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Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

International cooperation and coordination

Report on activities undertaken within the Global Mercury Partnership of the United Nations Environment Programme**

Note by the secretariat

1. The annex to the present note sets out a report on activities undertaken within the Global Mercury Partnership of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) during the period from January 2024 to July 2025.

2. The present report provides an overview of overarching activities undertaken by the Partnership, including on work conducted pursuant to decisions of the Partnership Advisory Group. Based on input received from the leads and co-leads of each Partnership area, it also presents highlights of Partnership areas activities during the reporting period, as well as some of the future work planned. The report is presented as received, without formal editing.

* UNEP/MC/COP.6/1/Rev.1.

** This document has not been formally edited.

Annex

Report on activities undertaken within the United Nations Environment Programme Global Mercury Partnership (January 2024 to July 2025)

I. Introduction

Initiated in 2005 by a decision of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council[1], the Global Mercury Partnership (hereinafter referred to as the "Partnership") focuses on supporting timely and effective implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, on providing state of the art knowledge and science on mercury, and on delivering outreach and awareness raising towards global action on mercury.

The Overarching Framework of the Partnership outlines that regular reports on activities undertaken within the Partnership will be submitted to meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention. **The present report provides highlights of sectoral and cross-cutting activities undertaken by the Partnership secretariat and its areas of work during the period from January 2024 to July 2025**, including capacity building and knowledge management to support the implementation of ongoing projects and broader dissemination of up-to-date information.

Celebrating 20 years of the Partnership

Since its inception in 2005, the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership has convened nearly 300 partner organizations and experts, including governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and academic institutions, to safeguard human health and the environment from mercury pollution. The Partnership has been instrumental in advancing scientific knowledge, facilitating collaboration, and supporting both the negotiation and implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. As **it marks its 20th anniversary, the Partnership remains committed to promoting the effective implementation of the Convention**, delivering critical trends analysis and country support, raising global awareness, and responding to emerging priorities. These include serving as a recognized platform for knowledge management and stakeholder engagement, as well as addressing novel challenges such as mercury emissions from the oil and gas sector, thereby fostering collective action towards a mercury-free future.

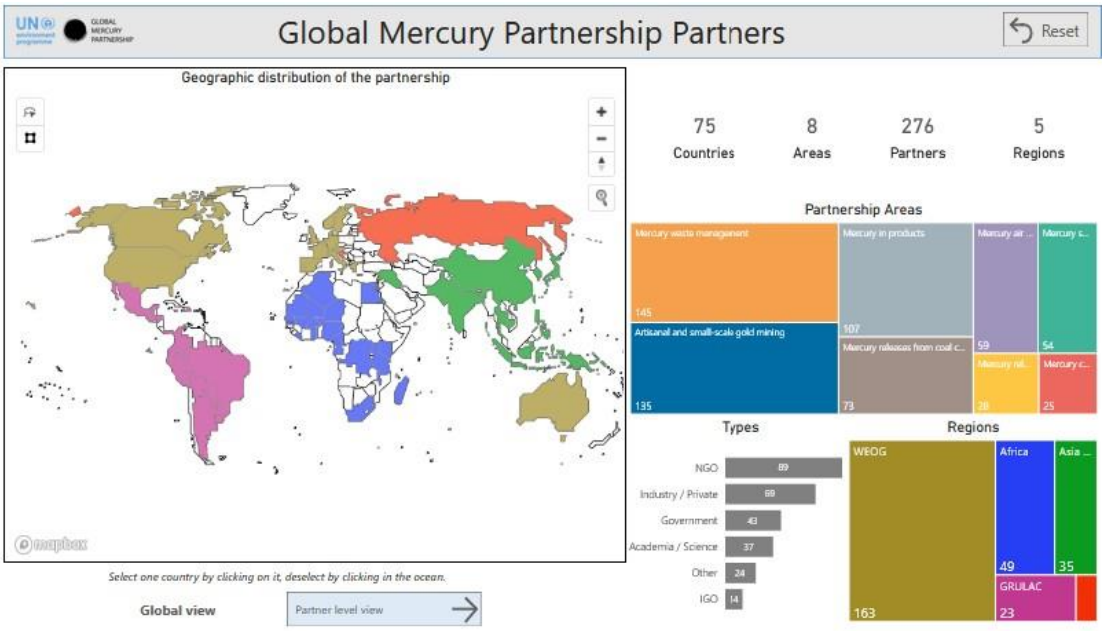
II. Overarching functions and updates

2.1. Participation and organisation

The number of partner organizations and individual partners of the Global Mercury Partnership is steadily growing:

- As of 31 July 2025, there were 276 official partners of the Partnership, including 43 governments, 14 international organizations, 89 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 69 industry/private sector as well as 61 academia and others.
- Partners include global industry associations or federations of civil society organizations that collaborate with and represent a larger number of national entities/associations. In addition, the Partnership works with a number of stakeholders that have not yet officially joined. The Partnership also closely collaborates with the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention as well as with other UN agencies.

[1] UNEP Governing Council Decision 23/9



Visit the partners dashboard online

As of July 2025, leads and co-leads of Partnership areas are as follows:

- **Artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM)**: The Natural Resources Defence Council (NRDC), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO);
- **Mercury cell chlor-alkali production**: The Environmental Protection Agency of the United States (US-EPA) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO);
- **Mercury air transport and fate research**: The National Research Council (CNR)[2] - Institute of Atmospheric Pollution Research, Italy, the Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) and the Dartmouth College;
- **Mercury in products**: The Environmental Protection Agency of the United States (US-EPA) and the Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG);
- **Mercury releases from coal combustion**: The International Centre for Sustainable Carbon (ICSC) and the Macquarie University (Australia);
- **Mercury waste management**: The Ministry of the Environment of Japan and Ms. Misuzu Asari, Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (Japan);
- **Mercury supply and storage**: The Ministry of Environment of Uruguay**;** The International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE);
- **Mercury releases from cement industry**: The Global Cement and Concrete Association (GCCA) and the Ministry of Climate Change of Pakistan.

2.2. Contribution to the international process

The Partnership has been actively supporting intersessional work in preparation for Minamata COP-6 by providing substantive inputs to key decisions. Under decision 5/5 on cosmetics, this has included submitting inputs and reviewing the draft report on challenges in preventing the manufacture, import, and export of cosmetics listed in Part I of Annex A to the Convention, as well as identifying measures—current or proposed—by Parties and stakeholders to address these challenges. In collaboration with the Minamata Convention Secretariat, the Partnership has also developed draft supplemental guidance for the review of Article 7 implementation, in line with paragraph 3 of that article, to support decision MC-5/7, paragraph 3(c). In addition, the active engagement of Partnership members has contributed to

[2] Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche

advancing the work of the Effectiveness Evaluation Group and contributed to decision MC-5/12 on capacity-building, technical assistance, and technology transfer.

2.3. Key achievements and recommendations

Resource mobilization: During the reporting period, the Partnership's engagement has contributed to significant resource mobilization in the area of mercury in products, particularly mercury-added skin-lightening products. Its work on global knowledge management and the provision of technical assistance, e.g. on addressing online sales, to the GEF-funded project on eliminating mercury-containing skin-lightening products has helped generate growing political momentum to address this issue. Notable developments include the adoption of the Libreville Commitment and, in June 2025, the approval of the concept for a new full-size 15 million USD GEF-funded project on skin-lightening products across 13 African countries. The success is attributed to the active engagement of the Products Partnership co-leads and the Partnership Secretariat from the outset, which fostered greater synergies and harmonized actions, while effectively leveraging ongoing efforts and expertise.

