MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON MERCURY MANAGEMENT AND DECONTAMINATION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE REGIONAL PLAN ON MERCURY (ALMADEN, 12-13 DECEMBER 2012)

1- Brief summary of the introductions and presentations regarding the state of play of mercury in the participant countries

2- Regional plan on mercury. Implications for the parties. Reporting elements

3- Relation of technical presentations *(All the presentations are available at the website www.cprac.org/almaden)*

4- List of participants

1- Brief summary of the introductions and presentations regarding the state of play of mercury in the participant countries

Enrique Villamore, CP/RAC Director, opened the workshop, pointing out and thanking MEDPOL colleagues for their collaboration in preparing this workshop. He also emphasised the leading role of MEDPOL in supporting the contracting parties to implement the Regional Plans adopted in the framework of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol. He thanked the Spanish Ministry of Environment and recognised the active role of Spain addressing the challenges of Mercury, especially in the process of negotiating the new global instrument for Mercury, and also thanked the National Technological Center for Mercury Decontamination (CTNDM) and his Director, Manuel Ramos, for hosting the workshop.

Ana Garcia, on behalf of the Ministry welcomed all the participants. Mercury was very linked to the history of Spain, specially the site of Almadén, and now Spain is very involved trying to find environmentally sound solutions for its management and actively participating in the negotiations of the new Convention. She highlighted the advantage of the Mediterranean Region to have a legally binding Plan on Mercury adopted in 2012 that contains many elements of the new forthcoming Convention.

Tatjana Hema from UNEP/MAP-MEDPOL highlighted the importance of the issue of Mercury, and of the provisions contained in the Regional Plan on Mercury of the LBS Protocol/Barcelona Convention, as well as the contribution of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) and Mediterranean region to the global agenda. She also said that depending on the results of the negotiation of the new Convention on Mercury, the Regional Plan may need to be updated or revised subject to decision by the Contracting parties. She explained that UNEP/MAP through CP/RAC and MEDPOL is joining forces with H2020 Capacity building Programme and Switch Med projects to support the implementation of the Regional Plan by the contracting parties.

Manuel Ramos, from the CTNDM, welcomed the participants to the Mercury Valley, literal meaning of “Valdeazogue”, the local name of the area, where mining operations ceased in 2001. Research activities started at that time and are currently being conducted in the CTNDM to find ESM solutions for metallic mercury and mercury containing wastes.

The meeting was chaired by Spain while Morocco was chaired as vice chair.

Frederic Gallo, from the RAC/CP presented the key points of the extensive study developed in 2010 “Diagnosis of Mercury in the Mediterranean countries". He highlighted the importance that all the Mediterranean countries should develop a National Plan on Mercury in order to put in place all the initiatives and commitments in order to reduce or eliminate the use of mercury and its industrial emissions. This exercise has been done until now in Algeria, Croatia, Morocco and Spain.

This was followed by short presentations about the state of play of Mercury by the representatives of the countries. All the presentations are available at the link www.cprac.org/almaden

(SPAIN) Ana Garcia, introduced the situation of Spain relating with each of the obligations of the Plan, delivered in form of table; in the left column the requirements coming from the Regional Plan, in the middle the state of compliance and the right column reflects activities or comments about the situation.

(CYPRUS) Christalla Nisiotou mentioned that there are no big mercury polluters in Cyprus and presented how the Ministry is monitoring mercury in ground waters, surface waters and Industry, and the different schemes put in place for waste management related with mercury.

(ISRAEL) Ilan Malester presented the situation of Israel with regard only to direct marine pollution. He pointed to the sludges coming from the Shafdan waste water treatment plant (Tel Aviv area) as the main mercury polluter in the marine environment. The depurated water is mainly reused in agriculture, but the sludges are currently dumped into the sea by pipe. There is an on-going project to treat the sludges for composting by 2015, after discarding the possibility of incineration. Another source of contamination was the chlor-alkali plant of EIL (Haifa bay) for PVC production is closed, and now is under risk assessment in order to decide the decontamination target levels. He mentioned also an existing fertilizer plant as source of pollution.

(MOROCCO) Mohammed Chaoui presented the Moroccan Plan for Mercury and other heavy metals. This Plan comprises an inventory of uses; the identification of known and potential sources for water, air and land; a health risk evaluation; and finally proposals for the prevention and reduction. With regard to air pollution, the major sources of mercury in Morocco are cement production and carbon power stations, and to water the rejects from chemical Laboratories (a very important source of pollution) and the only mercury cell chlorine

plant which exists in the country, which is located in Tétouan in the Mediterranean basin. With regard to soil contamination, the most important source of pollution are the discharges from the landfills. He presented also a summary of the proposals for prevention and reduction, which includes measures for the restriction of the marketing and use of mercury containing products and the switch to membrane of the chlor-alkali plant of Tetouan.

