



SUMMARY OF THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE TO PREPARE A GLOBAL LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT ON MERCURY: 10-15 MARCH 2016

The seventh session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to Prepare a Global Legally Binding Instrument on Mercury (INC7) convened from 10-15 March 2016 in Jordan. Over 300 participants attended the session, representing 103 governments, in addition to many non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations.

Following regional group consultations and technical briefings on Wednesday, 9 March, delegates resumed negotiations on work to prepare for entry into force of the Minamata Convention and the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP1). Issues under consideration at INC7 included, *inter alia*: procedures for export and import of mercury; operation of the financial mechanism; and draft rules of procedure and draft financial rules for the COP. Delegates also considered guidance on a range of issues, including on identification of stocks of mercury and mercury compounds and sources of supply, and best available techniques and best environmental practice for controlling emissions.

INC7 was the second of two negotiating sessions planned for the interim period between the adoption of the Minamata Convention and COP1. Key outcomes from the meeting include provisional adoption of technical guidance documents related to emissions and on the identification of individual stocks of mercury and mercury compounds. INC7 also forwarded to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council a Memorandum of Understanding between the Minamata Convention and the GEF Council, as well as its proposed guidance to the GEF on financing and activities related to implementation of the Convention.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GLOBAL ISSUE OF MERCURY

Mercury is a heavy metal that is widespread and persistent in the environment. It is a naturally occurring element and can be released into the air and water through weathering of rock

containing mercury ore or through human activities such as industrial processes, mining, deforestation, waste incineration and burning of fossil fuels. Mercury can also be released from a number of mercury-containing products, including dental amalgam, electrical applications (e.g. switches and fluorescent lamps), laboratory and medical instruments (e.g. clinical thermometers and barometers), batteries, seed dressings, antiseptic and antibacterial creams, and skin-lightening creams. Mercury exposure can affect fetal neurological development and has been linked to lowered fertility, brain and nerve damage, and heart disease in adults who have high levels of mercury in their blood.

24TH SESSION OF THE UNEP GC/GMEF: In February 2007, the UN Environment Programme's Governing Council/ Global Ministerial Environment Forum (UNEP GC/GMEF) discussed the issue of mercury extensively. Participants' preferences for international cooperation on mercury ranged from starting a negotiating process for a legally binding instrument, to incorporating mercury into existing agreements, or concentrating on voluntary actions, especially through partnerships. Delegates agreed in Decision 24/3 IV that a "two-track" approach could take forward actions on mercury, while keeping open the path to a binding instrument in the future. The UNEP Executive Director was requested to prepare a report on mercury emissions and to strengthen the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership. An *ad hoc* open-ended working group (OEWG) of government and stakeholder representatives was established to

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review and assess options for enhanced voluntary measures and new or existing international legal instruments for addressing the global challenges posed by mercury.

OEWG ON MERCURY: The first meeting of the OEWG to Review and Assess Measures to Address the Global Issue of Mercury was held from 12-16 November 2007 in Bangkok, Thailand. The OEWG discussed options for enhanced voluntary measures, and new or existing international legal instruments on mercury. The second meeting of the OEWG on mercury convened in Nairobi, Kenya, from 6-10 October 2008. The OEWG discussed: elements to be addressed by a mercury framework; the type of framework to be used; and the capacity-building, financial and technical support required to deliver on the identified elements. Delegates agreed on one legally binding option and three voluntary options for consideration by the UNEP GC.

25TH SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING

COUNCIL/GMEF: UNEP GC-25/GMEF took place from 16-20 February 2009 in Nairobi, Kenya. Decision GC 25/5 agreed to further international action consisting of the elaboration of a legally binding instrument on mercury, which could include both binding and voluntary approaches, together with interim activities, to reduce risks to human health and the environment. It also requested the Executive Director to convene an OEWG meeting in 2009, and an INC commencing its deliberations in 2010, with the goal of completing its work by GC-27/GMEF in February 2013. Agreement could not be reached on “leaving the door open” to consider other heavy metals, but the decision recognized that the mandate of the INC may be supplemented by future GC decisions.

AD HOC OEWG TO PREPARE FOR THE INC ON MERCURY: This meeting convened from 19-23 October 2009 in Bangkok, Thailand. The *ad hoc* OEWG agreed to recommend rules of procedure to the INC, as well as intersessional work for the Secretariat to prepare documentation for the INC, including options for the structure of the instrument and a description of options for substantive provisions.

INC1: The first session of the INC to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury convened from 7-11 June 2010 in Stockholm, Sweden. Delegates exchanged views on key elements of a convention, including: objectives; structure of the instrument; capacity building and technical and financial assistance; compliance; issues of supply, demand, trade, waste and storage; atmospheric emissions of mercury; and awareness raising and information exchange. The key outcome of INC1 was a request to the Secretariat to draft “elements of a comprehensive and suitable approach” to a legally binding instrument, which would serve as a basis for negotiation at INC2.

INC2: The second session of the INC convened from 24-28 January 2011 in Chiba, Japan. INC2 marked the first opportunity for delegates to start textual negotiations on potential elements for the mercury instrument, contained in a paper prepared by the UNEP Secretariat. INC2 achieved a first full reading of the paper and mandated the UNEP Secretariat to prepare a new draft text for further negotiation at INC3.

INC3: The third session of the INC convened from 31 October - 4 November 2011 in Nairobi, Kenya. INC3 completed a comprehensive review of the text of the draft instrument and requested the Secretariat to compile a revised draft text based on plenary negotiations, the reports of the INC3 contact groups and the work of the legal group.

INC4: INC4 convened from 27 June - 2 July 2012 in Punta del Este, Uruguay. Progress was achieved on storage, wastes and contaminated sites, and options were narrowed on articles related to information and reporting. Views diverged on compliance, finance and control measures for products and processes, with discussions focusing on laying out the range of positions. Delegates requested INC Chair Fernando Lugris (Uruguay) to “clean up” the negotiating text and, in cooperation with the Co-Chairs of the contact groups, to present possible compromise articles where there was divergence among countries. Delegates further requested the UNEP Secretariat to analyze, in cooperation with the World Health Organization, the extent to which the other provisions of the draft mercury instrument reflect the content of the draft article on health aspects and to present a draft of the final act for consideration by INC5 to determine work to be completed between signature of the instrument and its entry into force. INC4 also called for intersessional work on emissions and releases.

INC5: The fifth session of the INC convened from 13-19 January 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland. Delegates successfully completed the negotiation of a new global treaty: the Minamata Convention on Mercury. INC5 addressed several policy and technical issues, including mercury air emissions and releases to water and land, health aspects, and phase-out and phase-down dates for products and processes. A compromise was reached late on the final night, based on a package addressing outstanding issues related to the preamble, finance and compliance.

27TH SESSION OF THE UNEP GC/GMEF: UNEP GC/GMEF took place from 18-22 February 2013 in Nairobi, Kenya. Decision GC.27/L.4 welcomed the completion of negotiations of the mercury treaty, authorized the Executive Director to provide an interim secretariat to the instrument prior to its entry into force, and invited parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions to consider steps to facilitate cooperation and coordination with the Minamata Convention.

THE DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE OF PLENIPOTENTIARIES ON THE MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY AND ITS PREPARATORY MEETING: The Minamata Convention on Mercury was adopted on Thursday, 10 October 2013, in Kumamoto, Japan. The week started with a two-day open-ended intergovernmental preparatory meeting on 7-8 October, during which participants negotiated resolutions on elements of the Final Act, including: promoting and preparing for the early implementation of the mercury instrument; arrangements for the interim period between the signing of the instrument and its entry into force, such as arrangements for financial and technical assistance during that period; and secretariat arrangements. This was followed by the Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries held from 10-11 October, and attended by more than 1,000 participants from

over 140 countries, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. The Convention was signed by 91 countries and the European Union.

INC6: The sixth session of the INC convened from 3-7 November 2014 in Bangkok, Thailand. INC6 was the first of two negotiating sessions planned for the interim period between the adoption of the Minamata Convention and COP1. Delegates initiated discussions on a range of issues including the financial mechanism, rules of procedure and financial rules, and possible approaches to reporting. Delegates established an *ad hoc* working group of financing experts to address finance prior to INC7.

INC7 REPORT

On Thursday, 10 March, Jacob Duer, interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention, welcomed participants and, noting that this the largest meeting of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to date, highlighted the participation of numerous intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

Saying that the Minamata Convention's first meeting of the Conference of the Parties is "just around the corner," INC Chair Fernando Lugris (Uruguay) asked participants to engage in INC7 with "an appetite for hard work" to address technical, operational and political issues during what he said was expected to be the last INC meeting.

