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## **Addressee: UNEP, ECOSOC**

**Paragraph #50 Session #2 (2003)**

### **Full Text**

The Forum recommends that the United Nations Environment Programme report on the feasibility of developing mechanisms for indigenous peoples to participate in the persistent organic pollutants global monitoring programme's evaluation process under the Stockholm Convention. The Forum also welcomes the key findings of the UNEP global mercury assessment, and recommends that the Economic and Social Council recommend that UNEP take immediate action on mercury contamination and work towards initiating a global legally binding instrument and other measures at the next UNEP Governing Council meeting of environmental ministers, to be held in the Republic of Korea in 2005.

### **Comments**

UNEP reports the following: During the ninth special session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, held in Dubai in February 2006, the International Conference on Chemical Management adopted the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. This global initiative is aimed at making chemicals safer for humans and the planet and covers risk assessments of chemicals and harmonized labelling up to tackling obsolete and stockpiled products. Over 100 environment and health ministers agreed to meet the commitment made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. Among the institutions or networks working towards the elimination of pollutants is the International Persistent Organic Pollutant Elimination Network (IPEN). The mission of IPEN is to work for the global elimination of persistent organic pollutants, on an expedited

yet socially equitable basis. UNEP has a specific mercury programme based in the Chemicals Branch of the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics. In its decision 21/5, the UNEP Governing Council invited UNEP to undertake a global assessment of mercury and its compounds to be presented to the Governing Council at its session in February 2003. The global mercury assessment report was published in December 2002. At its twenty-fourth regular session, in February 2007, the Governing Council recognized that efforts to reduce risks from mercury were not sufficient to address the global challenges posed by mercury and concluded that further long-term international action is required. In decision 24/3, it called for a review and assessment of the options of enhanced voluntary measures and new or existing international legal instruments in order to make progress in addressing this issue. Two major areas of work set out in the decision comprise the strengthening of the UNEP mercury programme partnerships and the establishment of an ad hoc open ended working group of Governments, regional economic integration organizations and stakeholder representatives to review and assess options for enhanced voluntary measures and new or existing international legal instruments. The open-ended working group met in November 2007 and will provide a progress report and a further report to the twenty-fifth session of the UNEP Governing Council (see <http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/default.htm>).

## **Area of Work**

Environment