(GREECE) Ilias Mavroidis presented the state of play of Mercury in Greece, and the different controls and monitoring put in place by the Ministry of Environment. As industrial source of mercury, he presented data from the chlor-alkali plant of Thessaloniki. In the prevention field, he presented two systems for collection of lamps at national level. Regarding emissions from power production, there are emissions control technologies in place and mentioned the will to decrease the percentage of lignite and increase renewable sources in the energy mix of the country.

(AIGERIA) Farid Agouillal presented the Algerian legal framework for mercury and announced that in 2012 tenders were launched for the Decontamination and treatment of mercury wastes in the site of the mining complex of Azzaba (Wilaya of Skikda) with 1 million tons of mercurial waste. Currently the elimination of 2100 vases of mercury is under development.

(LEBANON) Samar Khalil presented the Lebanese legal framework for mercury, and the estimated sources of mercury per activity sector. With regard to Hospitals, she highlighted that 67% of Hospitals showed interest in phasing out mercury with financial assistance, and 17% without it. 40% of the dental clinics don't use amalgam, and 56% of these use trap and filters.

(BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA) Melisa Dzonlic presented the current situation in BiH. There is a single ELV for water discharges for all kind of industries in Bosnia, which is 10 micrograms per liter. With regard to air quality monitoring, there is no Hg monitoring in the monitoring networks. She presented the list of potential industrial polluting activities. The separate collection system for hazardous materials is not yet implemented in BiH, and there are no soil monitoring activities except on some specific projects.

(CROATIA) Biskerka Bastijancic-Kokic presented the legal regulations concerning mercury in Croatia, taking into account that the EU legislation on the matter will come into force the day of Croatia's accession to the EU. There are power plants, and a gas production industry in Molve which now has carbon filters. She mentioned that mercury use in laboratories is restricted and it is allowed only for scientific research, and dental fillings are restricted as well. A Chlor-alkali plant with mercury was closed. She also presented an annex of releases of mercury in 2010 according to the Register of the environmental pollutants.

(**ITALY**) Elena Romano exposed the mercury contamination on Italian marine coastal areas due to industrial and mining activities. She explained the role of ISPRA on marine environment and presented the list of marine relevance contaminated sites, of which 3 –

Orbetello, Laguna di Grado e Marano, and Priolo (Sicily Island)- are polluted by chlor-alkali plants and/or mining activities. She explained with detail the situation and monitoring data ineach of the three sites. It should be highlighted the case of Priolo (Augusta Harbor, a natural bay that is 8 km long and 4 km wide, located in the Augusta Gulf on the eastern coast of Sicily Island), where 500 tons of mercury from chlor-alkali plant where directly discharged into the sea. The harbour is strongly polluted also from current industrial activities and sediments have very high concentration, at varying depth, of mercury, Hydrocarbons, Hexachlorobenzene (HCB), Polychlorobyphenils (PCB), dioxins and furans. This pollution may affect the levels of Mercury in the entire Mediterranean basin, due to sediment mobilization.

2- **REGIONAL PLAN ON MERCURY. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PARTIES. REPORTING ELEMENTS.**

Tatjana Hema informed that 17 out of the 22 contracting parties of the Barcelona Convention (those who have ratified the LBS Protocol) are bound to comply with the measures provided for under the Regional Plan, thereforth their compliance will be checked.

The MEDPOL Focal Points of each country, as responsibles to ensure the national coordination of the LBS Protocol implementation, will be in charge to report to the Secretariat on measures taken to implement the Regional Plan. She pointed also that as there are many BAT and BEPs measures required by the Regional Plans it is very important that the MEDPOL Focal Points and CP/RAC Focal Points work together for the completion of the Report. The report should be submitted on biannual basis unless it was provided otherwise in the regional plan.

The meeting reviewed a document containing the reporting requirements based on the Regional plan provisions as well as some proposals regarding possible elements for establishing a reporting format of the Regional Plan. (Document available at http://www.cprac.org/sites/default/files/otherfiles/mercury_regional_planreportingrequirements_and_elements_2.pdf) This proposal will be submitted to the next MEDPOL Focal Points meeting in late spring 2013.