Global knowledge management: The Partnership Secretariat has further strengthened global knowledge management by curating and publishing additional knowledge hubs on key topics, including mercury in cosmetics, dental amalgam, mercury-containing medical devices, the coal sector, and the links between artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) and biodiversity. The ongoing maintenance of these knowledge hubs provides a sustainable solution for knowledge management by connecting past and ongoing time-bound projects under unified thematic areas. The knowledge hubs further reinforce linkages with the Minamata Convention Focus Areas Topics.

Updating of the registration process and soft membership: In line with the aspiration to foster ongoing interactions with broader and new stakeholders, the Partnership secretariat has launched a process to update existing partners' information and invite others to join the partnership. The registration form was also updated to consider a subscription to the entirety of partnership areas – to allow partners to participate in any activity and/or meeting of interest across all areas of work-, and collect interest on recent cross-cutting and emerging topics, among other areas.

Thematic working groups: on oil and gas: In addition to the existing Partnership areas, and building on recent work on cross-cutting topics, thematic working groups are being proposed to provide stakeholders with a dedicated space for exchange on specific issues, including the compilation, analysis, and dissemination of recent data and knowledge. As a follow-up to the study reports on mercury from the oil and gas sector and from non-ferrous metals mining and smelting, the first two working groups are proposed on these topics.

Looking ahead, the Partnership might consider expanding its role as an incubator of innovative ideas and a platform for connecting stakeholders in joint initiatives to address emerging challenges. Building on successful models such as the planetGOLD programme and the recently approved $15 million project on eliminating skin-lightening products, the Partnership is well-positioned to catalyse similar large-scale, transformative initiatives in other priority areas under the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

III. Highlights of sector-based activities

This section presents activities undertaken by partners during the reporting period that contribute to the transformation of sectors such as extractives, healthcare, cosmetics, appliances, and industrial processes. Cross-cutting topics—such as waste management, trade, and biodiversity—are featured in Section IV, while examples of capacity building and global knowledge management activities are presented in Section V.

3.1. Mining and extractive sectors

3.1.1. Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining (ASGM)

- **GEF planetGOLD Programme**

The programme, funded by the GEF, continued to assist countries to meet their obligations to reduce and where feasible eliminate mercury from ASGM. The seven of eight projects in the first phase are completed (Kenya will finish in December), while the 15 second phase projects are underway. Four additional projects were added during this reporting period (see www.planetgold.org for full list). Projects continue to work to transfer mercury free technology by building new mercury-free processing systems at project mine sites; by strengthening existing processing plants; and/or by encouraging miners to sell ore directly to mercury-free processing centers. In addition, projects across the programme provided trainings on how to utilize mercury-free technologies. The programme also piloted different models for access to finance, for example, debt financing mechanisms with loan guarantees or the use of an intermediary to "de-risk" the finance; development of supplier agreements with Central Banks that can be used as collateral; and the creation of a miner-owned savings and credit cooperative. For example, in Burkina Faso, the planetGOLD project team developed training programs for miners, coordinated with Coris Bank on a loan mechanism. The project also promoted responsible mining and the development of legal trade. It also developed two professional training frameworks for mercury-free technologies and operationalized a mercury-free ore processing pilot site at the Gnikpière mine site.

Projects reported training miners in basic business skills and on the development of loan applications and business pitches. All projects engaged in outreach to the formal financial sector to bridge knowledge gaps about ASGM and to promote positive opportunities for financing mercury-free ASGM. Finally, all projects have assisted and guided policy makers in improving or developing regulations to make them more appropriate for ASGM, on such issues as land tenure, speed of permitting and the permitted level of mechanization. Several projects trained government officials at national and local levels to support policy and regulatory reforms that are essential for formalization. Projects carried out capacity building activities with miners to train them on steps toward formalization, including the process for establishing cooperatives and for obtaining mining permits.

- **Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM)**

Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) has continued to promote the sustainable elimination of mercury in artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM), with a focus on strengthening mercury-free practices among formal miners in Latin America. In this region, ARM has prioritized the provision of tools, technical training, and social support to prevent setbacks among communities that have already phased out mercury use, recognizing that the transition is not only technical, but also social, cultural, and economic. ARM has also been the Executing Agency in the preparatory phases of planetGOLD projects in Costa Rica and Paraguay, contributing to strategic planning for mercury reduction and supporting governments in developing comprehensive, participatory approaches.

Through training programs, awareness-raising campaigns, and co-designed community strategies, ARM has educated ASGM communities on the health and environmental impacts of mercury, promoting behavior change and informed decision-making. In parallel, ARM has conducted field-level testing of low-cost, mercury-free processing technologies in both Latin America and Africa, aiming to ensure that alternatives are adapted to local conditions and accessible to miners.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in partnership with Justice Plus, ARM supported the establishment of health, safety, and environment (SSHT) committees at mine sites. These committees developed mercury reduction plans including training, risk assessments, and mitigation measures. As part of these efforts, "mercury houses" were built to safely manage and monitor mercury use, following best practices. These facilities were co-financed by the miners, reflecting their strong commitment to implementing safer practices.

- **ECON INDUSTRIES**

ECON INDUSTRIES has played a key role in developing local, on-site solutions for the treatment of elemental mercury and mercury-containing wastes. One of its major innovations is the design, manufacturing, and commissioning of the Mobile Mercury Conversion Unit – MMCU 150. This system can stabilize up to 200 kg of elemental mercury (Hg) per batch into mercury sulfide (HgS), a much safer compound for long-term disposal. This MMCU 150 is about to be delivered to Australia and will enable Australia to manage its elemental mercury waste independently, eliminating the need for hazardous and costly international transport.

Beyond Australia, econ industries VacuDry® plant successfully completed its remediation work in India, treating over 10,000 tons of mercury-contaminated soil at an altitude of more than 2,000 meters above sea level. The treated soil was safely reused on-site as backfill material. econ industries is currently overseeing the decommissioning and packaging of the remediation plant for future deployment in other parts of the world.

- **Laboratório de farmacologia molecular of the universidade federal do pará (LFM-UFPA).**

During this period, the LFM-UFPA has supported the following initiatives of the Brazilian Government:

  - the development of instructional materials for educational initiatives, in collaboration with the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples, which were presented at COP-5[3];
  - the review of the forthcoming document "*Protocolo Clínico e Diretrizes Terapêuticas para Intoxicação por Mercúrio*" (Clinical Protocol and Therapeutic Guidelines for Mercury Poisoning), which aims to guide the treatment of exposed populations in Brazil, as well as the "*Manual Técnico de Atendimento a Indígenas Expostos ao Mercúrio*" (Technical Manual for the Care of Indigenous Peoples Exposed to Mercury), launched in June 2025, both initiatives led by the Ministry of Health[4];
  - active participation, since May 2024, in the Permanent Workgroup on the Minamata Convention under the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change;
  - the launch of the *Instituto Amazônico do Mercúrio* (IAMER, Amazon Institute on Mercury), funded by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security[5], with the aim of bringing together the efforts of academia, civil society, and public and private sectors, especially those based in the Amazon. In 2024, IAMER implemented the first five standardized mercury testing centers across four Brazilian states in the Amazon region, addressing the urgent need for public awareness and the generation of data essential for evidence-based public policies.
  - the joint development, with the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, of the Brazilian proposal entitled "Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining in Brazil: Health and Environmental Aspects of Mercury Use" for the Fourth Round (2024–2025) of the Specific International Programme of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, which was recently approved.