Ibrahim Thiaw, UNEP Deputy Director, called for a systemic life-cycle approach to address mercury poisoning, based on public-private cooperation in countries of both the North and South. Noting that pollutants kill nine million people a year globally, he highlighted that action under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development integrates health, security and production concerns with regard to issues that cannot be tackled by countries on their own. He referred to the Montreal Protocol as a model for the integration of science, policy and action to address a shared global problem.

On behalf of King Abdullah II, Taher Shkhashir, Minister of Environment, Jordan, called for INC7 to take the necessary measures to implement global mercury control, and drew attention to the Kingdom's environmental protection initiatives. He reiterated his country's commitment to enhance the implementation of the Minamata Convention, including through the initiation of a national mercury needs assessment study and a process for the identification and disposal of products containing mercury.

Delegates then watched a cultural performance and heard from youth members of the national conservation club.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: On Thursday, delegates adopted the provisional agenda without amendment (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/1). Emphasizing the need to finalize work in preparation for COP1, Chair Lugris proposed organizing the agenda according to technical issues, financial issues, effectiveness evaluation and legal issues and rules.

OPENING STATEMENTS: Jordan, for the Arab Group, called for the adoption of guidance documents, including for best available techniques/best environmental practices (BAT/BEP), which he said should include low thresholds for mercury

wastes. He underlined the need for procedures to facilitate financial flows and for the specific international programme (SIP) to support institution building at the national level.

The European Union (EU) called for the provisional adoption of all the documents requested by the Diplomatic Conference and announced that the EU has begun legislative procedures to ratify the Minamata Convention.

Japan, for the Asia-Pacific Group, highlighted the importance of the draft guidance documents on the identification of mercury stocks and BAT/BEP, and said both should include options for parties. He underscored the relationship between technical options and the means to implement those options.

Uruguay, for the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), noted the importance of capacity building to support effectiveness evaluation. He underscored the need for financing through the SIP to be additional to support allocated to other chemicals conventions.

Zambia, on behalf of the African Group, called for simplifying the forms for notification of consent to import mercury. He urged prioritizing support for least developed countries (LDCs) and small-island developing states (SIDS) in Africa in, for example, the development of funding proposals, reduction of required co-financing contributions, and relaxation of eligibility criteria for participation in the SIP. He proposed that UNEP host the SIP, and he looked forward to development of comprehensive guidance on management of contaminated sites.

The Russian Federation, for the Central and Eastern Europe Group, said almost all countries in the region are working towards ratification and implementation of the Convention.

Switzerland reported on its provision of support for ratification of the Convention in 20 countries and its plans to support another 15. He outlined tasks to be completed before COP1, including adoption of BAT/BEP guidance, drafting of guidance to assist parties to complete the forms required under Article 3, and guidance on identification of individual stocks of mercury and mercury compounds, and their sources of supply. He highlighted the need for further guidance to be developed on: environmentally-sound interim storage; effectiveness evaluation; and contaminated sites.

Reiterating his country's commitment to the prevention and control of heavy metals including mercury, China underscored the need for delegates to respect the 1992 Rio Convention principle of common but differentiated responsibilities in INC7 discussions.

Nigeria noted his country's collaboration with the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in conducting pre-ratification activities, and drew attention to the development of a national implementation plan for mercury in artisanal and small-scale gold mining. Kenya welcomed the offer by Switzerland to host the secretariat of the Minamata Convention.

The Philippines reported on the intersessional meeting of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership, noting progress on, *inter alia*, addressing dental amalgam in East Africa, and collaborative

work on the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) guidance.

Drawing attention to the links between a mercury-free world and social and economic development, Indonesia stressed the importance of technology transfer for the implementation of the Convention. Lamenting the absence of a mercury-specific Sustainable Development Goal, Iraq called for safe alternatives to mercury-containing products, as well as “rational financing” for Convention implementation.

Japan stressed its commitment to playing a leading role through, *inter alia*, organizing high-level events, assisting with mercury monitoring, preparing national inventories and capacity building. Chile highlighted national initiatives on mercury and said the Convention will be a “compass and guide” for future legislation.

Noting its progress in replacing mercury thermometers and fully phasing out dental amalgam by 2020, India called for capacity-building measures.

Afghanistan underscored its commitment to ensuring that the economic benefits of mining are not undermined by damage to the environment, and welcomed technical support for managing hazardous waste. Kuwait highlighted national initiatives including the creation of an environmental police unit and a national committee on mercury including relevant stakeholders. She noted the need to provide technical assistance to support national capacity building.

The US called for prioritizing action on mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants as well as mercury in ASGM, and supported the draft guidance for national priorities for ASGM.

Iran announced that it is undertaking the last steps to deposit its instrument of ratification. Noting support received from UNEP, UNITAR and the Government of Switzerland, Zambia informed INC7 that its instruments of ratification are complete and awaiting deposit. Senegal announced its ratification of the Convention and expressed appreciation to the GEF and UNIDO for their support in this process.

Guinea called for financial and technical assistance to promote swift implementation, thanking the Government of Switzerland, UNITAR, UNIDO and others that have already provided assistance.

Noting mercury use in the health and mining sectors in his country, Burkina Faso reiterated commitment to ratification. Togo called for assistance in raising awareness at the national level and underscored the need for alternatives to mercury-containing products in the energy sector.

Thailand highlighted the establishment of a national committee on mercury and the creation of a national action plan for ratification. South Africa highlighted its enactment of air quality and waste management acts, which provide for enforcement of mercury emission limits and responsible management and disposal of mercury waste. He called on all concerned to advance technology transfer on mutually-agreed terms, and to finalize the SIP to build technical and professional capacity for mercury phase-out.

The World Health Organization (WHO) highlighted a series of regional workshops, supported by the Government of Germany, on implementing the health-related aspects of the Minamata Convention. He noted that guidance on health strategies for the ASGM sector is being developed, and guidance on phasing out mercury in medical equipment is now available.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) highlighted its support for implementation of the Convention’s provisions for occupational health and safety, and its work on ASGM, especially in Ghana and the Philippines.

The Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG) highlighted its activities to support national governments with early ratification and implementation, including strategies to phase out mercury-added products and national action plans on ASGM.

The International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) highlighted its activities in 30 countries to raise awareness of the Convention’s provisions, and announced its work, undertaken with UNEP, on global bio-monitoring of women of child-bearing age. Characterizing the transition to mercury-free dentistry as being “in high gear,” the World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry highlighted declarations and actions by civil society in Africa and Asia to reduce amalgam use.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) highlighted several projects relevant to the Convention, including support for countries to reduce mercury releases from ASGM and from products such as compact fluorescent lamps.

WORK TO PREPARE FOR ENTRY INTO FORCE AND COPI

ARTICLE 3. MERCURY SUPPLY SOURCES AND TRADE: INC7 took up this agenda item in plenary on Thursday and Friday, 10-11 March. After addressing the documents in plenary on Thursday, INC7 established a contact group on technical matters, co-chaired by Kateřina Šebková (Czech Republic) and Leticia Reis de Carvalho (Brazil). The contact group met each day from Thursday to Monday to consider the draft guidance to: assist parties in completing the forms required under Article 3 (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/3); and on identification of individual stocks of mercury or mercury compounds exceeding 50 metric tons, as well as sources of mercury supply generating stocks exceeding 10 metric tons per year (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/4). The group was also asked to consider UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/5, which set out a compilation of submissions by governments and other relevant actors on the question of whether additional guidance was necessary.

In plenary, the African Group recommended simplifying the import/export forms. The African Group and Japan questioned the need to include the secretariat in country-to-country communications on trade. GRULAC called for revising the form on notification for the register of information supplied by parties choosing not to apply Article 3(8) (import from a non-party). Switzerland and Norway introduced a joint proposal (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/CRP.3), noting the need to include guidance for the application of the prior informed consent procedure. The EU introduced a proposal to separate the guidance on forms relating to the management of movement

of mercury from the notification for the register of information supplied by parties choosing not to apply Article 3(8) (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/CRP.1).