With regard to the measures of the Regional Plan whose implementation shall to be reported by 2013, the countries may provide information without a specified format in the framework of reporting implementation of Articles 5 and 15 of the LBS Protocol. The meeting of the MEDPOL and CPRAC Focal Points could be used for this purpose.

With regard to the inventory of contaminated sites (point 20 of the measures), it was clarified that the list with relevant information must be submitted by January 2013 as specified in the Regional Plan. It was pointed out that the deadline for the implementation of the environmentally management measures for each polluted site is 2015. Therefore the countries should complete the list as soon as possible.

Following the discussions by the meeting the following clarifications were made with regard to potential reporting elements

1- List of measures/ obligations of the Parties, according to the Regional Plan. This may imply for some countries actions to enact new and or update existing Legislation and regulation, as suggested in column 5 of the proposed table.

2- Expected targets to be achieved, as consequence of the effective implementation of the measures, are legally binding or indicative. The 50 micrograms per litre for the industrial sector by 2015 is legally binding. The target value of 5 micrograms per litre is not legally binding already, because it may be revised in 2015.

3- Implementation timetable. The Regional Plan provides for measures/actions to be implemented in 2013, 2015 and 2020 as specified in the table

4- With regard to Monitoring (measure number 23), the countries shall report once every two years, but the monitoring data should cover both years.

5- Suggested reporting elements and indicators presented in column 5 of the tables were in principle agreed to be included in the reporting format

6- National implementation reports should be using to the extent possible the reporting cycle established by the Parties in the framework of the LBS Protocol.

Following a comment about the mercury coming from the decommissioned chlor-alkali plants, It was clarified that the Secretariat considers that chlor-alkali plants have important quantities of mercury, and the measure was to progressively phase out its availability in the market, so it has to be disposed in an ESM way and not to re-enter the market. Also, as it is predicted that the uses for which mercury is still allowed become more and more less, the quantities still needed by the market can come from the recycling of products containing mercury, like batteries and lamps.

Tatiana Hema concluded by reminding that is very important that the countries submit at least the list of contaminated sites, locations, surface area, level of pollution, etc. to the Secretariat in January 2013. However, in case a country would need more time or support, it should contact and inform the Secretariat as soon as possible.

Finally, Mohammed Chaoui from Morocco reminded that is countries should be provided with the technical and finance assistance for the preparation and implementation of the Regional and National Plans, and that actions to avoid the direct pollution of the sea should be a priority. Also he mentioned that maybe the Regional Plan has to be revised with the new mercury Convention. Therefore priorities should be put on activities which are polluting directly the sea.

The meeting requested the secretariat to draft the minutes and circulate them by email for feedback and adoption.

The meeting thanked the Secretariat (CP/RAC in particular and MEDPOL for its contribution) for the organization of this very useful workshop. The participants confirmed that they will send the information on the list of the mercury contaminated sites by January 2013 where appropriate.

The meeting was closed by the chairman on 13 December 2012 at 13:00.

3- **List of technical presentations. All the presentations are available at the link www.cprac.org/almaden**.

- Presentation of the National Technological Center for Mercury Decontamination: Objectives and activities - Mrs. Ana Garcia. Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Affairs

-Technical presentation of the Laboratories of the CTNDM: capabilities and current activities. Mrs. Ana Conde. National Technological Center for Mercury Decontamination (CTNDM)

-Spanish technological developments for an environmentally sound management and stabilization of mercury and mercury containing wastes. Mr. Manuel Ramos. National Technological Center for Mercury Decontamination (CTNDM)

-ECOPILAS: An Integrated Management System for batteries collection and recycling. Mrs. Patricia Sánchez.

-AMBILAMP: An Integrated Management System for lamps collection and recycling. Mr. Alberto Rodriguez AMBILAMP

-EU Legislation on exports/storage/disposal of Mercury. Mr. Oscar González Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Affairs

-Decommission planning and management in the chlor-alkali industry. Mr. Antonio Caprino, SOLVAY Martorell

-Soil decontamination. Legal instruments and management process. Mr. Joan Bartoll. Catalan Waste Agency.

-Decontamination works at the Flix dam on the Ebro river. Mr. Marc Pujols. ACUAMED

-A case study of remediation in a mining/industrial area: Almadén Mine restoration. Mr. Javier Carrasco CTNDM

-Mercury contamination on Italian marine coastal areas due to industrial and mining activities. Mrs. Elena Romano, Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e Ricerca Ambientale-State of play of the global legally binding instrument on mercury. Mrs. Ana Garcia. Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Affairs.

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Regional Activity Centre for Cleaner Production

Almadén Meeting, 12-13 December 2012

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