LFM-UFPA has also been working closely with civil society in the development of key initiatives, such as the creation and launch, in March 2025, of the Plan for Mitigating the Impacts of Mercury on the Amazon Environment and Its Populations[6]. This plan was developed collaboratively with academic institutions, NGOs, and traditional communities, as a roadmap to guide coordinated actions for reducing

[3] https://www.gov.br/povosindigenas/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2023/10/ministerio-dos-povos-indigenas-participa-da-5a-conferencia-das-partes-da-convencao-de-minamata-em-genebra

[4] https://www.gov.br/saude/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2025/junho/ministerio-da-saude-lanca-manual-inedito-para-enfrentamento-a-contaminacao-por-mercurio-na-saude-indigena

[5] https://www.wwf.org.br/?89021/Researchers-launch-the-Amazon-Mercury-Institute

[6] https://wwfbrnew.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/plano-regional-de-mitigacao-dos-impactos-do-mercurio-no-ambiente-amazonico-e-em-suas-populacoes_wwfbrasil.pdf

https://www.wwf.org.br/?91140/WWF-Brasil-lanca-plano-para-mitigar-impactos-da-contaminacao-por-mercurio-na-Amazonia#

mercury exposure, restoring affected ecosystems, and promoting health and environmental justice across the region.

International attention have also been drawn to: i) mercury as one of the most harmful pollutants in the world and its effects on key components of the brain, such as glial cells[7]; ii) the role of genetic background in modulating the consequences of human exposure to mercury across different populations worldwide[8]; and iii) the significant underreporting of human mercury exposure in Brazil and the challenges faced by the public health surveillance system, with specific recommendations and strategies aimed at improving public policies, particularly those focused on the Amazon region[9].

Finally, as part of the Science and Voices from the Amazon Movement at COP-30[10], LFM-UFPA has emphasized the close relationship between gold mining activities in the Amazon (currently the main human-driven source of greenhouse gas emissions in the region), and the increasing mobilization of mercury as a consequence of climate change[11].

- **National Institute for Minamata Disease (NIDM)**

At the ICMGP 2024 in Cape Town, NIMD organized a dedicated workshop under the Global Mercury Partnership, focusing on analytical support and exposure assessment in ASGM and traditional mercury-using practices. Presentations highlighted challenges and solutions from mercury-impacted communities, particularly those involving elemental mercury. Case studies from Nigeria addressed health risks in ASGM, while Brazil's Amazon region presented ongoing concerns over mercury exposure from mining.

To improve exposure monitoring, NIMD conducted the evaluation of the fourth round of international proficiency testing (PT4) for urinary mercury analysis, a key biomarker for elemental mercury. This round engaged 40 laboratories, contributing to harmonized data quality across regions affected by mercury use.

- **Population and Development Initiative, Kigoma, Tanzania**

Since 2023, PDI is working with End Water Poverty, Responsible Mining Foundation and Innovation for change Africa Hub in the gold-rich Geita district (Tanzania) by administering the dialogue-enabling tool called Mining Site Assessment Tool (MSAT) among affected gold mining communities (Nyarugusu and Lwamgasa wards) in Geita district (Tanzania). The community dialogues and advocacy initiatives involve discussions, monitoring and reporting of aspects such as water access, water quality, decent wages, women workers affairs, safety issues and availability of complaints mechanisms.

Population and Development Initiative (PDI) has managed to introduce a community surveillance mechanism, along with 15 community agents of change, among 36 small and mid-gold mining companies in Geita district in efforts to engage communities in advocating, monitoring and reporting of navigation to better mining practices including introduction of safe gold processing technologies in the district and Tanzania in general. The initiative is gaining traction and momentum as agents of change are advocating and documenting transformation to responsible mining standards, mercury use being a large part of the monitored aspects through digital mapping.

PDI has managed to enrol 36 small and mid-gold mining and processing sites under community surveillance of navigation to responsible mining practices, zero mercury being one of the aspects which will be monitored for the next 2-3 years. PDI relocated of 60 small and mid-gold processing sites from residential places and water sources in efforts to save the environments and health of the communities in three wards of Nyarugusu, Lwamgasa and Mgusu ward in Geita district. Finally, PDI introduced

[7] https://doi.org/10.1007/s11064-022-03725-7 and https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2024.170939

[8] https://doi.org/10.3390/toxics11120967

[9] https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lana.2024.100880

[10] https://amazonianacop.ufpa.br/

[11] See pages 64-69: https://www.flipsnack.com/ABC6F588B7A/science-and-voices-of-the-amazon-1st-edition-english-h9010e095e/full-view.html

responsible mining standards with mercury aspects among 36 gold processing and mining sites by means of Mine Site Assessment Tool adopted from Responsible Mining Foundation.

- **Pure Earth**

With a focus on the region of Madre de Dios Peru, Pure Earth is supporting the expansion of a comprehensive model of mercury-free artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM). Pure Earth's work in Peru, funded by jewelry company Brilliant Earth with support from the Alliance for Responsible Mining and the Tauro Fátima Artisanal Mining Association, introduced safer gold processing technologies (shaking tables and flotation) and established the first supply chain of Fairmined-certified gold from the Amazon to the U.S. Pure Earth also provided training to local stakeholders in ecological mine closure techniques using reforestation, and supported research on prevention of mercury from entering local watersheds using this technique. The current phase of this work focuses on strengthening the Women's Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Network of Madre de Dios by expanding mercury-free processing skills, rehabilitating mined areas with biochar and soil restoration techniques, evaluating the use of solar energy, improving access to ethical markets, and engaging stakeholders nationally and internationally.

In Ghana, Pure Earth launched the Mercury Impact Assessment Study Project in collaboration with the Ghana Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This initiative is assessing mercury contamination in selected mining sites, particularly within the ASGM sector. Assessments are focused on key environmental matrices such as crops, water, soil, and fish, aiming to bridge the knowledge gap on mercury pollution and its impact on food safety, providing critical data to inform policy and enhance implementation strategies.

- **European Environmental Bureau EEB/ZMWG**:

In the context of the ACP-MEAs programme of UNEP, the EEB/ZMWG carried out two projects between February 2022 – February 2023, with two African NGOs: UNACOH in Uganda and WoME in Sierra Leone. In Uganda, the project has provided training on the health effects of mercury as well as practical trainings on extracting gold without mercury. About 180 participants, 45% of which were women, have been trained, which included district leaders, miners' cooperatives delegates and miners. A draft by-law to regulate mercury use in Amudat district has been developed. Building on the above results a new project started with UNACOH, Uganda in 2024 and ended in April 2025. The project re-habilitated one mercury free demonstration site, and continued the mercury free training and demonstrations with miners; initially 39 ASG Miners and leaders attended, a new gender balanced committee was constituted to oversee management of the sites, followed by another training of 23 new ASG Miners and trainers and with focus on women. The draft by-law was discussed as a draft district ordinance with wider coverage, at the district council at a meeting attended by 40 district leaders, who were also sensitized on mercury toxicology and mercury free gravimetric gold extraction technique. Members of the Social Services Committee of the District Council also visited the sites, witnessed the training and encouraged miners to abandon mercury use. The project was also supported by Planet Gold Uganda and we hope this support will continue in the future. A video has been developed with UNEP's support[12].

