 October 2006

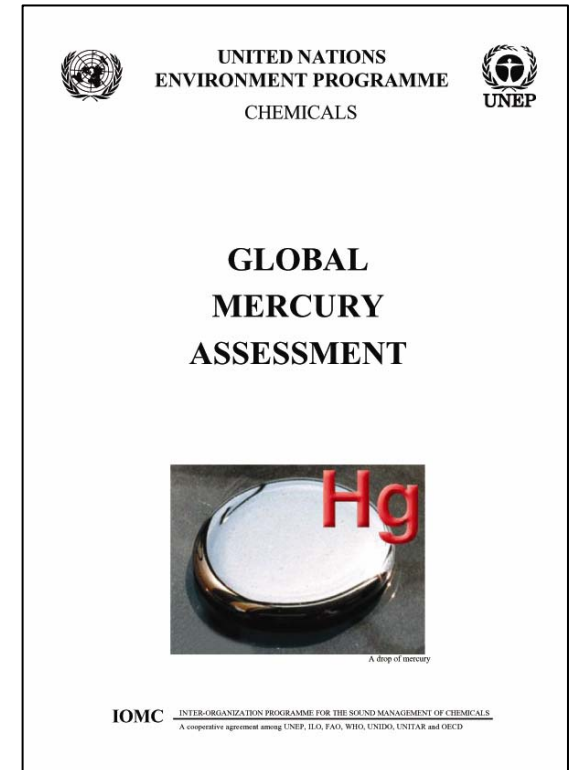
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# Overview of UNEP mercury & other metals (lead & cadmium) programme

- Background and mandate
- Programme activities (past and planned)
- Considerations for Governing Council

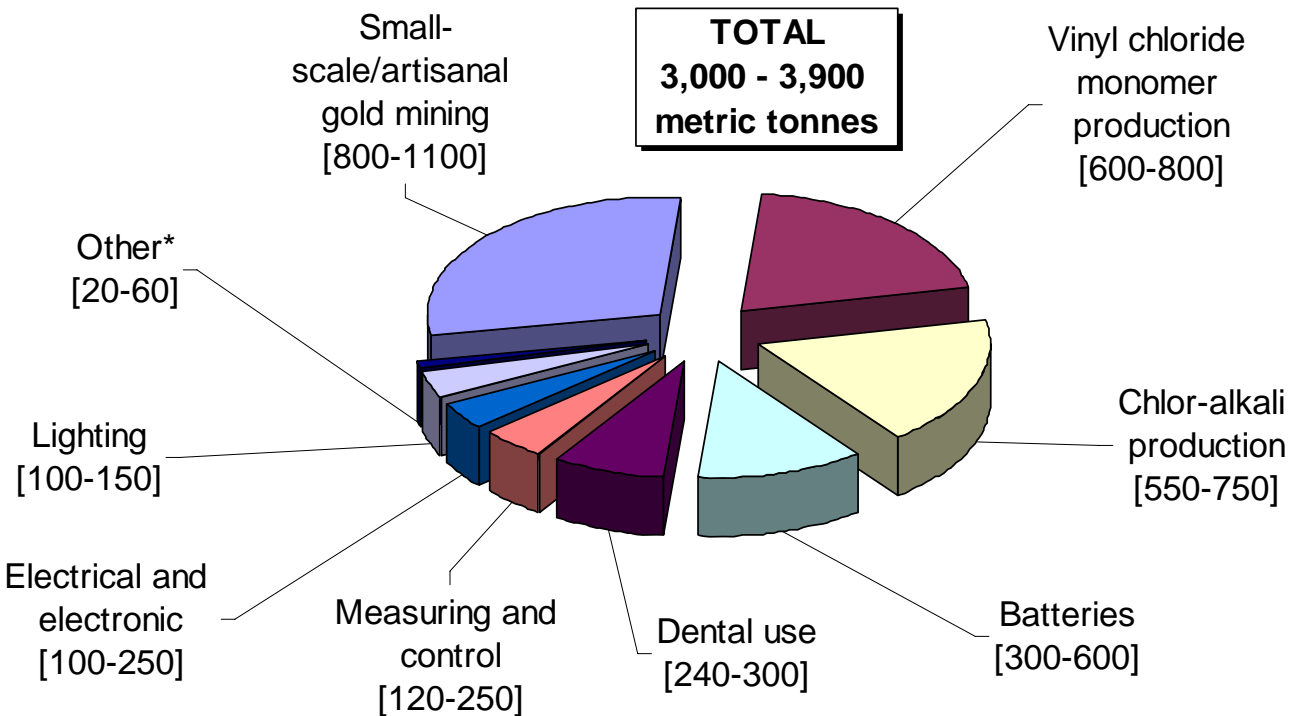
# A global assessment of mercury was initiated in 2001.

