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**Strategic Approach  
to International  
Chemicals Management**

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**Open-ended Working Group of the International Conference  
on Chemicals Management**

**Third meeting**

Montevideo, 2–4 April 2019

Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda\*

**Progress towards the achievement of the 2020 overall  
objective of the sound management of chemicals: progress  
report for the period 2014-2106**

## **Cooperation and coordination between the secretariat of the Minamata and the Strategic Approach**

### **Note by the Secretariat**

The secretariat has the honour to circulate, in the annex to the present note, information on activities under the Minamata Convention on Mercury as of 31 March 2019. The information has been submitted by the secretariat of the Minamata Convention. The present note, including its annex, has not been formally edited by the secretariat.

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\* SAICM/OEWG.3/1.

## Annex

### Update on the Minamata Convention on Mercury

#### I. Objective

1. The objective of the Minamata Convention on Mercury is to protect the human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. Its provisions cover the entire life cycle of mercury, including supply, trade, mercury-added products, industrial processes using mercury, artisanal and small-scale gold mining, emissions to air, releases to land and water, interim storage, waste and contaminated sites.

#### II. Entry into force of the Convention

2. The Convention was adopted at the Conference of Plenipotentiaries held on 10 and 11 October 2013, and entered into force on 16 August 2017, the 90<sup>th</sup> day after the date of deposit of the 50<sup>th</sup> instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. As of 31 March 2018, 107 governments and one regional economic integration organization have submitted such instrument.

#### III. First meeting of the Conference of the Parties

3. The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties was held in Geneva, Switzerland from 24 to 29 September 2017. The Conference elected Mr. Marc Chardonens, Switzerland, as president, and representatives of Antigua and Barbuda, Czech Republic, Gabon, Japan, Jordan, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, Sweden and Zambia as vice-presidents, to serve at its first meeting, during the intersessional period and at its second meeting. The Conference adopted the following 21 decisions, as attached to its report UNEP/MC/COP.1/29.

- MC-1/1: Rules of procedure
- MC-1/2: Guidance in relation to mercury supply sources and trade
- MC-1/3: Guidance in relation to mercury supply sources and trade in relation to certification
- MC-1/4: Guidance in relation to mercury emissions
- MC-1/5: Guidance to the Global Environment Facility
- MC-1/6: Specific international programme to support capacity-building and technical assistance
- MC-1/7: Membership of the implementation and compliance committee as referred to in paragraph 3 of article 15
- MC-1/8: Timing and format of reporting by the parties
- MC-1/9: Establishment of arrangements in regard to effectiveness evaluation
- MC-1/10: Financial rules for the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury and any of its subsidiary bodies, as well as financial provisions governing the functioning of the secretariat
- MC-1/11: Secretariat
- MC-1/12: Formats to be used in registering for an exemption from the phase-out dates listed in Annex A and Annex B and for the register of exemptions
- MC-1/13: Guidance on the preparation of national action plans for artisanal and small-scale gold mining
- MC-1/14: Mercury emissions related to the open burning of waste
- MC-1/15: Programme of work of the secretariat and proposed budget for the biennium 2018–2019
- MC-1/16: Guidance in relation to mercury emissions
- MC-1/17: Guidance in relation to mercury releases

- MC-1/18: Draft guidelines on the interim storage of mercury and mercury compounds referred to in paragraph 3 of article 10
- MC-1/19 : Mercury waste
- MC-1/20: Guidance on the management of contaminated sites
- MC 1/21:Capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer on the Minamata Convention on Mercury

4. In preparation for the first meeting of the Conference, a meeting of the bureau of the intergovernmental negotiating committee on mercury established pursuant to United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council decision 25/5 was convened in July 2017. Regional consultations for the African, Asia-Pacific, Central and Eastern European and Central Asian, and Latin American and the Caribbean regions were also convened in July 2017.

## **IV. Intersessional work between the first and second Conferences of the Parties**

### **Technical work**

5. The Conference of the Parties at its first meeting decided to seek input from governments and a range of other stakeholders on a number of issues.

6. Article 10 of the Convention provides that the Conference of the Parties shall adopt guidelines on the environmentally sound interim storage of mercury and mercury compounds other than waste mercury, taking into account any relevant guidelines developed under the Basel Convention and other relevant guidance. As requested by the Conference of the Parties in its decision MC-1/18, the secretariat revised the draft guidelines submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its first meeting, by seeking technical input from relevant experts and inviting comments from parties and other stakeholders, and submitted the draft to the Conference of the Parties at its second meeting.

7. Article 11 of the Convention defines mercury wastes as waste consisting of, containing or contaminated with mercury or mercury compounds in a quantity above the relevant thresholds defined by the Conference of the Parties, in collaboration with the relevant bodies of the Basel Convention in a harmonized manner. As requested by the Conference of the Parties in its decision MC-1/19, the secretariat compiled developed a report on the types of mercury waste and priorities and approaches for establishing the thresholds, by calling for submissions from experts nominated by parties and other stakeholders, and submitted the report to the Conference of the Parties at its second meeting.