- **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**

UNEP continued to provide global component services to Parties to the Minamata Convention in achieving their obligations toward Article 7. A total of 34 National Action Plan was submitted, and project are ongoing in South Africa, the Philippines, Brazil and Pakistan. UNEP also continued their work on global Knowledge Management, updating the data of the latest submitted NAP in the NAP interactive dashboard, and uploading the relevant ASMG related resources. In particular, UNEP created a new knowledge hub webpage under the ASGM area focusing on the links between ASGM and biodiversity, aiming at gathering the latest information and initiative addressing biodiversity loss due to ASGM.

[12] A Uganda Mercury Free Gold Mining Success Story- Safeguarding the Environment and Human Health to view the video.

UNEP through its role as the host of the Partnership co-led with the Minamata Secretariat the development of the guidance for the Review of the Implementation of Article 7 that will be presented at COP6, providing a structural framework for parties to evaluate progress made in implementation of the NAPs, identify gaps and take steps strengthen their national strategies. Finally, UNEP supported the development of the first two GEF funded RIA projects in 23 countries, with a global component to continue providing global knowledge management services, including capacity building, upgrade the ASGM dashboard for updated NAP data and continue curating and disseminated knowledge and experience related to NAP implementation and evaluation, including where feasible best practices and experience with supplementary COP decisions.

3.2. Industrial and energy sector

3.2.1. Chlor-Alkali production

The Partnership Area works to significantly minimize and where feasible, eliminate global mercury releases to air, water, and land that may occur from chlor-alkali production facilities. Through information collection and dissemination and support to implementation activities, it's objectives are to:

- Reduce mercury emissions and use from existing mercury-cell facilities;
- Encourage conversion to non-mercury processes;
- Reduce or eliminate mercury releases from waste generated by chlor-alkali production facilities including waste from conversion to non-mercury processes; and
- Promote environmentally-sound options for storage of surplus mercury to limit downstream releases from surplus mercury generated by the conversion, phase-out, or closure of mercury cell chlor-alkali facilities.

The partnership area continues to monitor the closure of facilities globally and the progress of decommissioning activities. While closure of major facilities has taken place, the need for technical assistance for decommissioning and mercury disposal still remains. The partnership area has been supporting two projects during the reporting period; one GEF funded project under implementation in Mexico and another GEF-funded project under preparation in Brazil.

- **Mercury Use Elimination in Chlor-alkali Project for Mexico**

The project to Eliminate mercury use and adequately manage mercury and mercury wastes in the chlor-alkali sector in Mexico, supports Mexico's obligations under the Minamata Convention to phase out mercury use in chlor-alkali production. It targets the decommissioning of mercury cell facilities, stabilization and disposal of mercury waste, and the development of remediation plans for contaminated sites. The project also strengthens institutional frameworks and promotes gender-responsive and environmentally sound management practices.

During the reporting period, foundational activities were undertaken to launch the project and establish implementation mechanisms. These included the Inception Workshop and the first Project Steering Committee meeting, held on 19–20 November 2024 in Monterrey. These events brought together key stakeholders, from SEMARNAT, IQUISA, UNEP, GMP and UNIDO, to validate institutional roles and align efforts with the Minamata Convention. The meetings also included site visits to mercury and membrane cell facilities, reinforcing technical understanding among participants.

Coordination structures were formalized, and recruitment of the National Project Coordinator was advanced. The inception phase laid the groundwork for future phases by addressing early institutional, technical, and governance elements critical to achieving its objectives.

- **Environmentally Sound Management of Mercury Project in Brazil**

The project on Environmentally sound management and disposal of excess mercury and mercury waste from removing mercury electrolytic cells in Brazil's chlor-alkali sector project was approved in November 2024. Project activities include the development of a stabilization unit, which may offer synergies with mercury waste management needs from other sectors, such as ASGM and medical

devices. UNEP is currently working with the Executing Agency and national partners to finalize the CEO Endorsement document and annexes, with submission to the GEF expected by September 2025.

- **ECON INDUSTRIES**

ECON INDUSTRIES has played a key role in developing local, on-site solutions for the treatment of elemental mercury and mercury-containing wastes. One of its major innovations is the design, manufacturing, and commissioning of the Mobile Mercury Conversion Unit – MMCU 150. This system can stabilize up to 200 kg of elemental mercury (Hg) per batch into mercury sulfide (HgS), a much safer compound for long-term disposal. This MMCU 150 is about to be delivered to Australia and will enable Australia to manage its elemental mercury waste independently, eliminating the need for hazardous and costly international transport.

Beyond Australia, econ industries VacuDry® plant successfully completed its remediation work in India, treating over 10,000 tons of mercury-contaminated soil at an altitude of more than 2,000 meters above sea level. The treated soil was safely reused on-site as backfill material. econ industries is currently overseeing the decommissioning and packaging of the remediation plant for future deployment in other parts of the world.

As part of broader global cooperation, econ industries has provided substantial technical and strategic support to the two major international initiatives by UNEP mentioned above:

- In **Mexico**, econ industries has been closely supporting the project led by UNEP, the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), and CYDSA S.A. de C.V. to convert and decommission the country's two remaining mercury-cell chlor-alkali facilities. This includes planning for mercury waste management and remediation of contaminated sites. The project is set to deploy a VacuDry® 3 000 for the treatment of contaminated soils and Mobile Mercury Conversion Unit for the stabilization of elemental mercury as part of the decommissioning and treatment strategy.
- In **Brazil**, econ industries is working in close collaboration with UNEP to assist the country's chlor-alkali sector in phasing out mercury-based technologies. This support includes the development of local, cost-effective mercury waste treatment solutions and stabilization technologies. In this context, econ industries would manufacture a Mobile Mercury Conversion Unit specifically for Brazil and South America to have a local solution for the conversion and safe disposal of elemental mercury. This initiative is also highly relevant to the ASGM (Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining) sector, where safe and sustainable mercury management is urgently needed. UNEP's project for the chlor-alkali sector can have a huge impact for the whole of Brazil and South America.

Through its innovative technologies and deep engagement in country-led processes, econ industries is making a critical contribution to the global reduction and sound management of mercury.

- **UNEP**

The GEF-funded 3-year project "Assessment of existing and future emissions reduction from the coal sector toward the implementation of the Minamata and Stockholm Conventions", implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme and executed by the Macquarie University with targeted activities from the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership has now concluded.

The objective of the project was to demonstrate carbon dioxide (CO2), mercury, and persistent organic pollutants (POPs) emissions reduction potential from coal-fired power plants (CFPPs) and industrial boilers (CFIBs) to support governments in implementing control and reduction strategies for new and existing installations. The project identified Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam, and South Africa as high-potential countries. One of the outcomes of the project is an interactive dashboard showcasing the reduction scenarios.

3.3. Cosmetics sector

- **UNEP**

In its capacity as secretariat of the Partnership, UNEP has provided global knowledge management and technical assistance to the GEF-funded UNEP-led project on eliminating mercury-added skin-lightening products (SLPs) in Gabon, Jamaica, and Sri Lanka, which is set to conclude in early 2026. As part of this work, a dedicated knowledge hub on the issue was developed, including country-specific pages. Several outreach and communication campaigns were also organized to raise global awareness on the need to eliminate mercury from cosmetics and to challenge harmful beauty standards. In addition, UNEP convened the second and third meetings of the Eliminating Mercury Skin-Lightening Products project stakeholders' group and conducted research leading to a draft report on SLP supply chain considerations.

