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AUC claims bronze award of 'mercury negotiators'

Addis Ababa – 29 June 2012 – During the 4th Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) meeting (INC4) that took place in Punte del Este, Uruguay from 25-28 June 2012, the 'mercury club' of the Mercury Negotiators held an award ceremony on 27 June, where the African Union Commission, (AUC) was given a bronze award in recognition of its contributions to the negotiating process.

It is a brief ceremony, where supporters of the mercury negotiations are given a certificate signed jointly by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) Executive Director and Minister Fernando Lugris, the Chair of the INC. Patrick Aplogan, the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), Account Assistant, received the award on behalf of the AUC.

The INC for Mercury was established by a UNEP Governing Council Decision with the mandate to prepare a global legally binding instrument on Mercury. This legally binding instrument would help control the use and handling of mercury and mercury compounds. The instrument would hopefully be broad in scope to include issues of technology transfer, low cost alternatives, producer responsibility and capacity building which would be beneficial to Africa. Mercury and its compounds are highly toxic substance which can have adverse effects on human health and the environment.

The MEAs Project is implementing inter-alia activities related to supporting African Negotiators, including those of Mercury INC. In September 2011, the MEAs Project in collaboration with UNEP Chemicals and the Burkina Faso Government held training for these negotiators in Ouagadougou. The MEAs Project further supported the negotiators in October/November 2011 by providing them legal, policy and economic expertise to strengthen the core group of negotiators at the pre-INC 3. The same support is being granted them in Uruguay for the Mercury INC 4 held from 25-28 June 2012.

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