- Initiated by UNEP Governing Council at its 21st session in February 2001;
- Responded to concerns that national/regional actions were not sufficient to address mercury pollution;
- Assessment concluded that sufficient evidence of significant global adverse impacts from mercury to warrant further international action.



# Mercury continues to be used...

**Global mercury demand by use, 2005 (metric tonnes)**

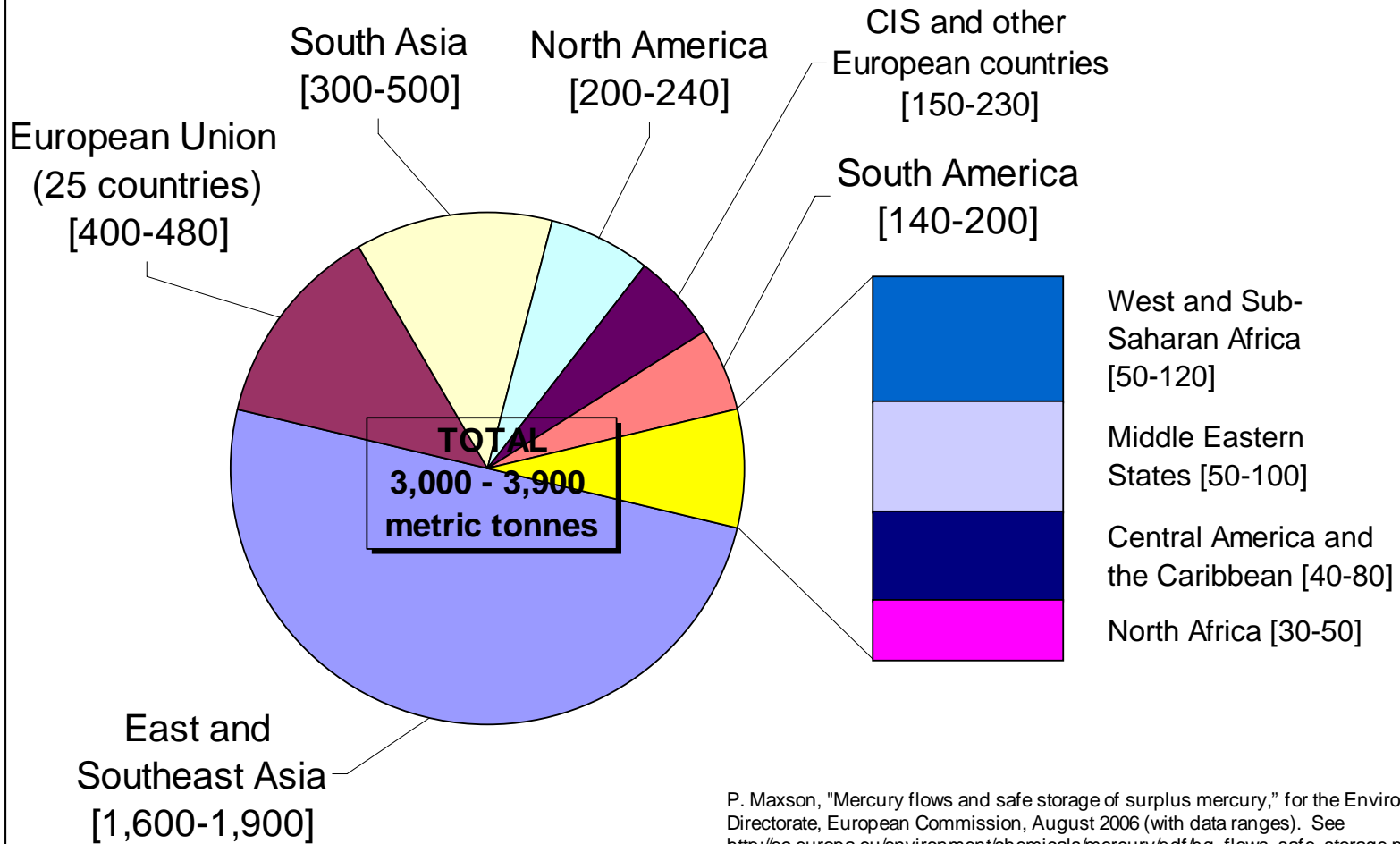


\* Laboratory, pharmaceutical, cosmetic, cultural/traditional uses, etc.

P. Maxson, "Mercury flows and safe storage of surplus mercury," for the Environment Directorate, European Commission, August 2006 (with data ranges). See [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/mercury/pdf/hg\\_flows\\_safe\\_storage.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/mercury/pdf/hg_flows_safe_storage.pdf)

... and there is a global demand.