8. Article 12 of the Convention provides that the Conference of the Parties shall adopt guidance on managing contaminated sites. As requested by the Conference of the Parties in its decision MC-1/20, the secretariat developed a draft guidance document by drawing on existing information and inviting comments from experts nominated by parties and other stakeholders, and submitted the draft to the Conference of the Parties at its second meeting.

9. Article 22 of the Convention provides that the Conference of the Parties shall, at its first meeting, initiate the establishment of arrangements for providing itself with comparable monitoring data on mercury and mercury compounds, for evaluating the effectiveness of the Convention. As requested by the Conference of the Parties in its decision MC-1/9, an ad hoc expert group on effectiveness evaluation was established and met in Ottawa, Canada, from 5 to 9 March 2018. The expert group produced a draft report, and submitted it to the Conference of the Parties at its second meeting.

### **Specific international programme**

10. Article 13 of the Convention defines a mechanism for the provision of adequate, predictable and timely financial resources, which includes the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund and a specific international programme to support capacity building and technical assistance. Conference of the Parties adopted guidance on the operations of the specific international programme in its decision MC-1/6. Following this decision, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme established a specific trust fund for the specific international programme. In 2018, 1,284,837 United States dollars was made available in the trust fund, with contributions from Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

11. A Governing Board consisting of 10 members was established to oversee and implement the guidance of the Conference of the Parties, including decision-making on projects and project management. The Governing Board met in Geneva, Switzerland, on 15 and 16 May 2018, and considered the application, screening and appraisal process for the programme. The secretariat launched the first round of application on 5 June 2018, with a deadline for submission of applications by 31 August 2018. A total of 19 applications were received from 18 parties. The Governing Board had its second meeting in Oslo, Norway, 2 and 3 October 2018, reviewed the applications submitted. The Board selected the following five projects to be funded by the programme:

- Argentina: Capacity building programme for the implementation of the Minamata Convention
- Armenia: Strengthening capacity to promote phasing-out of mercury-added products (lamps) in Armenia
- Benin: Improvement of management framework for mercury-containing products and wastes
- Islamic Republic of Iran: Implementing of Minamata Convention on Mercury - management in chlor-alkali plants in the petrochemical industry
- Lesotho: Strengthening institutional capacity in the development of a phase-out and phase down strategy for mercury-added products in Lesotho

### **Implementation and Compliance Committee**

12. Article 15 of the Convention establishes an Implementation and Compliance Committee as a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties, to promote implementation of, and review compliance with, all provisions of the Convention. The Committee, consisting of 15 members elected by the Conference of the Parties at its first meeting, met in Geneva on 29 and 30 May 2018. The meeting was preceded by an information-sharing session on experiences from implementation and compliance mechanisms under other multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), the Basel Convention and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The Committee adopted its rules of procedure.

## **V. Second meeting of the Conference of the Parties**

13. The second meeting of the Conference of the Parties was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 19 to 23 November 2018. The Conference adopted the following 11 decisions, as attached to its report UNEP/MC/COP.2/19.

- MC-2/1: Secretariat
- MC-2/2: Mercury waste thresholds
- MC-2/3: Releases
- MC-2/4: Rules of procedure for the Implementation and Compliance Committee of the Minamata Convention on Mercury
- MC-2/5: Time and venue of the third and subsequent meetings of the Conference of the Parties
- MC-2/6: Environmentally sound interim storage of mercury other than waste mercury
- MC-2/7: Cooperation between the secretariat of the Minamata Convention and the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions
- MC-2/8: Guidance on the management of sites contaminated by mercury and mercury compounds
- MC-2/9: Harmonized System Codes
- MC-2/10: Effectiveness evaluation
- MC-2/11: Article 14 – Capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer
- MC-2/12: Update on the budget for 2019

14. The Conference elected Mr. David Kapindula, Zambia, as president, and representatives of Canada, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Gabon, Guyana, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Republic of Moldova and Sweden as vice-presidents, to serve during the intersessional period and at its third meeting.

15. In preparation for the second meeting of the Conference, the bureau had two teleconferences in December 2017 and April 2018, and met in Geneva, Switzerland, on 13 and 14 September 2018. Regional consultations for the African, Asia-Pacific, Central and Eastern European and Central Asian, and Latin American and the Caribbean regions were also convened in October 2018.

## **VI. Intersessional work between the second and third Conference of the Parties**

### **Bureau meetings**

16. The bureau of the Conference of the Parties had its first teleconference on 29 January 2019. It plans face-to-face meetings on 26 April and in September 2019.

### **Technical work**

17. Article 9 of the Convention provides that the Conference of the Parties shall, as soon as practicable, adopt guidance on best available techniques and best environmental practices and the methodologies for preparing inventory of releases of mercury and mercury compounds to land and water from relevant point sources not addressed in other provisions of the Convention. As requested by the Conference of the Parties in its decision MC-2/3, A group of technical experts was established to identify significant point sources and to develop a roadmap and structure for the development of guidance on inventory. The group will work electronically.

18. On mercury waste thresholds, as requested by the Conference of the Parties in its decision MC-2/2, a group of technical experts was established to work on technical matters including the listing of mercury waste and the development of relevant approaches and methodologies for establishing thresholds for waste contaminated with mercury and mercury compounds. The group will meet in Osaka, Japan from 27 to 29 May 2019.