- **Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI)**

1. BRI serves as the Executing Agency for GEF projects related to skin-lightening products including a pilot project (with Jamaica, Sri Lanka and Gabon), a new project for the African continent (approved GEF project), a new project for Asia (a proposed GEF project) and others.
2. Over 400 skin-lightening products have been analyzed for mercury content in Jamaica, Sri Lanka and Gabon.
3. A kick-off project workshop for 13 countries in Africa will be conducted about skin-lightening products in Ethiopia with over 40 delegates.
4. A trial example of how to use the GBMS database of over 500,000 published mercury concentrations in WESR will be demonstrated at COP6.

- **Skin-Lightening Cream Campaign (ZMWG)**[13]
    - Input was submitted to the Secretariat following COP 5 request to address challenges and measures to banning manufacture and trade of SLPs (June 2024).
    - Presented and contributed to discussions at the ICMGP 2024 in Cape Town. (July 2024).
    - Contributes to the UNEP/GEF project carried out by WHO/BRI on Eliminating mercury in SLPs: Assisted in planning the second and third meetings of the Eliminating Mercury SLP Stakeholder Group, supports the Stakeholder platform; under a contract with WHO-addresses online sales of mercury SLPs in Sri Lanka, Gabon, Jamaica.
    - Contributes to the newly approved UNEP/GEF project to Eliminate mercury SLPs in 13 African countries, carried out by BRI.
    - Two new rounds of sampling of skin-lightening products (SLPs) started end 2024. With the assistance of the ZMWG network, products 'made in Pakistan', as well as products from targeted online platforms were screened and skin-lightening products, possibly containing mercury, were purchased. Testing of those products to measure mercury concentrations is taking place by an accredited laboratory. The results will form the basis of two upcoming ZMWG reports on Skin Lightening products. The ZMWG former global report *Skin lighteners still available online despite mercury findings* was published in October 2023[14].
    - Our online database has been updated, providing information on the skin-lightening products tested so far by ZMWG and other sources, available at *www.zeromercury.org/cream-catalog/*
    - On-the-ground projects are being carried out in the Philippines (since October 2022), Bangladesh (since January 2023), Pakistan (2023-2025) and in Nigeria (2023-2024) and Kenya (2022-2025). The activities carried out under those projects aim to shed light on the issue of illegal trade of skin lightening creams; bring more evidence (e.g., mercury concentration in the air in beauty parlours); inform, raise awareness, and built capacity of governments and relevant stakeholders such as customs, dermatologists, students etc.; identify the capacity-needs; engage cooperation with manufacturers and online platforms accordingly; etc. Meetings have taken place with different authorities to showcase the issue, as well as with platforms. Additional national sampling has taken place in many of the countries.

3.4. Healthcare sector

3.4.1. Dental amalgam

- **UNEP**

GEF project "Accelerate implementation of dental amalgam provisions and strengthen country capacities in the environmental sound management of associated wastes under the Minamata Convention" (GEF7 Phasing Down Dental Amalgam project) - This 3-year project, launched in March 2023, expected to be extended to September 2026, is implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and executed by the World Health Organization and participation of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership in the three project countries: Senegal, Thailand and Uruguay.

The partnership is supporting the implementation of components 2 and 3 of the project, respectively on strengthening capacities for the sound management of mercury wastes, and knowledge management. To support component 2 of the project – Pilot demonstrations conducted, and capacity increased in project countries to manage mercury/hazardous waste from amalgam use in an environmentally sound manner in Senegal and Thailand – the partnership is coordinating activities towards the reduction of mercury

[13] www.zeromercury.org/mercury-added-skin-lightening-creams-campaign/

[14] https://eeb.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ZMWG-Skin-2022-Report-Final.pdf Online Marketing of Toxic Skin Lighteners: Mercury cosmetics marketed as a 'solution' to dark skin (October 2023)

releases in wastewaters as well as the related sound management of collected mercury wastes, including in collaboration with the private sector. Additionally, the partnership is finalizing a guidance document for the sound management of mercury waste in healthcare, conducting information and experience sharing events and documenting countries processes to put in place a safe handling of mercury wastes as case studies. Information and progress made under the project are accessible on the project knowledge hub hosted on the partnership website.

- **World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry - Make Dental Amalgam History Campaign**

The World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry, its six regional environmental health centers, its NGO partners in dozens of nations, and its professional advisors in medicine, dentistry, law, and journalism work in every region with major successes as the Minamata Parties accelerate the phasing down and move toward phasing out dental amalgam. Projects included:

- Assisting countries in implementing the COP4 “Children's Amendment” to phase out dental amalgam in children/pregnant and breastfeeding women;
- Organizing Webinars in cooperation with the African Regional Centers of the Basel and Stockholm Convention;
- Organizing Webinars in cooperation with the coordinators of the GEF ISLANDS Project;
- Organizing Workshops in Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Thailand, South Africa or Vietnam among others;
- Supporting efforts in several countries to draft a phase out plan in line with requirements of the Minamata Conventions Amendment MC-5/4;
- Assisting the European Commission, Parliament and Council on the way to the adoption of the revised mercury regulation, which is phasing out the use and banning the export of dental amalgam by 1 January 2025;
- Launch of a Campaign to stop amalgam exports worldwide;
- Advocating for strong language to phase out dental amalgam in the WHO Bangkok Declaration adopted on 29 November 2024;
- Raising Awareness to end demand for mercury fillings, enhance consumer and parent education to choose toxic-free safe dental materials for themselves and their families.

3.4.2. Medical devices

- **UNEP**

The Phasing out mercury measuring devices in healthcare project, is a key project being undertaken in Albania, Burkina Faso, India, Montenegro and Uganda to assist the project countries to phase out the mercury containing devices from the health facilities and replace them with alternatives. These governments have joined forces in a historic endeavour to tackle chemical pollution. Medical thermometers and sphygmomanometers (devices which measure blood pressure) are essential medical devices used widely in healthcare. Key among the activities being implemented include the following:

- Providing technical assistance to countries on the sound management of mercury waste;
- Developing a desk review for the project that took into consideration literature review on mercury and mercury in products, which saved as a background document and literature hub for the project;
- Capacity building on effects of mercury on health and the environment, alternatives devices, procurement processes, waste management including treatment technologies available and provisions of the Basel convention;
- Awareness raising programme for manufactures of mercury containing devices in India;
- Developing the case studies have been drafted which will highlight lesson learnt and best practices from the project countries as a key part of project dissemination;
- Conducting national assessments to identify existing devices that require replacement and to assess the availability of policies and procedures;

- Technical guidance on the management of mercury containing healthcare wastes to be used by health facilities to aid in the sound management of mercury waste from point of generation to final disposal.

