

Research and inventory of mercury in Kazakhstan

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In September of 2017 was finished Project of GEF, UNDP and government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which name is «National implementation plan update, integration of POPs into national planning and promoting sound healthcare waste management in Kazakhstan». Project duration was from 2014 to 2017.

The objective of the project was reducing the releases of unintentionally produced persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and other globally harmful pollutants into the environment by promoting sound healthcare waste management in Kazakhstan and to assist the country in implementing its relevant obligations under the Stockholm Convention.

Research of mercury pollution it was a one of components of this project. By team of project has been carried out the first stage of the mercury inventory. Experts determined 570 tons of mercury in Kazakhstan and made the recommendation for government. Also, in frames of this project 18 000 mercury thermometers have been replaced by electronic ones in the framework of the project at all state-run medical institutions of cities of Ust-Kamenogorsk, Semey, Kostanay as well as Astana and also at medical centers of high schools, colleges and kindergardens of the Astana City, was conducted research for assessment the mercury pollution in the pilot regions (air, soil, water, fish, human body).

Next two years UNDP will implement project which name is «Minamata Initial Assessment for Kazakhstan». The Project aims to support the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan in conducting the Initial Mercury Assessment, which will enable the country to identify national requirements and needs for the ratification of the Minamata Convention and to provide a basis for further work on the implementation of the Minamata Convention.

As it is known throughout the world community, the management of mercury and other hazardous chemicals is currently a major problem in the field of chemical safety. Kazakhstan is a party to a number of multilateral environmental agreements governing the rational management, treatment and disposal of hazardous chemicals and wastes, including Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. Taking into account the global transfer of mercury in the environment, the presence of «historical» mercury polluted areas in Kazakhstan, which require further demercurization measures, Kazakhstan is on the way to make a decision to ratify the Minamata Convention. The Minamata Convention is included in the long-term plan for concluding international treaties of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

However, the Government is faced with a lack of understanding of the mercury situation in the country, as well as an assessment of the efforts required to fulfill all the obligations under the convention.

In frames of this project will conduct second stage of mercury inventory based on UNEP Toolkit for identification and quantification of mercury releases, will organized consultations with government, industrialists and other stakeholders.