19. On the management of contaminated sites, as requested by the Conference of the Parties in its decision MC-2/8, the secretariat will develop a revised draft guidance taking into account the submissions from parties and other stakeholders and the comments from experts, for the consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting.

20. On effectiveness evaluation, as requested by the Conference of the Parties in its decision MC-2/10, the ad-hoc technical expert group will develop a report for the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties describing a draft effectiveness evaluation framework, proposed methodology and schedule for the evaluation, technical information on monitoring, and draft terms of reference for the effectiveness evaluation committee and the global monitoring arrangements. The group will meet in Geneva, Switzerland, from 8 to 12 April.

### **Specific international programme**

21. The Governing Board of the specific international programme held its third meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, on 14 and 15 February 2019, and agreed to open the second round of application. The round started on 5 March 2019, inviting eligible parties to submit applications for project funding between 50,000 and 250,000 United States dollars. Applications have to reach the secretariat by 14 June 2019. As of 14 March 2019, 2,178,617 United States dollars is available for the operation of the programme in 2019.

22. The Governing Board will meet again on 18 and 19 to review the applications and select the projects to be funded.

### **Implementation and Compliance Committee**

23. The Implementation and Compliance Committee will meet in Geneva, Switzerland, on 3 and 4 June 2019.

## **VII. Other activities of the secretariat**

24. In addition to its work in support of the Conference of the Parties, the secretariat has supported activities at the national and regional levels to facilitate the ratification and early implementation of the Minamata Convention. Such activities include a training webinar on the mercury trade and the Minamata Convention in the Latin American and Caribbean region, held on 27 June 2018, and a support to a seminar and a workshop on the implementation of the Convention held in Tehran, the Islamic Republic of Iran, from 25 to 27 February.

25. The Executive Secretary and other staff of the secretariat participated in a number of relevant meetings including the meetings of the United Nations Environment Assembly, World Health Assembly, Global Environment Facility Assembly, and other relevant conventions.

26. The secretariat facilitates the information exchange and raises public awareness on the Convention through publications and website (<http://www.mercuryconvention.org>). The website provides information such as official documents including relevant guidance and formats, a database of projects for capacity-building and technical assistance, and publicity materials.

## **VIII. Status of Contributions to the Minamata Convention**

27. The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in decision MC-1/15 on the programme of work of the secretariat and budget for the biennium 2018–2019, approved activities through the General Trust Fund amounting to USD 3,916,524 for 2018, and USD 3,843,074 for 2019. As of 22 February 2019, USD 3,110,825 was received for 2018, and USD 256,287 for 2019.

28. The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties further, in decision MC-1/15 on the programme of work of the secretariat and budget for the biennium 2018–2019, approved activities through the Special Trust Fund amounting to USD 3,192,250 for 2018 and USD 4,014,890 for 2019. As of 22 February 2019, USD 1,303,467 for 2018 has been received, and USD 721,429 has been pledged or received for 2019.

29. Contributors to the Special Trust Fund for 2018 and 2019 are: Austria, the European Union, Finland, France, Japan, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

30. Contributors to the Specific Trust Fund that supports the Specific International Programme in 2018 are: Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. Contributors for 2009 thus far include: Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States.

## **IX. Cooperation in the chemicals and waste cluster**

31. The secretariat, in performing its functions, cooperates with the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions and Chemicals and Health Branch and other part of the United Nations Environment Programme. A task force consisting of relevant officials was established to enhance cooperation between the two secretariat and the Chemicals and Health Branch, as well as another task force on the post-2020 strategic approach to chemicals management. Cooperation and coordination are also enhanced through the participation in the Global Environment Facility's chemicals task force, the activities of the Inter-Organization Programme on the Sound Management of Chemicals, the Global Mercury Partnership, and the InforMEA initiative on access to information on multilateral environmental agreements. A number of events have been convened jointly, including the briefing sessions to the Geneva permanent missions facilitated by the Geneva Environment Network and regional meetings in preparation for the conferences of parties. Both secretariats cooperate on administrative procedures such as small-scale funding agreements. Staff of both secretariats and the Chemicals and Health Branch provide substantial and logistic support to each other's meetings, including the conferences of the parties. A number of Basel and Stockholm convention regional centres have been involved in capacity building and information sharing activities on the Minamata Convention.

32. Both secretariats and the Chemicals and Health Branch also cooperates on policy and technical matters. The secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions were invited to the meetings of the Implementation and Compliance Committee and the ad-hoc technical expert group on effectiveness evaluation. They are also involved in technical work on mercury releases, mercury waste and contaminated sites. Both secretariats and the Chemicals and Health Branch contribute to the implementation of the special programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and

the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, by appraising the proposals and participating in the meetings of its Executive Board.

## **X. Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management**

33. At the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties, it was noted that it was important that the Conference of the Parties actively follow and contribute to the discussions on the sound management of chemicals and wastes beyond 2020, in order to consider a new enabling multilateral framework for all relevant organisations active on the sound management of chemicals and waste, and also that mercury is adequately reflected within that future agenda.

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