3.5. Electronic and appliances sector

3.5.1. Lighting sources

- **The Clean Lighting Coalition**

Phase-Out of Fluorescent Lighting: The Clean Lighting Coalition has assisted governments around the world in assessing their lighting markets and developing the technical, economic, and environmental justification for adopting regulations that phase-out fluorescent lighting. These activities which include the provision of locally relevant evidence on the benefits of a lighting transition, have resulted in the adoption of policies that phase-out fluorescent lamps from the market, shifting instead to cost-effective, mercury-free, energy-efficient LED lamps. Below are some of the new policies that have been adopted with the help of CLiC's technical support:

- In the US, 10 states have adopted clean lighting bills expected to phase out 21% of the mercury-containing fluorescent lighting market with support from the CLiC campaign and local state advocates. These actions will prevent 2,420 lbs. of mercury pollution from lamps shipped through 2050 and avoid 1.2 Mt of CO2 annually in 2030 and 13.6 Mt cumulatively through 2050.
- In Africa, CLiC is supporting a resolution by African ministers to require party and non-party countries to phase-out fluorescents. Nationally, we engaged with countries interested in fast policy action to close their lighting markets to fluorescents. With CliC support, Burkina Faso and Nigeria have already adopted lighting efficiency regulations to phase-out fluorescents.
- In Kenya and South Africa, CLiC collaborated with local enforcement agencies to provide training to local inspectors on best practices for enforcing lighting regulations to ensure their compliance.
- South Africa – South Africa passed a new efficiency standard that will effectively transition its market from CFLs to LEDs.
- Minnesota (United States) - legislature passed a clean lighting policy via omnibus bill on May 17, 2024.
- Illinois (United States) - clean lighting bill signed by the Governor in August, 2024 banning the production or sale of screw-based or bayonet-based compact fluorescent lamps starting in 2026 and pin-base compact fluorescent lights and fluorescent tubes in 2027.
- Burkina Faso- Burkina Faso Minister of Commerce signed off an efficiency regulation that will phase-out fluorescents, enforcement beginning on October 9th, 2024.
- Nigeria - In November 2024 adopted lighting efficiency standards to effectively eliminate fluorescent lamps from one of Africa's largest importers, significantly reducing China's fluorescent lamp footprint in Africa and helping build capacity for West African regional policy Compliance.
- **Information exchange on phasing out fluorescent lamps under the Minamata Convention on Mercury:** The workshop "Information exchange on phasing out fluorescent lamps under the Minamata Convention on Mercury" was held on 21st March 2025 in Lusaka, Zambia. Building on the June 2023 workshop Transitioning to Mercury-Free Lighting in Asia-Pacific Countries, the purpose of this Workshop, led by the Clean Lighting Coalition (CLIC) and CLASP and organized under the umbrella of the Global Mercury Partnership, was to convene a meeting among interested Parties, relevant government and non-governmental observers and experts in lighting, to discuss measures that could be taken

to foster the phase out of fluorescent lighting as per decision MC-5/4 of the Minamata Convention. [15]

In addition to these, CLASP/ Clean Lighting Coalition has collaborated closely with African policymakers to identify paths to close any remaining doors to fluorescent demand and supported regional and national African leaders to meet and exceed the Minamata decision mandates. Some of these activities include the following:

- CLiC, with support from the Minamata Convention's Secretariat and the Africa Region, hosted a webinar for policymakers across Africa, providing an overview of available pathways for complying with the Minamata Convention decision.
- CLiC conducted a training session for Kenyan and South African agencies responsible for the implementation of new lighting efficiency policies. The training covered an overview of global and regional lighting policies, lighting technologies and emerging market trends, nationally adopted standards and testing, and best practice on regulatory compliance implementation.
- CLiC, with the Global Mercury Partnership, held an Information exchange on phasing out fluorescent lamps under the Minamata Convention on Mercury for countries involved in the fluorescent lighting trade, along with policymakers and regional agencies. The event focused on global trends in fluorescent lighting use and disposal, actions taken to meet the Minamata Convention phase-out, manufacturers' readiness to shift to alternatives, implementation needs, and opportunities to accelerate the transition to more efficient, environmentally friendly non-fluorescent lighting
- CLiC published a Compliance Guideline for Implementation of Efficient Lighting Standards in Africa. his guide provides the research and tools African governments need to lead the continent's transition to more efficient, better performing lighting solutions

IV. Highlight of activities on cross cutting topics and synergies

4.1. Hazardous/Mercury Waste Management

The Waste Management Partnership Area (WMA) has been actively engaged in various activities since PAG-14. The key activities are summarized below.

- WMA convenes meetings of the WMA partners twice a year. Following PAG-14 (December 2023), three meetings were held (March 2024[16], November 2024[17] and March 2025[18]) where GMP-WMA activities were presented, future plans discussed, updates from the Minamata Convention Secretariat and the GMP Secretariat shared, and presentations from WMA partners were delivered.
- In order to disseminate its activities for wider involvement of stakeholders, WMA shared its activities in various forums, as shown below.
  - December 9, 2024: Joint GMP–World Health Organization information-sharing webinar, "Managing Mercury Waste from Dental Amalgam and Medical Measuring Devices: Sharing Existing Knowledge and Initiatives."
  - January 31, 2025: Philippine Healthcare and Mercury Wastes Management Project 2025 National Workshop. In addition to sharing its activities, the WMA also shared the Japanese mercury waste collection experience with stakeholders in the Philippines.

[15] Further information and key take aways maybe found at https://www.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/events/workshop/information-exchange-phasing-out-fluorescent-lamps-under-minamata-convention

[16] Partnership Area on Mercury Waste Management – March 2024 meeting | Global Mercury Partnership

[17] Partnership Area on Mercury Waste Management – November 2024 meeting | Global Mercury Partnership

[18] Partnership Area on Mercury Waste Management – March 2025 meeting | Global Mercury Partnership

- May 7, 2025: BRS COP side event organized by the GMP, titled "Mercury in Products: Integrated Approaches and Innovative Tools for Sustainable Waste Management."

- In 2024, the WMA delivered recorded presentations on the Mercury Material Flow (MMF) of Japan, developed by the Ministry of the Environment, Japan (MOEJ), at three country-specific workshops (South Africa, Pakistan, Vietnam) on enhancing mercury inventory production, organized by the UNEP Coal combustion Partnership Area under the guidance of the UNEP Secretariat.
- In 2024, the Minamata Convention Secretariat developed training materials to support capacity-building on mercury waste management and organized webinars to disseminate this information. WMA partners provided input during the preparation stage, and their inputs were incorporated into the final materials.
- As part of its ongoing work, WMA updated the *Catalogue of Technology and Services on Mercury Waste Management*[19] to reflect the latest information from the WMA partners.
- WMA finalized a factsheet[20] on non-electronic measuring devices and prepared a new factsheet on mercury waste from the oil and gas sector (pending final revisions). Plans are underway to develop factsheets on additional mercury waste streams.

WMA has started making preparations for an online consultation desk, a new initiative aimed at connecting stakeholders with mercury waste-related needs to WMA experts who have specialized knowledge in various aspects of waste management, on a voluntary basis. The consultation desk will act as a facilitator in this process.

- **UNEP**

Considering the increasing importance of the safe handling of mercury wastes and ongoing efforts under the GEF funded projects on dental amalgam and mercury containing medical devices, the secretariat, in collaboration with the WMA, is developing the followings:

- **Community of Practice (CoP):** which would aim at providing an interactive, and inclusive platform that is multi-sectoral for stakeholders (members and non-members of the GMP) engaged in and/or with interest in mercury waste management. Especially, the CoP wishes to: (i) support interactions between public and private sectors; (ii) share knowledge and concrete case studies; (iii) co-develop practical tools, build capacities; and (iv) align actions with international commitments such as the Minamata Convention, the Basel Convention and related MEAs, frameworks and practitioners.
- **Knowledge hub:** which would serve as the repository of key information on the sound management of hazardous/mercury wastes, including: (i) ongoing work of the CoP; and (ii) existing resources on the sound management of hazardous/mercury wastes; and (iii) efforts from the international community, especially from MEAs, relevant groups and frameworks, as well as the WMA partners.

