



PROVIDED WITH SUPPORT FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION

ACP MEAs



THE ROLE OF ACP- AU MEAS PROJECT

The ACP-AU MEAs project has over the years provided both catalytic and substantive roles in supporting the region. It has been catalytic as it has triggered Africa to become more proactive in representing its own interests in global negotiating fora. Since the second session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Mercury, the project has helped in increasing the negotiating capacity of the African region by providing advisors to the group of experts. For the past three to four years, the project has sponsored policy, legal and financial experts that have profound experience in international chemicals negotiations. Through this support Africa is able to make a unified voice in the run up to the adoption of the Minamata Convention and towards its ratification. The project has helped in bridging communication barriers between francophone and Anglophone African countries by providing translation services during the usual regional coordination meetings taking place at the margins of intensive, daily negotiations. By so doing it has set an example for emulation by other multilateral negotiation events.

In the intersession between the third and fourth intergovernmental negotiation committee meeting of the Minamata Convention, the MEAs project has provided a skills building training in Burkina Faso. This event took place in 2012 and has been instrumental in raising the awareness level of key expert negotiators of African countries.

The support has resulted in the adoption of a strong convention reflective of Africa's aspirations in the sound management of Mercury and Mercury products. The Convention now supports an action plan for phasing out the use of Mercury in many manufacturing processes including Artisanal and Small Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) and dental amalgam. One of African advisors sponsored by the project – Wondwossen Sintayehu - has been named "Public Official of the Year for 2013" by a global network of physicians working actively towards phasing down Mercury use in dentistry, and has received an award in January 2013 at the fifth Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland.