In the contact group, delegates compared the two proposals and edited the draft guidance on import/export forms for clarity. They noted that trans-shipment of mercury wastes is covered under the Basel Convention, not the Minamata Convention. Regarding shipment information to be provided by the exporting party, they agreed to mention that, if the mercury is to be disposed of, the procedures for transboundary movements of waste in Article 11.3 (appropriate measure for mercury waste) should be followed, and that in such cases, the form should not be used unless the party has applied Article 3.9 on providing a general notification of consent. On separating the general notification form from those related to individual notifications, one country noted that relying on general notifications may not give an accurate picture of the aggregate quantity of mercury being traded.

Plenary took up discussion of the draft guidance on mercury stocks and supply in plenary on Friday, 11 March. The EU highlighted the need to clarify, *inter alia*, how to calculate when the thresholds are exceeded and the definition of “stocks” and “sources.” Switzerland proposed clarifying the definitions of “waste” and “non-ferrous metal mining.” With Chile, he called for deleting a reference to unprocessed ore.

Japan and the US called for flexibility according to national situations. GRULAC noted that the guidance is not legally binding. The African Group said the burden of identifying mercury stocks should be on those countries that are producing mercury, and called for incorporating prior informed consent into the draft guidance.

The Philippines said trade and trans-shipment are the main sources of mercury in his country, and called for addressing concerns through regional trade platforms.

Saudi Arabia and China disagreed with inclusion of a reference to fossil fuels, including natural gas.

ZMWG called for grouping small mercury-generating sources for reporting. IPEN called for national assessments to include emissions from gold processing shops and e-waste recovery of over 10 tons a year.

On Sunday and Monday, 13-14 March, the contact group took up consideration of this draft guidance on mercury stocks and supply. Some countries opposed referring to natural gas as a source of mercury emissions, and others clarified that the reference is to gas cleaning technology, which could become a significant source of mercury emissions. Other debates included: calculating mercury amounts; taking the time needed to consider technical content; and adhering to the Convention text.

Delegates discussed qualifying some proposed definitions with the text, “to be determined by each party, as it deems appropriate.” Debating whether the guidance language was prescriptive, they agreed to replace “necessary” with “useful” in some instances and withdraw a proposed use of “should.” They disagreed about whether to include a list of potential sources of mercury supply-generating stocks, including from: primary mining; decommissioning of industrial facilities such

as chlor-alkali facilities; non-ferrous metal mining; collection of mercury and mercury compounds recovered during the cleaning of fossil fuels such as natural gas; mercury compound and catalyst producers; and recovery, recycling or reclamation of mercury from mercury waste. Some countries stressed that these go beyond the Convention, while others said that such a list could be useful. Late on Monday, 14 March, a delegate called for bracketing the entire draft. The text was finally agreed in the early hours of Tuesday morning, with the deletion of the list of potential sources of mercury supply generating stocks.

Delegates discussed the need for additional guidance (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/5) in plenary on Friday, 11 March. Japan said the Convention does not define the means to quantify mercury and mercury compounds, which could cause confusion when identifying stocks and supplies. Noting that current work could address this issue, she suggested that additional guidance should be a last resort. Colombia emphasized that additional guidance is unnecessary. On Tuesday, 15 March, Co-Chair Šebková reported to plenary that a technical submission by Japan on the calculation of mercury and mercury compounds merited further work.

Final Outcome: The draft guidance on the identification of individual stocks of mercury or mercury compounds exceeding 50 metric tons and sources of mercury supply generating stocks exceeding 10 metric tons per year (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/CRP.14) contains five sections: background; definitions; a section on individual stocks exceeding 50 metric tons; a section on supply generating stocks exceeding 10 metric tons; and some guiding questions to help identify mercury stocks and sources of supply.

In the definitions provided, mercury or mercury compounds not intended for a use allowed under the Convention fall under the definition of mercury wastes, and are excluded from the requirements of Article 3. Individual stocks “could” be considered to be the total quantity of mercury or mercury under the control of a party or an economic or legal entity, to be determined as the party deems appropriate. An entity storing mercury in different locations “will consider them combined” as an individual stock.

The guidance lists entities and activities that may influence the storage and use of mercury, including, *inter alia*: mercury traders; primary mercury mines; recycling and waste treatment activities; national governments; and production facilities for mercury-added products.

The draft guidance on completing the forms required under Article 3 related to trade in mercury (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/CRP.16) contains guidance on the use of the Forms A to D, which are for: the provision of written consent by a party to the import of mercury; written consent by a non-party to the import of mercury; non-party certification of the source of mercury to be exported to a party; and general notification of consent to import mercury. Separate guidance is provided on the use of Form E, which provides for notification for the register of information supplied by parties choosing not to apply Article 3(8).

ARTICLE 7. ASGM: The plenary discussed this item on Thursday and Sunday. On Sunday, the interim secretariat introduced the draft guidance on developing a national action plan to reduce and, where feasible, eliminate mercury use in ASGM (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/17), and an information note providing an overview of progress in the development of public health strategies on ASGM, including in the context of the Minamata Convention on Mercury (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/INF/7).

The Natural Resources Defense Council, with the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership, noted many partner contributions. The WHO drew attention to its ongoing development of training materials for healthcare providers, in support of the development of public health strategies to address community exposure from ASGM.

The African Group requested the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership to pilot the guidance and conduct a review and validation workshop before COP1. Mali, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso and Senegal noted the prevalence of ASGM in their countries and presented their national actions. The Democratic Republic of Congo highlighted a partnership project that will certify that its gold is legal, traceable and did not come from conflict zones. The EU suggested mentioning the role of certification bodies.

Malaysia requested the interim secretariat to help determine criteria for defining where ASGM is “more than insignificant” with reference to Article 7.3. Indonesia called for flexibility in setting implementation timelines and establishment of licensing systems. He requested deleting the mention of cyanide use as a “worst practice.”

The US said that related child labor, human health and poverty concerns, as well environmental risks, make action on ASGM a high priority.

IPEN urged governments to promote jewelry made by local communities and to purchase and formally record gold produced by small-scale miners. ZMWG called for considering migrant miners. Citing a study in the Philippines, the World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry expressed concern that the amount of dental mercury entering a country far exceeded the amount used in dental amalgam, suggesting illegal trade.

Chair Lugris noted that parties generally agreed to adopt the guidance on a provisional basis. He invited all concerned to make suggestions for improvements, with a view to presenting a revised version for consideration at COP1. INC7 also took note of the call for regional workshops, and requested the committee to convene such events, within available resources, in regions with significant prevalence of ASGM.

Final Outcome: The draft guidance on “Developing a National Action Plan to Reduce, and Where Feasible, Eliminate Mercury Use in Artisanal and Small Scale Gold Mining” (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/17) was adopted on a provisional basis and provides background information on ASGM, including on aspects of the Minamata Convention that relate to ASGM, and background information on the ASGM industrial process. It outlines steps for developing a national action plan, including an implementation strategy, timeline and budget, and explains the

reporting requirements following submission of a national action plan. The guidance also includes suggestions for promoting a market for mercury-free gold, and covers issues of concern regarding the gender and child labor aspects of ASGM. The guidance highlights that Annex C of the Minamata Convention provides a list of elements that must be included in each national action plan.

ARTICLE 8. EMISSIONS: This issue was addressed in plenary on Friday, 11 March, and in informal consultations co-facilitated by John Roberts (UK) and Adel Shafei Mohamed Osman (Egypt) from Friday to Tuesday.

On Friday, the interim secretariat introduced the report of the BAT/BEP expert group (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/6) and draft guidance documents on: BAT/BEP (Add.1); existing sources (Add.2); criteria for relevant sources (Add.3); and preparing inventories (Add.4). BAT/BEP expert group Co-Chairs Osman and Roberts underlined that these are living documents that provide guidance only, and suggested a process for updating information.

In the ensuing discussion, the African Group, the EU, Jordan, Thailand, Australia, and many others supported provisional adoption of the guidance. GRULAC and Canada stressed that the guidance is neither legally binding nor mandatory, and called for similar guidance on releases. Chile called for a clear distinction between BAT and BEP. India called for the guidance to be linked to Article 13 (financial resources and mechanism) and Article 14 (capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer), and stressed that the guidance should address technical information related to high ash sub-bituminous Indian coal. Cameroon and The Gambia requested the inclusion of guidance on emissions from open burning.

The informal group met from Friday to Tuesday, and among other actions, outlined a proposal on additional paragraphs to be included in the BAT/BEP guidance to clarify the relationship between the guidance and obligations in the Convention.