4.2. Mercury trade

- **UNEP**

UNEP is actively supporting on-the-ground efforts to address mercury trade in Asia and Latin America through targeted regional initiatives. In Asia, a Japan-funded project leverages national expertise to

[19] The catalogue prepared by the WMA contains a series of information on mercury waste treatment technologies, equipment and services owned by Partners and serves as a quick reference tool for readers to identify relevant solution providers. It can be downloaded from https://www.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/node/27105/

[20] WMA is working on preparing a series of technical factsheets to support the environmentally sound management (ESM) of mercury wastes to assist countries facing challenges in the management of mercury wastes. The factsheets are intended to complement the technical guidelines for the ESM of mercury wastes developed under the Basel Convention, by providing general information that is common to specific mercury waste streams at different stages of waste management.

strengthen Minamata Convention enforcement via hands-on training and inter-agency coordination. In Latin America, the regional GEF-funded project Accelerating Minamata Convention Compliance launched in early 2025, focuses on improving countries' capacity to monitor and control mercury trade - particularly illegal flows - through enhanced data systems and regional cooperation, directly supporting Article 3 of the Convention. Through these initiatives, UNEP is leading the way in building multi-sectoral partnerships with key actors such as the World Customs Organisation, INTERPOL, UNODC, and others.

4.3. Pollution, biodiversity and climate change synergies

The mercury air transport and fate research partnership area, through BRI, contributes in multiple ways to ongoing initiatives on pollution, biodiversity and climate change synergies:

- BRI serves under contract to assist with developing a global mercury database for Parties and members (Biodiversity Research Institute and Dartmouth College) contribute to the Open-ended Science Group (OESG) that is organizing data contributions.
- BRI is working with the World Environment Situation Room (WESR) to use the Global Biotic Mercury Synthesis (GMBS) database as a pilot project for use by Parties by COP6.
- BRI is also working with Gabon and neighboring countries on a Specific Implementation Programme project, as they did with Antigua and Barbuda, partly as a contribution to establish a Regional Mercury Monitoring Center.
- Finally, BRI is working to develop a GEF project that examines the triple threat of pollution (mercury), climate change and biodiversity in East Africa.

In terms of research, the Partnership, in collaboration with BRI, conducted a study on the interactions between artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) and biodiversity. The research drew on more than one hundred resources, including 27 ASGM National Action Plans developed under Article 7 and Annex C of the Minamata Convention, with findings published in a scientific article. A database was also established to consolidate resources on this topic. Building on this work, BRI has proposed two sessions for the next International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant (ICMGP), scheduled to take place in Hyderabad, India—one focusing on mercury in skin-lightening products and the other on the relationship between biodiversity and mercury pollution.

V. Capacity building and global knowledge management

5.1. Data collection and analysis

Knowledge management has also been further strengthened through the development and maintenance of several dedicated knowledge hubs. A hub was created under the GEF-funded project on phasing out mercury-containing medical measuring devices, providing a central platform for information and resources on this issue. The dedicated hub on skin-lightening products, developed as part of the GEF-funded project on eliminating mercury-containing skin-lightening products, continues to serve as a tool for sharing information not only about the project and participating countries but also about the broader issue of skin bleaching. It presents the context and objectives of the project, highlights news and resources, and hosts the community of practice that has been established. Country-level achievements, including the outcomes of regional workshops, are also made accessible. The knowledge hub on dental amalgam continues to be actively updated in the framework of the GEF-funded project on phasing down the use of dental amalgam, ensuring that recent information and resources remain readily available.

In addition, the Partnership maintains two interactive dashboards on National Action Plans (NAPs) and Minamata Initial Assessments (MIAs), which support data mining and trend analysis. These dashboards currently gather qualitative and quantitative data from 30 NAPs and 78 MIAs and are continuously updated. UNEP remains committed to assisting new countries in the execution of their NAP and MIA projects, as well as in maintaining the dashboards and facilitating regional and global sharing of knowledge.

5.2. Awareness raising and communication campaigns

The Partnership Secretariat and its partners have been leading global advocates for detoxifying the cosmetics sector and challenging harmful beauty ideals by eliminating mercury-containing skin lightening products. Through the Global Mercury Partnership and GEF-funded initiative, UNEP launched two social media campaigns linking mercury pollution and racial discrimination, timed with the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and amplified by global stakeholders and project partners. Building on this momentum, UNEP is preparing to launch a longer-term global campaign - Detoxifying Cosmetics and Beauty Ideals - which will harness the influence of prominent voices, including advocates, artists, celebrities, and cosmetic companies, to shift public perception, reduce demand for toxic products, and promote diversity and racial inclusion. A series of social media activations, in-store campaigns in collaboration with the private sector, and public engagement events - including at COP6 - will further raise awareness and drive action at both local and global levels.

5.3. Stakeholder engagement, information dissemination and experience-sharing activities

The partnership organised and/or participated in a series of in person and online events aiming at sharing information, recent knowledge, experience and related lessons learned. Interests and priority topics were identified through needs expressed in the context of ongoing projects, discussions with partners, including sister agencies and the private sector, as well as meetings of the Partnership Advisory Group and the co-leads of the areas of work. The full events list is available on the Partnership page.

The following sessions have been organized during the reporting period:

- **Mercury in products: Integrated approaches and innovative tools for a sustainable waste management - BRS COPs 2025 side event** - The Global Mercury Partnership, its areas of work on mercury in products and waste management proposed **a 90 minutes' side event** on the management of waste from mercury containing products held during the 2025 BRS COPs. Aligned with the COP theme *"Make Visible the Invisible: sound management of chemicals and wastes,"* the discussion linked national action to the requirements of the Basel Convention, shed light on successful strategies for institutional engagement, and examined the administrative procedures necessary for compliance. Featuring insights from health, environment, and waste management sectors, the session emphasized South-South-North cooperation and presented concrete lessons learned to advance coordinated, sustainable mercury waste solutions.

- **Unmasking Mercury and Colorism in Cosmetics -** This event, held on 5 March 2025, was co-organized by the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Geneva Environment Network featured leading voices to highlight the need of addressing the underlying socio-cultural norms surrounding skin-lightening products.

- **Third meeting of the Eliminating Mercury Skin Lightening Products project stakeholders grou**p - The event, held on 30 January 2025, he event provided an opportunity to share updates and lessons learned from the GEF project on Eliminating Mercury Skin Lightening Products, to present draft report on Cosmetics Listed in Part I of Annex A to the Minamata Convention on Mercury and to hear from stakeholders regarding their experiences.

- **Sixteenth International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant (ICMGP-16) –** The conference took place from 21 to 26 July 2024 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre, Cape Town, in South Africa. The meeting was a great opportunity to learn more on existing research and interact with a wide range of scientists and stakeholders on mercury science. The event featured various special sessions, workshops and plenaries on priority thematics around the theme "From Minamata to Africa and Beyond: Addressing Mercury Challenges in Global Environment Change".

- **Second meeting of the Eliminating Mercury Skin Lightening Products project stakeholders group -** The event, held on 21 May 2024, provided an opportunity to share updates and lessons learned from the GEF project on "Eliminating Mercury Skin Lightening Products" and hear from stakeholders regarding their experiences.