**Mercury demand by region - 2005 (metric tonnes)**



P. Maxson, "Mercury flows and safe storage of surplus mercury," for the Environment Directorate, European Commission, August 2006 (with data ranges). See [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/mercury/pdf/hg\\_flows\\_safe\\_storage.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/mercury/pdf/hg_flows_safe_storage.pdf)

# Decisions from GC 23rd session strengthened the mercury programme.

- Reiterated the conclusions of the mercury assessment report on the global adverse impacts of mercury on health and environment;
- Reiterated its decision that national, regional and global actions should be initiated ASAP;
- Urged all countries to adopt goals and take actions to identify exposed populations and reduce anthropogenic mercury releases;
- UNEP also requested to implement partnerships between Governments, IGOs, NGOs and private sector, in a clear, transparent and accountable manner, as one approach to reducing risks from mercury.

# A number of other relevant chemicals decisions taken at the 23rd GC Session:

- Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)
- GC 23/9 omnibus decision on sound chemicals management
- Synergies among Conventions (Montreal, Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm) and the Chemicals Branch of UNEP
- Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building

# Mercury programme established within UNEP Chemicals Branch...

- To support country efforts to take action in initiating technical assistance and capacity building activities;
- Main element of the programme to assist countries to understand and address mercury problems, through:
  - Building inventories of uses and releases,
  - Identifying populations at risk,
  - Developing communication and outreach to at-risk populations,
  - Initiating actions to reduce uses and releases of mercury, including promoting mercury-free products, technologies and processes, using environmentally friendly alternatives.

...and mercury partnership activities have been initiated in a number of key areas.

- artisanal/small-scale gold mining;
- coal combustion;
- chlor-alkali sector;
- reduction in products
  - batteries, dental amalgams, measuring and control (largely medical sector), electric and electronic switches, fluorescent lamps, cosmetics; and
- air transport and fate research.

Cross cutting activities are on-going & planned, in addition to activities in the targeted areas.

- Mercury small grants programme;
- Inventory development underway in many countries;
- Series of other guidance materials:
  - Considering possible options and approaches to reduce Hg releases developed
  - Assessing exposures and identifying populations at risk under development
  - Developing communication/outreach to populations at risk under development;
- Continued awareness raising activities.

# Artisanal & Small Scale Gold Mining

## On-going and Planned Activities

- UNIDO has developed ground level expertise in this area:
  - wrapping up a pilot project in 6 countries (Brazil, Lao PDR, Indonesia, Sudan, Tanzania and Zimbabwe)
  - looking to broaden and build on the pilot project;
  
- UNEP is currently considering support for projects under the small grants programme:
  - Suriname and continued efforts in Tanzania.

# Coal fired power & heat production

## On-going and Planned Activities

- Some countries have joined to target efforts in China;
- Strong link to global energy demand:
  - UNEP Chemicals is working to strengthen synergies within the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE), building on the multi-pollutant approach;
- UNEP considering possibility of building on Arctic Council Action Plan (ACAP) research demonstration project on the effectiveness of halogenated/ carbon sorbents in reducing mercury from power plant emissions.

## On-going and Planned Activities

- Arctic Council Action Plan (ACAP) has been working closely with Russia's Volgograd Caustic:
  - UNEP working with ACAP to see if pilot project can be used to demonstrate more broadly planning and changeover process
  - India planning to develop a study tour, modeled after the Russian experience;
- World Chlorine Council working to catalogue facilities using mercury-cell technology and collecting information on use and emissions from its facilities;
- Strong collaboration on best practices with Mexico
  - workshop and associated follow-up.

# Mercury in products

## **On-going and Planned Activities**

- Health care sector;
- Waste management guidelines;
- Arctic Council Action Plan (ACAP) mercury project 'Collection, storage and treatment of mercury containing waste in Russia Demonstration Project';
- Mercury in products awareness/workshops;
- Linkages within Division of Trade, Industry and Economics Sustainable Consumption & Production Branch.

## **On-going and Planned Activities**

- Italy is planning a monitoring project in Suzhou, China in cooperation others, to characterize mercury levels in atmosphere and attribute them to various local sources.
- An overall plan indicating contributions of various countries is being developed by Italy.

# UNEP working to facilitate discussions on further actions to address Hg in preparation for 24th GC...

- 3 main products being prepared by UNEP Chemicals:
  1. Report on progress, including partnership activities;
  2. Report on the summary of supply, trade and demand information for Hg, for consideration by the Governing Council in February 2007;
  3. Scientific reviews on lead and cadmium (key findings to be presented to UNEP GC, no options).
  
- UNEP actively soliciting input from Governments, IGOs, NGOs in development of these materials

# UNEP Chemicals is encouraged by lead-up activities to UNEP GC 24:

- Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety from 25-29 September 2006, Budapest:
  - Budapest Statement issued on Mercury, Lead and Cadmium is constructive, builds momentum for UNEP GC and starts a thinking process.
- This conference, the EC International Mercury Conference:
  - Proves a useful forum for policy makers, industry representatives, NGOs, and scientists to engage.

Further information  
can be found at:

**<http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/>**