In the plenary on Tuesday, Co-Facilitator Roberts reported that participants were close to agreement and presented an annex with suggested amendments. He highlighted: the importance of open burning as a potential source of emissions; that BAT enables parties to take account of national circumstances and economic and technical circumstances; and that the guidance should reflect available information. After further consultations, Co-Facilitator Roberts reported that the informal group had finalized its work, agreeing on compromise language to be added to the BAT/BEP guidance to define its scope. Delegates then provisionally adopted the four guidance documents.

Final Outcome: INC7 provisionally adopted draft guidance on:

- BAT/BEP (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/6/Add.1);
- Support for parties in implementing the measures set out in Article 8(5), in particular in determining goals and in setting emission limit values (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/6/Add.2);
- Criteria that parties may develop pursuant to Article 8(2)(b) on relevant sources (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/6/Add.3); and
- Preparing inventories of emissions (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/6/Add.4).

They also adopted UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/CRP.8 containing a submission by the Co-Facilitators on Article 8 issues, as well as an annex containing suggested amendments to the draft guidance documents. Amendments to the BAT/BEP guidance include text that notes that in the determination of BAT, each party will take account of its national circumstances in accordance with the definition of BAT contained in Article 2(2)(b) that explicitly takes into account economic and technical considerations for a given party or a given facility within its territory. It is recognized that some of the control measures described in this guidance may not be available to all parties for technical or economic reasons. Financial support, capacity building, technology transfer, or technical assistance are to be made available as elaborated in Articles 13 and 14 of the Convention.

ARTICLE 10. ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND INTERIM STORAGE OF MERCURY OTHER THAN WASTE

MERCURY: On Sunday, the interim secretariat introduced the compilation and summary of submissions, identification of relevant sections of Basel Convention guidance, and a roadmap for work in interim guidance (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/18). Several countries and ZMWG indicated interest in providing experts. The African Group stressed the need to support participation. Switzerland supported engaging experts from the Basel Convention.

Canada and the US sought clarification that the Basel Convention technical guidelines are not being revised. GRULAC underlined the need for the Minamata Convention to develop its own guidelines, taking into account the work of the Basel Convention and national realities. Canada suggested that COP1 did not have to adopt the guidance, while Switzerland supported its adoption at COP1.

The US underscored the need to recognize the difference between interim storage and waste. Malaysia called for a clear definition of interim storage. The BRS Conventions Secretariat said that the roadmap considers and aligns with the activities of the Basel Convention, as appropriate, and stated that the technical guidelines contain relevant information for interim storage and for management of contaminated sites.

Final Outcome: Delegates agreed to defer this issue to a future meeting.

ARTICLE 11. MERCURY WASTES: On Sunday, the interim secretariat introduced the compilation of information on the use of mercury waste thresholds (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/19), noting that submissions were received from nine countries and one regional economic integration organization (REIO). The EU called for more information to be submitted for consideration by COP1. GRULAC and Guinea suggested an expert group be established to address this issue with a view to defining a global threshold standard. The US proposed a threshold range of 0.1-0.2mg Hg/L. Calling for a master plan for threshold definition, Japan noted his country's threshold of 0.5µg Hg/L. Switzerland drew attention to its draft proposal, which: welcomes the Basel Convention technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of mercury wastes; requests parties to the Minamata and Basel Conventions to use these guidelines; and invites parties to the Minamata Convention

who are not party to the Basel Convention to use the guidelines as guidance. IPEN urged INC7 to adopt guidance on thresholds, suggesting that substances containing 2mg Hg/Kg or more should be defined as waste.

Delegates agreed to task the interim secretariat to request countries to submit information on national thresholds. Chair Lugris informed delegates that calls to establish an expert group on this issue, as well as suggestions to utilize the expertise of the Basel Convention, would be noted in the meeting report.

On Tuesday afternoon, Switzerland proposed further consideration of the draft decision (CRP.6) it submitted with the African Group on the technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of mercury wastes, which proposed that parties to the Basel Convention apply the technical guidelines for mercury wastes, and to encourage non-parties to use these guidelines as guidance. The EU suggested collecting additional ideas and forwarding the issue to the next meeting.

Final Outcome: Delegates agreed to defer this issue to a future meeting.

ARTICLE 12. CONTAMINATED SITES: On Sunday, the interim secretariat introduced the guidance on managing contaminated sites and the proposed way forward for developing guidance (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/20), noting that relevant Basel Convention technical guidelines had been considered, as had experience under the Stockholm Convention.

GRULAC highlighted the potential need to establish a group of experts and requested a regional workshop on contaminated sites. Highlighting the significant workload before the INC, the EU and the US suggested deferring this issue to COP1. The US also expressed concern about efforts to coordinate with the Stockholm Convention, saying relevant work had not been undertaken by this Convention.

South Africa, Uruguay, The Gambia, Kuwait and China underscored the importance of work on this issue. The African Group underscored the challenges posed by inadequate data, technology and resources to mitigate contaminated sites. Tunisia and Togo called for technical support to facilitate identification of contaminated sites. Egypt and Morocco cited relevant work under the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution, and Morocco and Togo highlighted guidance prepared by IPEN to help countries address contaminated sites. The International Indian Treaty Council called for use of IPEN's draft guidance on contaminated sites as a basis for discussion.

Switzerland and ZMWG supported the proposed way forward and Switzerland called for "tight collaboration" with the conventions in the chemicals and waste cluster, governments and other organizations.

IPEN called for INC7 to provisionally adopt guidance on managing contaminated sites to allow immediate action to be taken. The World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry called for aggressive reduction in mercury use, saying use in dental amalgam is unnecessary.

In plenary on Tuesday, the African Group introduced a proposal (CRP.9), which requests the interim secretariat to develop draft guidance on management of contaminated sites

for consideration at COP1. Many delegations underscored the importance of having effective mechanisms and guidance to support the management of contaminated sites, and the Asia-Pacific Group, the African Group, Switzerland and Belarus supported forwarding the draft to COP1 with no changes. The EU and US preferred requesting the interim secretariat to prepare a compilation text to use as draft guidance for consideration by COP1.

Final Outcome: After informal consultations in parallel to the closing plenary, the African Group reported that a compromise had been reached to request the interim secretariat to prepare a compilation to be used as a basis for a draft guidance document on the management of mercury-contaminated sites and an outline of its structure and content, together with a road map for consideration by COP1.

ARTICLE 13. FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND

MECHANISM: This issue was discussed in plenary on Friday and in a contact group on finance co-chaired by Gillian Guthrie (Jamaica) and Greg Filyk (Canada) that met every day from Friday to Monday.

The interim secretariat introduced the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the COP and the GEF (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/7), draft guidance to the GEF (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/8), report of the *ad hoc* working group of financing experts (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/9) and governance arrangements for the SIP (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/INF/6). The GEF reported on the expansion of eligibility for GEF support, and the status and increase of support provided in response to guidance provided by the diplomatic conference and INC6.

MOU with the GEF: Switzerland, Norway, the EU and the African Group expressed support for provisional adoption of the MOU. In plenary on Sunday, Chair Lugris introduced the draft MOU between the Minamata Convention COP and the GEF Council (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/CRP.5). INC7 agreed to forward it to the GEF Council and to COP1 for further consideration.

Final Outcome: The MOU contains sections on definitions, purpose, guidance from the COP, conformity with COP guidance, reporting, monitoring and evaluation, cooperation between secretariats, reciprocal representation, amendments, interpretation, entry into effect and withdrawal.

Guidance to the GEF: Iran suggested that GEF reports should include a listing of approved projects within the financial mechanism, not outside the mechanism. He also suggested that the COP may seek explanation from the GEF for matters arising from its reports. The Russian Federation suggested deleting a reference stipulating that the COP decides whether the concern of a party regarding a GEF decision has merit. GRULAC and the Island Sustainability Alliance called for inclusion of health-related activities in the implementation of the Convention's legally-binding obligations. IPEN suggested inclusion of activities related to public awareness and effectiveness evaluation. Japan, Cuba and Brazil underscored the need for financial assistance to encourage ratification. ZMWG suggested the Convention create a website that contains information on all projects receiving support, organized by country and issue.

In contact group discussions, views diverged on issues including the eligibility of signatories to access financial resources for enabling activities, with some developed countries noting that this may be a disincentive to ratifying the Convention, and some developing countries stressing that financing should be provided to countries taking "meaningful steps" towards ratification. Text calling for GEF funding for activities that build capacity and promote the utilization of local and regional expertise also proved contentious, with one developing country concerned that this would interfere with national governments' activities. Some proposed that these activities would receive GEF financing "if applicable."

