

Brazil Mercury Stewardship Workshop Report
WCC - Chlorosur Mercury Workshop
Held at São Paulo/Brazil, on 9 & 10 September, 2003

Available via UNEP at: <http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/GC-23-responses/NGO/WCC-attachment1-Capacity%20building%20workshops%200107041.pdf>

Despite sufficient understanding of mercury, further activities are needed to improve the common understanding and coordination in the use of elemental mercury in chlor-alkali production. So, the main objective of the first WCC Mercury Workshop held in São Paulo/Brazil, on September 9 & 10, 2003, with the local support of Chlorosur, was to present to managers and technical representatives from chlor-alkali producers in the Latin America region and abroad, as well as to environment regulators, the academia and others the best practices adopted in the chlor-alkali sector worldwide.

Besides the local experts, we had the collaboration of representatives from Euro Chlor and the Chlorine Institute discussing scientific and technical issues of mercury including waste management and remediation. Also, the program included visit to a chlor-alkali facility located in Cubatão, nearby São Paulo - Carbochloro S/A Industrias Químicas – company owned 50% by Occidental and 50% by the Brazilian group UNIPAR. During the visit participants could verify how the sector, and Carbochloro in particular, care and is continuously looking new techniques and knowledge that allow tighter mercury stewardship in keeping with the values of Responsible Care. Although legislation is a key component of most initiatives, the workshop made clear the chlor-alkali sector is taking the lead in regulating itself, on an international basis.

Chlor-alkali production using mercury cells is an anthropogenic process that mobilises the product and vary between nations and regions - the sharing of information allows implementation of best practices and techniques to improve reduction on consumption by controlling release through end-of-pipe controls on waste management. The workshop improved the understanding and international coordination on the use of mercury within the chlor-alkali sector. It is in line with the additional efforts needed, besides national legislations, to develop and introduce safer techniques and practices.

The chlor-alkali industry makes products that confer enormous value to society. Its factories support not only its own workers, but also many other industries and civic purposes. Each factory is unique in size, customers, costs, age, equipment variations, operational methods, government regulations. Sharing mercury stewardship lessons is not costly and promoting best practices will make chlor-alkali industry to earn goodwill. The WCC workshop was structure in such way that participants attending it could return home and teach others.

In concluding, we can say that there are many people in developing countries needing help. It has not been easy to get this type of support the workshop provided. We are

living in an ever-more connected world. So, the recommendation is for the chlor-alkali sector to continue its pioneer effort in spreading the word under the WCC umbrella. The cooperation of partners like Euro Chlor, the Chlorine Institute, Clorosur and other sister entities is essential. When technical and financial resources are scarce to everybody the workshop proved to be a well spent investment.

Martim A. Penna
Executive Director - Clorosur/Abiclor
Sao Paulo, Brazil