- **WEBINAR - ASGM in Africa: recent tools, knowledge and considerations for effective implementation of national strategies -** Within the framework of Article 7 and Annex C of the Minamata Convention, and the implementation of their draft National Action Plan (NAP) for the reduction, and if possible, elimination of mercury use in the gold EMAPE sector, eight countries took part in a West African study tour organized in Togo in May 2023. This session, organized on April 23, 2024, enabled participants to share their knowledge and data on the NAPs projects and the resulting national strategies, as well as addressing some of the key themes common to the region.

- **WEBINAR - Contribution of the chemicals and waste Conventions to Target 7 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**: The information session, convened by the Secretariats of the Minamata Convention and BRS Conventions on 18 April 2024, facilitated exchange among National Focal Points to the biodiversity and chemicals and waste Conventions on how Parties are incorporating control measures for highly hazardous chemicals in their revised National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, as well as on the need for additional indicators related to highly hazardous chemicals in the monitoring framework for the GBF, under Target 7.

- **WEBINAR - Mercury from Non-Ferrous Metals Mining and Smelting: current knowledge and tools towards sustainable practices**: The Global Mercury Partnership organised a webinar on **Mercury from Non-Ferrous Metals Mining and Smelting: current knowledge and tools towards sustainable practices**, on Thursday 21 March 2024. This session provided a platform for further exchange of information, awareness raising and discussion on best practices in managing mercury emissions, releases and waste in the sector. The event featured latest developments in the context of the Minamata Convention, feedback from countries on their national contexts, ongoing efforts, challenges and needs as well as practical experiences in managing mercury in the industry.

- **The third meeting of the Eliminating Mercury Skin Lightening Products project stakeholders group took place on Thursday 30 January 2025, and** provided an opportunity to share updates and lessons learned from the GEF project on Eliminating Mercury Skin Lightening Products, to present draft report on Cosmetics Listed in Part I of Annex A to the Minamata Convention on Mercury and to hear from stakeholders regarding their experiences.

5.4. Trainings and workshops

- **Multi-country meeting on Enhancing Monitoring of Trade and Elimination of Mercury Skin Lightening Products** - A regional workshop was held on 5–6 June 2025 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, alongside a Customs Training on monitoring mercury trade. The final two days featured a multi-country meeting to share lessons from the project's implementation, particularly in Sri Lanka, and to raise regional awareness. Representatives from **Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam** joined discussions on phasing out mercury-containing SLPs and explored the potential for a larger regional or global initiative.

- **Information exchange on phasing out fluorescent lamps under the Minamata Convention on Mercury - Workshop -** The event took place on 21st March 2025 in Lusaka, Zambia. Building on the June 2023 workshop Transitioning to Mercury-Free Lighting in Asia-Pacific Countries, the purpose of this Workshop, led by CLIC/CLASP and organized under the umbrella of the Global Mercury Partnership, was to convene a meeting among interested Parties, relevant government and non-governmental observers and experts in lighting, to discuss measures that could be taken to foster the phase out of fluorescent lighting as per decision MC-5/4 of the Minamata Convention.

- **Sub-regional meeting - Elimination of skin-lightening cosmetic products containing mercury in Africa region -** From January 20 to 22, 2025, Libreville hosted a landmark regional workshop, bringing together 15 African nations to develop a unified strategy to eliminate harmful skin-lightening products containing mercury and other hazardous substances. This marked the first regional initiative of its kind, signaling a significant step toward safeguarding public health and the environment across the continent. The event concluded with a high-level ministerial segment, where African Ministers of Health and Environment, along with delegates from international organizations

and civil society, adopted the Libreville Commitment. This declaration calls for concerted, integrated, and sustainable actions to eliminate harmful skin-lightening products across Africa.

- **Series of workshops to enhance inventories and strategies under Article 8 of the Minamata Convention on Mercury -** From 6 to 10 June 2024, the Partnership areas on mercury releases from coal combustion, mercury releases from the cement industry and mercury waste management jointly held a series of workshop to enhance inventories and strategies under Article 8 of the Minamata Convention on Mercury in Pakistan, South Africa and Viet Nam. The events provided opportunities to share information on the most recent inventory information available for Annex D sources, discuss available methods for evaluating and ranking inventory results, as well as reflect on pertinent ways to use existing inventories and policies to support future emissions scenarios.

- **Phasing out the use of Mercury Containing Measuring Medical Devices – Inception Workshop** - Agencies, countries and invited stakeholders came together from 14 to 16 May 2024 at the WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland for the official launch of the project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), with the World Health Organization (WHO) as the executing agency, and the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership as technical partner. The project is being implemented in the following 5 countries in collaboration with their respective governments: Albania, Burkina Faso, India, Montenegro and Uganda.

- **Capacity Building Related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries - Phase 3 (ACP-MEA's) project:** Under this project which began at the end of 2020 and ended in April 2025, the EEB/ZMWG focused part its work on the formulation of specific strategies in selected ACP countries for addressing the mercury-added product phase out provisions under Article 4 of the Minamata Convention. Activities are targeted mainly in the Caribbean and African regions. In the Caribbean, EEB/ZMWG is collaborating with CARICOM and BCRC Caribbean.

- **The EEB/ZMWG has lead several training and capacity building activities, including**: A) established memorandum of understanding with the governments of Trinidad and Tobago (TTO), Antigua and Barbuda (ATG) and St. Kitts and Nevis (SKN), to carry out work towards phasing out mercury added products. In summary the activities, carried out were: Developing a roadmap and a national action plan for phasing out mercury-added products in the three countries; St Vincent and the Grenadines was also added at a later stage; carrying out market studies of mercury-free alternatives, Assessing/focusing institutional capacity; Developing strategies on mercury-free product procurement for measuring devices and dental amalgam, as well as lighting products. A case study was published from UNEP to showcase the work. [21]. And B) The EEB/ZMWG further assisted the Minamata Secretariat on the development of training materials on MAPs as well as relevant webinars to strengthen implementation of the MAP related provisions of the Minamata Convention.

- The UNEP/Global Mercury Partnership (GMP), in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), delivered a comprehensive **training programme to strengthen national capacities for phasing out mercury-containing thermometers and sphygmomanometers in healthcare facilities across five project countries:** Albania, Burkina Faso, India, Montenegro, and Uganda. The training, part of the GEF-funded project "Phasing Out Mercury Measuring Devices in Healthcare" supports the implementation of the Minamata Convention and promotes the safe substitution and disposal of mercury-based devices in pilot health facilities. The trainings were held from 21 to 23 May and 1 July 2025 virtually.

[21] https://www.zeromercury.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/acp-mea_case_study_mercuryfree_final.pdf

VI. Conclusion

Building on its past successes and its leading role in knowledge generation, stakeholder engagement, and idea incubation, the Partnership has catalyzed a range of prominent initiatives—including the planetGOLD programme and, more recently, impactful work on mercury-added products, such as the GEF-funded 13-country project on eliminating skin-lightening products. Beyond these achievements, the Partnership continues to work across key sectors, including mining, energy, industrial processes, cosmetics, and healthcare. It leverages its core strengths through the provision of technical expertise, global communications and knowledge management, and ongoing stakeholder engagement led by the Secretariat and its partners.

Looking ahead, the Partnership aims to further expand its role as a global knowledge management platform, an incubator of ideas and a connector of stakeholders, fostering joint initiatives to address key challenges. Building on the success of planetGOLD and the new skin-lightening products project, it is well positioned to catalyze similar transformative efforts in other priority areas.