In plenary on Tuesday, Co-Chair Filyk noted that the proposal on the draft guidance to the GEF contains brackets related to the eligibility of signatories to receive financing for enabling activities, and drew attention to the guidance on the implementation of the chemicals and waste focal area strategy adopted by INC6 that is valid until COP1.

Final Outcome: INC7 forwarded the draft guidance to the GEF on overall strategies, policies, programme priorities and eligibility for access to, and utilization of, financial resources as well as on an indicative list of categories of activities that could receive support from the GEF Trust Fund (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/CRP.7) to the GEF Council and to COP1. The draft guidance contains five sections on:

- eligibility for access to and utilization of financial resources;
- overall strategies and policies;
- programme priorities;
- an indicative list of categories of activities that could receive support, including enabling activities and activities to implement the provisions of the Convention; and
- review by the COP.

SPECIFIC INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME: In plenary on Friday, Greg Filyk, who co-chaired the *ad hoc* working group of experts on financing, summarized the group's report, which suggests that UNEP would be the most suitable host institution for the SIP and that it may be premature to discuss the duration of the SIP. GRULAC said the SIP should have unlimited duration and finance all the activities that the GEF cannot. Jordan said the SIP should support institutional capacity not covered by the GEF. The African Group said the SIP must have sustainable resources, avoid duplication and be subject to regular review. GRULAC, Switzerland, the US, China, Jordan, Gabon and others supported UNEP as the host of the SIP.

In contact group discussions, many developing countries preferred that the duration of the SIP be unlimited, while one developed country preferred that it be time limited. One developing country pointed to discussions on the need for the SIP to be under periodic review, and suggested that its duration also be considered in this review. Others called for further discussions on related issues in order to determine the SIP's duration. In their discussions on options to host the SIP, they considered a proposal for UNEP to act as the secretariat of the SIP, which would report to a Minamata-SIP executive board operating under the authority of the Minamata COP. They also considered a proposal that suggests that the SIP be established

as a subsidiary body of the Minamata COP; financed by the Convention's voluntary trust fund; and serviced by the Minamata secretariat.

After extensive discussions on the options, Co-Chair Guthrie presented the contact group with a proposal on the common elements for the SIP structure drawn from the two options. She explained the proposal that the COP would provide guidance to a SIP governing body (either a SIP committee or an executive board), which would, in turn, instruct either the Minamata secretariat or UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics to provide information on proposed SIP projects for a technical review. The technical review function could be undertaken by intergovernmental experts and would be responsible for reviewing projects for funding by a SIP voluntary trust fund.

In plenary on Tuesday morning, contact group Co-Chair Guthrie presented the draft decision for consideration by COP1 on the SIP to support capacity building and technical assistance. She called on the interim secretariat to provide information during the intersessional period on the cost of the SIP's governance arrangements based on the host institution options. She also noted that the schematics related to the structure of the SIP would be appended to the draft decision for adoption at COP1, and drew attention to bracketed text in the sections on governance arrangements, resources and the duration of the SIP.

Final Outcome: INC7 forwarded the draft decision on the SIP to support capacity building and technical assistance (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/CRP.12) to COP1. The draft decision, *inter alia*, states that the hosting institution is provided by UNEP; and requests the UNEP Executive Director to establish a trust fund for the SIP and implement its governance arrangements.

The annex contains the hosting arrangements, guidance on the operations and duration of the SIP, including bracketed text on: governance arrangements; guidance on the SIP pertaining to scope, eligibility, operations and resources; and three options for the duration of the SIP.

ARTICLE 21. REPORTING: This issue was addressed in plenary on Saturday and in a contact group co-chaired by Silvija Kalniņš (Latvia) and David Kapindula (Zambia) from Sunday to Tuesday.

The Secretariat introduced the draft reporting format as amended by INC6 (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/10) and the compilation of information on the frequency of reporting under other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), along with available data on the submission of reporting rates under other agreements (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/11). Many countries supported a simple, efficient, non-burdensome, and facilitative reporting scheme.

On the frequency of reporting, GRULAC, the EU, Norway and Argentina preferred a four-year reporting cycle and an electronic format, and called for the reporting forms to be translated into all six UN languages. The US, Iran, Switzerland, Japan and China also supported a four-year reporting cycle, with Japan preferring a flexible cycle, allowing countries to report at

any time within this four-year period. IPEN called for aligning reporting with the three-year cycle of ASGM reporting to encourage compliance.

GRULAC stressed that the effectiveness of the Convention should not be measured solely by reporting requirements, and called for national and regional support for implementation of the Convention.

Norway noted the need for the forms to be made available in an offline format, proposed supplements to the reports to track the Convention's effectiveness, and preferred a two-year reporting cycle for trade data.

India called for simplification of the format to ensure better implementation and called for capacity building to support reporting. The African Group called for the reporting scheme to be aligned with reporting under the BRS Conventions, and preferred annual or biennial reporting on trade.

Canada said the reporting cycle should balance transparency and administrative burden, and be separate from other MEAs. Iran said the amount of reporting called for is "excessive" compared to other MEAs and urged considering the different levels of financial and technical capacity among parties. Peru said reporting requirements should be clear, simple and specifically related to national priorities. The US said that there is no need to submit additional data that could be demonstrated through a description of a party's experience, with China and Thailand stressing that reporting requirements should not overburden parties. Pakistan said reporting should be used to understand the effectiveness of the Convention and not to "name and shame."

Noting that national reports under the Basel and Stockholm Conventions provide critical information on implementation, the BRS Conventions Secretariat said that enhanced cooperation among conventions will be beneficial to countries implementing the Minamata Convention.

The ZMWG called for collection of data on mercury production and trade, as such information is not available elsewhere, and called for financial assistance to be made available via the SIP to support capacity building and training for reporting.

In contact group discussions, one country suggested having either one simple form for all countries or two separate forms for countries with more or less capacity. A developed country suggested the possibility of submitting an incomplete report and another suggested identifying some information as supplemental. In comments on the form, delegates discussed if parties should be asked to provide information on the number of tons of mercury produced per year from a primary mercury mine used in the manufacture of products for processes using mercury and for disposal. Some countries noted that such information requires significant capacity to gather and report. One developed country suggested that the specific amounts could be labeled as supplemental information. Another developed country opposed this suggestion. Yet another developed country proposed reporting the total amount of tons mined per year.

On questions related to Articles 8 (emissions) and 9 (releases), countries discussed whether information about availability of inventories should be supplemental. They debated whether providing inventory data is required by the Convention and discussed its utility for evaluating effectiveness. On Article 11 (waste), countries discussed asking if facilities for managing wastes duplicated Basel Convention reporting, and whether the information should be supplemental. On Article 13 (financial resources and mechanism), countries debated whether information on contributions to the financial mechanism or to assist developing countries was supplemental. On Tuesday in plenary, contact group Co-Chair Kalniņš presented the draft reporting format, noting outstanding issues that will need to be addressed at COP1.

Final Outcome: INC7 provisionally adopted the draft reporting format (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/CRP.17), which contains four parts on:

- general information on the party for which the report is being submitted;
- information on the measures taken by the party to implement the relevant provisions of the Convention;
- possible challenges in meeting the Convention's objectives; and
- reporting format and possible improvements.

Brackets still remain on issues concerning mercury supply sources and trade, emissions, mercury wastes and financial resources and mechanism. The instructions on the reporting format state that additional information may be attached.

ARTICLE 22. EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION: This issue was addressed in plenary on Saturday and in the contact group on reporting from Saturday to early Tuesday morning.

The interim secretariat introduced the compilation and analysis of the means of obtaining monitoring data in relation to the effectiveness evaluation (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/12). Japan introduced a proposal submitted with the US (CRP.4) suggesting that a technical expert group be established to develop a comprehensive global monitoring approach. The US said that the evaluation must identify the baseline, what will be measured and how. She supported using the 2013 UNEP Global Mercury Assessment, potentially with other data sources, as the baseline.

IPEN urged that the proposed technical expert group on a global monitoring approach be open to observers. The Biodiversity Research Institute noted that information on monitoring mercury levels is available and supported the establishment of a technical expert group on this issue. ZMWG supported establishing an expert group to develop the framework and methodology for effectiveness evaluation, based on representation from different geographic regions. Kenya said the expert group could also identify the primary parameters for monitoring mercury in air, water, soil and food, and called for monitoring some diseases caused by mercury.

