



# Reducing the Risk from Mercury in North America

A Project of the Sound Management of Chemicals Working Group

CEC Council Session - 24 June 2009



cec.org

## Sound Management of Chemicals Working Group

The Sound Management of Chemicals Working Group (SMOC WG) was established in 1995 to reduce the risks of toxic chemicals to human health and the environment in North America.

- **Chemical sector investment in North America: more that \$11 billion in next 2 years**
- **Past accomplishments include reduction or elimination of the use of chemicals of mutual concern such as DDT, PCBs and chlordane**

## In 2008, a Renewed Strategic Direction

Supports parties in meeting national commitments and fulfilling international obligations under WSSD 2020, SAICM and multi-lateral environmental agreements

- Establish a foundation for chemicals management across North America
- Develop and implement a sustainable regional approach for monitoring toxic substances in humans and the environment
- Reduce the risk from chemicals of mutual concern in North America
- Improve environmental performance of sectors

# Mercury: Recent Accomplishments

A toxic metal dispersed globally by air and water currents and which accumulates in humans through food consumption, most notably in the North.

## Accomplishments and results of the past two years:

### **Mexican Mercury Market Report Study**

- Identified and prioritized sources of mercury in the marketplace
- Made concrete recommendations for a path forward for reducing consumption of mercury and handling supply.

### **Mercury Reductions in the Health Care Sector**

- Reduced use of mercury in hospitals (e.g. thermometers)

## Accomplishments and results of the past two years (continued)

### **Tri-national Maternal Blood Monitoring**

- Provided comparable monitoring data on mercury in maternal blood across North America (report in 2009)
- Built capacity for assessment of contaminant levels in blood

### **Lake Zapotlan Study**

- Identified human sewage as the major source of mercury in the lake

### **Case study for UN Mercury Programme**

- Base for the upcoming negotiations

## Benefits to the North American environment

- **Reduced mercury use, release and exposure**
- **Provided information for decision makers**
  - e.g., results from monitoring and assessment activities
- **Increased data comparability, reliability and availability**
- **Improved health of citizens in the three countries**
- **Improved competitiveness through regional conformity**
- **Demonstrated North American leadership in international fora**
  - UNEP, GRULAC, SAICM

Project for  
the Sound Management of Chemicals



Thank you  
Gracias  
Merci