

From: Desiree NARVAEZ [mailto:dnarvaez@chemicals.unep.ch]

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Dear Partners of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership in Products,

I am writing to inform you of an upcoming joint WHO-UNEP Experts Consultation of the "Future Use of Dental Restorative Materials". The meeting is in response to UNEP GC 25/5 mandate to continue the existing work under the Global Mercury Partnership particularly in the areas of reducing mercury in products and processes and raising awareness of mercury-free alternatives, reducing mercury supply and enhancing storage capacities, and providing information on sound management of mercury.

The overall objective of the meeting is to assess the scientific evidence available on use of dental restorative materials, including dental amalgam, and the implications of using alternatives to amalgam in dental restorative care. Specific objectives are:

- To assess the potential side effects and hazards to health of existing materials for restorative dental care
- To assess the feasibility (appropriateness, efficacy, and safety) of using dental restorative materials alternative to dental amalgam, particularly the potential for use in populations of countries around the world
- To address the cost implications of alternative dental restorative materials to the population and society, particularly relevant to the situation in low- and middle- income countries
- To discuss the environmental concerns of mercury pollution from the dental sector, and the effect and implications of occupational exposure from mercury to dental personnel
- To suggest principal strategies for further reduction in contamination of the environment from mercury due to dentistry

Attached is the provisional agenda, for your information (*See attached file: Agenda-22oct09.pdf*)

This meeting is step 1 of a 2 step approach to inform the intergovernmental negotiating committee that will elaborate a legally binding instrument for mercury. The meeting report in step 1 will feed into step 2 where a small Meeting of Interested Parties will be convened as soon as possible thereafter to interpret the findings in step 1. The step 2 meeting will focus on recommendations and will assist in formulating the operational guidelines. It will tackle specific issues such as the implementation of amalgam phase out and ban, possible reactions and compliance. Both meeting reports are envisaged to inform the INC process.

Rest assured, UNEP will inform you of outcomes of these meetings and will keep you updated with developments as regard addressing the challenge of the dental amalgam issue.

Thank you and we look forward to a continuing collaboration.

Best regards,
Desiree

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