Ghana highlighted the Stockholm Convention Global Monitoring Plan as a useful practice to help regions collect data. Peru highlighted regional cooperation, saying that high-level annual meetings among Venezuela, Ecuador and Peru have led to

joint action on mercury, including data exchange, regulation, and measures on waterway pollution. Senegal stressed the need for financial resources to support data collection.

The EU observed that effectiveness evaluation would evolve over time, saying that in the short term the evaluation will draw upon parties' reports. The African Group, supported by China, suggested including technical assistance and capacity-building efforts under the Convention in the effectiveness evaluation.

The BRS Conventions Secretariat highlighted evaluation-related activities under the Stockholm Convention, mentioning monitoring of chemical levels in surface water and in human milk and blood, and the work of the Arctic Monitoring Assessment Programme.

The contact group on reporting considered this issue on Monday evening. On Tuesday, contact group Co-Chair Kalniņš reported that the group had reached agreement on a plan to assist the COP in initiating the establishment of arrangements for providing comparable monitoring data to facilitate the effectiveness evaluation.

Final Outcome: In the plan to assist the COP in initiating the establishment of arrangements for providing comparable monitoring data to facilitate the effectiveness evaluation (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/CRP.15), the INC requests the interim secretariat, in consultation with national governments, regional and subregional monitoring programmes and partnerships, the WHO and other stakeholders to, *inter alia*, compile information on existing monitoring programmes and how they can contribute to an overall monitoring approach and develop:

- a draft roadmap to include an outline of types of regionally comparable data;
- a draft framework for a global monitoring approach to integrate comparable results of future monitoring; and
- a draft strategy to incorporate reports and other monitoring information that can be used for evaluating the Convention's effectiveness.

ARTICLE 23. CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES: On Friday, the interim secretariat introduced the draft rules of procedure (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/13) and draft financial rules (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/14) for the COP. The latter issue was taken up by the contact group on rules co-chaired by Andrew McNee (Australia) and Mohammed Khashashneh (Jordan), which met from Saturday to Monday.

On rules of procedure, the EU, the African Group, Colombia, Switzerland, Canada, Norway and New Zealand supported having a voting rule. Japan, the US, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Iran, China and India supported decision-making by consensus. The Russian Federation suggested keeping the brackets around the voting rule.

On deciding whether an issue is substantive or procedural, the African Group supported enabling the president to decide, subject to a majority decision if no agreement is reached. Togo suggested that the president should decide and a two-thirds majority should be required to overturn the decision. Iran suggested that if there is a question, the decision should be ruled

as substantive. The EU preferred that the president decide, in consultation with the Secretariat. India supported treating issues as substantive, in cases of doubt.

The US, the Russian Federation and India suggested specifying that a REIO can vote only on behalf of members that are present and voting. The EU responded that a REIO is defined in the Convention as an organization constituted by sovereign states of a region to which its member states have transferred competence. She underscored that the COP cannot rewrite the Lisbon Treaty and said mandating the presence of all member states would mean bringing delegates to a meeting about issues for which they have no role.

The UNEP legal advisor explained that rule 44.2 in the draft rules of procedure related to REIOs is agreed language from Article 28 of the Convention (right to vote). Chair Lugris asked delegates to discuss the issue informally.

On financial rules, the EU, Switzerland and others called for compatibility with the BRS Conventions, and compliance with UN financial regulations and UNEP's financial rules. The African Group stressed the need for them to be consistent with international rules and urged that they empower the secretariat.

In the contact group, Co-Chair Andrew McNee (Australia) outlined the main issues to be discussed, including: the nature of contributions and how they are described; the nature of support that can be provided by the COP and which parties can receive support; the financial mechanisms and interactions between the convention and the UN/UNEP; and host country contributions.

On the way in which contributions are described, discussion focused on whether or not contributions should be characterized as "voluntary." Some countries supported voluntary contributions, with one country underscoring the importance of considering the implications for domestic budgeting processes. Others said that the nature of contributions is related to the effectiveness of the convention and that other conventions do not describe contributions as voluntary.

The group then reviewed the text paragraph by paragraph, discussing, *inter alia*, core funds versus earmarked funds; harmonizing the Minamata Convention with the BRS Conventions in terms of a programmatic budget; and the role of the UNEP Executive Director regarding budget authorization.

On Rule 4, regarding the approval of the trust fund, many developed and developing countries said they were not in a position to discuss the changes without further consultations and that they did not want to prejudge the outcome of the second meeting of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) scheduled for May 2016. Other participants said that the proposed changes would not prejudge UNEA. Additional discussion focused on the nature of host country contributions; the Special Trust Fund; and support for participation by developing countries and SIDS in the work of the COP and its subsidiary bodies.

On Rule 5, regarding contributions, discussions continued on whether or not to include language referencing "voluntary contributions" by parties. Some countries underscored the non-binding nature of the Convention, said that the word "voluntary" conflicts with the fact that contributions would be considered based on "indicative assessments," and highlighted the need

for contributions to be serious commitments. Other discussions focused on minimum contributions by parties; contributions by non-parties; timeline for notification of contributions; and how to handle arrears.

On Monday, progress was made on removing brackets in sections of Rule 6 on accounts and audit. On Rule 7, participants removed language regarding the amount the COP may reimburse UNEP for administrative costs.

Participants reviewed the annex to the financial rules and bracketed a reference to subsidiary bodies. One country suggested removing text regarding facilitating the participation of SIDS and LDCs, to which other developed and developing countries objected, noting the outcome of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development as well as Article 14 of the Minamata Convention supporting such facilitation. After further discussion, participants agreed to bracket the entire annex.

Having completed a first reading, the contact group returned to outstanding issues including: the financial period; whether or not the budget would be presented in a programmatic format "harmonized" with the BRS Conventions; contributions by the host government; and language regarding voluntary contributions.

In plenary on Tuesday, contact group Co-Chair McNee said a large amount of text, particularly concerning host country arrangements and the SIP, remained in brackets. He said there was no resolution on Rule 5 regarding outstanding contributions and how to treat developing countries, LDCs and SIDS. Chair Lugris reported on informal consultations to address the rules of procedure, requesting the secretariat to inform INC7 of the conclusion on this. The interim secretariat noted that concerned delegations would continue to discuss the issue informally during the intersessional period, and highlighted that some delegations had reserved the right to propose adding language to rule 45(2) that "when a REIO exercises its right to vote on behalf of its member states, it may only do so for those member states that are present at the time of the vote." Chair Lugris noted that this will be reflected in the meeting report.

Final Outcome: The draft document on rules and legal matters in relation to draft financial rules for the COP, its subsidiary bodies and the secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/CRP.13) was forwarded to COP1 for further consideration.

ARTICLE 24. SECRETARIAT: This article was addressed in plenary on Monday. The interim secretariat introduced the documents (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/15-16, and INF/5), drawing attention to, *inter alia*, options including having a permanent "standalone" secretariat, a full and immediate merger of the permanent Minamata Convention secretariat with the BRS Secretariat, or working gradually toward a merger by establishing an initial "Minamata Branch" of the BRS Secretariat.

Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary, BRS Conventions, said the BRS Secretariat is ready to welcome the Minamata secretariat and pledged to give the new Convention the attention it deserves. Many countries supported the Government of Switzerland's offer to host the permanent secretariat of the Minamata Convention.

On the arrangements for the secretariat, the EU favored a potential merger as maximizing coordination and institutional coherence with the BRS Conventions. He called for making a distinction between the general assistance of the secretariat to parties, and technical assistance and capacity building, noting that the latter will depend on the SIP.

GRULAC called for addressing the proposals in detail at COP1 and preferred a strong, effective and independent secretariat. Argentina stated that the synergies arrangements in the BRS Conventions have not provided benefits to developing countries and, with the US, Cuba, Jordan, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Iraq, and China, expressed a preference for an independent secretariat. The US expressed concern that the proposal for 20% of the BRS Executive Secretary's time will be insufficient, saying the Convention will need an Executive Secretary who is able to commit "100% time" to the Convention. She called for a full evaluation of options and more quantitative data for review at COP1, including a full analysis of staffing and meeting costs. Kenya called for further discussion of the cost assessments for the proposed host locations, and highlighting the successful hosting arrangements for the Montreal Protocol, which is based in Nairobi.

Supporting an integrated secretariat, Switzerland noted the cost savings offered by this arrangement, stressing that the current interim secretariat arrangements cannot continue after the Convention enters into force. He noted that the cost comparisons prepared by the interim secretariat only include staff costs, and highlighted the need to take into account other costs, such as travel, meeting facilities, and the hiring of independent consultants. Underscoring the need for joint messaging within the chemicals and waste cluster, he also urged consideration of the location of chemicals and waste experts as well as the BRS Secretariat and UNEP Chemicals. Norway, Colombia, Malaysia, Armenia, and Sierra Leone supported an integrated secretariat.

Brazil noted there could be options that fall between an independent and an integrated secretariat, and Switzerland and Japan supported exploring these possibilities.

Iraq and Sierra Leone called on the Swiss Government to be flexible with visa arrangements for countries without Swiss representation within their borders.

Switzerland summarized its offer to host the secretariat, saying if the COP decides to locate the secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland would provide, *inter alia*, free office and meeting space. He stated that if the Minamata secretariat is merged with the BRS Secretariat, Switzerland would pay CHF2.5 million per year, with CHF2 million of un earmarked contributions, and the remainder earmarked for financing integration. He underscored a preference to have separate Minamata COPs in the immediate future.

Jamaica called for discussions to amend the Swiss hosting offer containing conditionalities for hosting arrangements. The US expressed disappointment that the offer links a decision on geographic location with a policy decision on the structure of the secretariat. Switzerland responded that this is an administrative measure to enhance efficiency, and underscored that policy decisions are taken independently under each Convention.

The EU asked for clarification of the precise annual amount Switzerland would contribute to the trust fund, and Switzerland replied that is a matter for discussion in the financial rules contact group.

Final Outcome: Chair Lugris said that the documents would be updated based on the discussion in plenary and suggested intersessional consultations to prepare a decision to be taken by COP1.

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERIM SECRETARIAT

On Tuesday, the interim secretariat introduced a report on activities carried out by the interim secretariat since INC6 (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/21). He summarized work on activities to be carried out before COP1, including organization of Bureau meetings, regional consultations, and meetings of the expert group on emissions, and its work to support early ratification and implementation of the Convention, including through organization of regional and subregional workshops and participation in the BRS COPs.

Chair Lugris invited reports from intergovernmental organizations promoting early implementation of the Convention. WHO noted its development of technical guidance for phasing out mercury use in thermometers and sphygmomanometers in healthcare. UNIDO, on behalf of Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, emphasized that its agencies are working to facilitate a harmonized approach to mercury initial assessments and supporting countries in development of national action plans on ASGM. UNEP highlighted its work with 42 countries on Minamata Initial Assessments and 10 countries on ASGM, and noted that a new global mercury assessment would be published in 2018. UNITAR noted its collaboration with UNEP to develop the online platform "Mercury:Learn" to assist users in developing mercury inventories. The BRS Conventions emphasized that the Basel and Stockholm Convention Regional Centres have demonstrable competence to give support to the implementation of the Minamata Convention. UNDP noted that supporting countries to meet future commitments under the Minamata Convention is an important component of its objective to support sustainable development.

Many delegates expressed appreciation to donor countries for supporting activities related to ratification and the phase-out, phase-down and elimination of mercury.

GRULAC called for regional workshops on contaminated sites and on mercury pollution in marine areas. Norway, supported by Switzerland, requested the interim secretariat to publish a catalogue of all funding sources on their website. The EU expressed support for the call for financial assistance and welcomed the close collaboration between the interim secretariat and the BRS Secretariat. Niger requested the interim secretariat to provide additional information for their national ratification process. The Bahamas expressed appreciation and called for further support for SIDS participation.

IPEN highlighted its activities on, *inter alia*, awareness raising, trade and supply, mercury-added products, and industrial

processes, and volunteered their expertise in activities related to hair-sampling of women of childbearing age. ZMWG announced plans to host regional workshops in Africa on ASGM and mercury phase-out projects. The Sustainable Development Policy Institute called for national regulation to address mercury in dental amalgam and skin lightening products.

OTHER MATTERS

On Tuesday, Chair Lugris reported to plenary that the Bureau had considered the possibility of convening INC8, if necessary, to prepare for COP1. He noted that the Bureau would review the intersessional work arising from INC7 and determine whether to convene an abbreviated meeting of the INC prior to COP1. INC7 agreed to this proposal.

CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

On Tuesday afternoon regional groups and many countries made closing statements, expressing thanks to the Jordanian hosts, interim secretariat and all staff involved in the excellent arrangements for the conference.

GRULAC requested advancing the SIP before COP1, saying INC7 discussions on this topic had not met the region's expectations. She proposed deleting the brackets in the draft of the financial rules, deleting mention of "special needs" and referring to the "special circumstances" of developing countries, especially SIDS and LDCs. She also called for a simple reporting system that does not impose an additional burden on parties. She urged delegates to approve effective support mechanisms for the management and rehabilitation of contaminated sites. She stressed the importance of holding regional meetings before the COPs, saying this will make it possible to progress on agreement. She highlighted the importance of Article 16 on health, and requested the WHO to consider the possibility of undertaking bio-monitoring through its network of regional centers.

Iraq highlighted the threat of chemical weapon and the illegal trade in chemical products. He deplored the use of such weapons in recent terrorist attacks on villages, which had resulted in the deaths of some children. He called for devoting sufficient attention to environmentally sound management of chemical substances.

Switzerland urged all concerned to continue their efforts toward a good, ambitious and fair outcome to negotiations, so that COP1 can be "a true celebration."

The EU welcomed the progress made on technical matters, adding that some complex arrangements on financial issues remain to be finalized. He welcomed GRULAC's removal of brackets on financial rules, saying that this enables the interim secretariat to prepare a budget for approval at COP1. He called on the Bureau to find a clear way forward on the secretariat hosting before COP1, and he looked forward to the adoption of the rules of procedure at COP1.

Nigeria, on behalf of the African Group, mentioned outstanding issues, including: the need for a roadmap to promote the capacity of the region to implement the Convention, especially in the areas of reporting, data generation, inventory, and developing national action plans on ASGM; agreement

on the SIP; and aligning the Minamata reporting obligations with those of the other chemicals and waste conventions, to the extent practicable. He requested the interim secretariat to prepare a schedule for guidance on the management of mercury-contaminated sites. He identified the use of mercury in ASGM as one of the highest priority issues for many countries in his region, noting that over one million miners are exposed to health risks. On the SIP, he stressed the need for regular review to ensure its objectives are being met, with the support of its host institution. He called for an independent secretariat for the Convention.

China said that financing is core to the Convention, and supported the GRULAC position on the SIP. He urged "the mercury family" to continue in the spirit of partnership embodied in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, according to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Japan highlighted the need for global monitoring of mercury to ensure successful evaluation of the Convention's effectiveness.

Jamaica supported the GRULAC statement, saying that support for LDCs and SIDS will determine their ability to contribute to effective implementation.

India welcomed the guidance on BAT/BEP. She said that while India fully subscribes to concerns about mercury emissions, the country's 61% dependence on the coal-based thermal power sector makes it difficult to take decisions regarding adoption of the guidance, until the effectiveness of the prescribed BAT/BEP has been proven with regard to high ash sub-bituminous Indian coal. She welcomed the acknowledgement of the expert group that the specific technical information with respect to this coal is not currently available. In view of this, she dissociated India from the guidance document, until this particular technical concern can be accommodated.

In brief comments, the Russian Federation, for Central and Eastern Europe, and Saudi Arabia also thanked the host government, organizers and interim secretariat.

Chair Lugris thanked the interim secretariat, the Bureau, and members of the INC, noting the need for more work to ensure success at COP1.

Thanking delegates for their work in overcoming challenges to make progress on protecting human health and the environment, Taher Shakhashir, Minister of Environment, Jordan, congratulated delegates for their efforts, particularly on the guidance on BAT/BEP, guidance to the GEF, and on the SIP. Raouf Al Dabbas, Ministry of Environment, Jordan, then presented Chair Lugris with a token of appreciation for his work as "captain of the INC ship."

Chair Lugris gavelled the meeting to a close at 6:22 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF INC7

While adopting a new treaty or convention can be a celebratory event, it does not merely commemorate the conclusion of negotiations. In fact, it marks the beginning of a new process that develops an effective operational and administrative framework to facilitate the work of the Convention. In the case of the Minamata Convention, these

post-agreement negotiations must strike a delicate balance that upholds the careful compromises struck when negotiating the Convention, but also facilitates action to achieve the Convention's aim of protecting human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. At INC7, the second such meeting since the 2013 adoption of the Minamata Convention, after a week at the Dead Sea in Jordan delegates ultimately floated, neither sinking nor swimming, toward this goal.

This brief analysis considers the extent to which INC7 fulfilled the mandate outlined by the Diplomatic Conference of the Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

THE MINAMATA MANDATE FOR THE INC

The Diplomatic Conference outlined a detailed programme of work for the INC to complete before the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties. This work included intersessional consultations toward creating the administrative basis for effective implementation of the Convention, such as rules of procedure and financial rules. The Conference required the INC to prepare draft guidance for countries in important areas, including guidance documents on: artisanal and small-scale gold mining; identification of stocks of mercury and mercury compounds; procedures for the export and import of mercury; and best available techniques and best environmental practices for controlling emissions and determining emission limits.

While INC6 made some headway in many of these areas in 2014, INC7 was expected to complete the mandate on several fronts, from agreement on the operation of the financial mechanism to substantive guidance documents and secretariat arrangements. INC7 made progress by completing the prescribed import-export forms, agreeing on draft guidance documents on ASGM, identifying mercury stocks and sources of supply, and finalizing the memorandum of understanding with the GEF. Nevertheless, by the end of INC7, much work remained, leaving countries little choice but to empower the Bureau to consider the need for an eighth meeting of the INC, which some expect to be a one-day meeting that will be held immediately before COP1.

In the final hours of the meeting, there were several attempts to make up ground on issues of particular importance to many countries. For example, the African Group joined with 25 other states to propose that the Secretariat develop guidance on contaminated sites, and, with Switzerland, submitted a second proposal that parties to the Basel Convention apply its mercury waste technical guidelines and encouraged countries that are not a party to the Basel Convention to apply the guidelines as guidance. The latter suggestion fell flat because delegates lacked the time necessary to reach consensus. The former proposal on contaminated sites also failed to gain traction due to the objections of the EU and US, who expressed concern about the workload of the Secretariat ahead of COP1. The compromise ultimately reached, that the Secretariat would compile submissions and propose an outline and roadmap for the guidance on contaminated sites, disappointed many who see urgent action on contaminated sites as crucial to protecting human health and the environment in their countries. One

delegate expressed regret about the lack of decisive action, underscoring that cleaning up contaminated sites "is necessary to do justice" to the Convention.

DEFINING THE LETTER OF THE LAW

Implementation of some aspects of the Convention will require precise technical guidance, and the mechanisms for facilitating implementation, including technical guidance documents and reporting forms, need to accurately reflect future parties' obligations. As one delegate noted, "We created some ambiguities years ago to reach consensus, and now we must sort through them." In this process of elaboration, many delegates took a cautious approach.

In the technical issues contact group, many participants were wary of reinterpreting the Convention, and said they were playing a watchdog role to guard against "mission creep." For example, an illustrative list of mercury supply sources was ultimately deleted, because some countries feared including certain references would open the way for the Convention to seek rules related to natural gas as a potential source of mercury. Some felt this was unfair, since INC3 in Nairobi had already debated the issue and agreed that natural gas would not be listed in the annexes to the Convention.

On finance, countries could not agree on the duration, governance arrangements, and resources for the specific international programme. These are key issues that will require careful negotiation in order not to upset the balance enshrined by the Convention, in what one called "the made for Minamata solution." This solution addresses the preferences of both donor countries who, in the early negotiations, favored the GEF as the sole financial mechanism, and those who called for funding that is predictable, accessible, and directly under the control of parties to the Minamata Convention.

As delegates worked through these complex issues at INC7, they continued to build a shared interpretation of the Convention that is reflected in several areas of the operational framework. For example, delegates designing the reporting format engaged in numerous discussions of what, specifically, the Convention would require of parties. For several delegates, discussions of "this is what I take this provision to mean" provided a valuable opportunity to build a collective institutional memory of how to interpret the Convention as they move from institutional design to implementation.

UPHOLDING THE SPIRIT OF THE CONVENTION

Operational rules can create incentives that promote or hinder efforts to implement the provisions of the Convention and, in turn, achieve its objectives. Several delegates noted that defining rules involves difficult fundamental choices about how the Minamata Convention will function.

For example, providing support through the GEF for ratification can expand the number of parties engaged in tracking the transboundary movement of mercury. Such support can help developing countries undertake projects and regulations that will put them in a stronger position to ratify and implement the Convention. However, as one delegate pointed out, this provision could create a disincentive for ratification and enable "cherry-

picking,” as countries can access funds for projects they want to complete while avoiding the obligation to take action on more fraught issues such as ASGM.

Other guidance documents, such as the BAT/BEP guidance for emissions, seek to empower countries to undertake an ambitious level of implementation, in line with their national capabilities. Yet, some worried that some guidance could impose burdensome, technology-dependent solutions that lie exclusively in the hands of developed countries. One delegate worried that if the BAT/BEP guidance was the standard, her country would be out of compliance as soon as the Convention enters into force for her country. Others dismissed such concerns, arguing that the guidance is not legally binding and only provides information.

Similarly, reporting requirements can help parties understand if the Convention is effective, but can also alienate parties that lack the capacity to provide detailed reports. In the end, delegates agreed some questions were “supplemental,” to allow for those not able to gather the information to leave the question blank without repercussion. While there may be no formal requirement for all countries to complete every aspect of the form, one observer hoped to see an informal expectation arise for those with capacity to provide information, such that developed countries would provide what he called “fully complete and robust” reports.

DIFFERENT VISIONS OF THE CONVENTION

Some view the Minamata Convention as naturally connected to the work of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions, and thus want to strengthen the ties among the four conventions to facilitate cooperation and coordination among what one delegate characterized as “sister agreements.” Others are less enthusiastic about tying the Minamata Convention too closely to the BRS Conventions, and instead envision a standalone convention with its own experts working on mercury-specific issues.

Many countries that expressed a preference for a standalone Convention highlighted the importance of ongoing input from technical experts who specialize in issues related to mercury, and they called for the establishment of a subsidiary body to provide scientific and other technical advice to the Conference of the Parties. Several delegates in this camp cited the BAT/BEP guidance as an example, noting that it is a “living document” that will need to be updated at regular intervals. Others also pointed to the need for experts to support work on other core issues, such as contaminated sites and interim storage, with one observer saying that an expert group process would support implementation in part by making it difficult for countries who may not want to fund the cleanup of contaminated sites to avoid taking action on this issue.

One veteran observer cited the value of the intersessional work on BAT/BEP, and other technical issues would have gone more smoothly at INC7 with face-to-face expert meetings. Such a consensus-building process would address not only the technical details but also provide greater transparency. This, she suggested, would be preferable to “compiling all submissions

and unveiling the whole Frankenstein only at the INC,” and alluded to the value of intersessional work to facilitate future COPs’ consideration of technical issues.

However, several developed countries called for expanding the BRS synergies process to include the Minamata Convention, saying this would help leverage expertise and promote efficiencies. One delegate pointed out that many of the experts who would serve as technical experts for the Minamata Convention are the same people who already sit on the expert committees of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions. Several proponents for integrating the Minamata Convention into the “BRS family” underscored it would be an administrative arrangement, and, sharing concerns over a workload of a “quadruple COP,” were open to other COP arrangements.

Others acknowledged the unspoken, yet obvious, fact that the US is a party only to the Minamata Convention, and is wary of any attempt to introduce the rules or guidelines of the BRS Conventions into mercury governance. Suggestions to use the technical guidelines of the Basel Convention in guidance documents of the Minamata Convention creates policy coherence for countries that are, or will be, parties to both Conventions. For the US, such substantive synergies could import obligations from a Convention for which they currently have no legally-binding obligation and had no formal role in agreeing to those technical guidelines.

Many noted that there is overlap on some substantive issues, but did not welcome the perceived conditionalities in the Swiss offer to host the permanent secretariat of the Minamata Convention. Since no other country has put forward a proposal to host, despite the Bureau’s decision to extend the deadline, some delegates said they are now considering how, and not whether, synergies will unfold.

REALIZING THE CONVENTION’S PROMISE

INC7 showed that negotiating the operational details of a Convention is as difficult as agreeing to the Convention text itself. For some countries, INC7 was their last chance to influence the future of the Minamata Convention, because once the Convention enters into force, decision-making will lie with the Conference of the Parties. Some countries will not have ratified in time to participate in COP1 as parties, and others are wondering whether they will ratify at all. With the 25th ratification occurring during INC7, and the EU’s work toward ratification in progress, entry into force of the Minamata Convention is on the horizon. At COP1, which is expected to take place in 2017, parties will celebrate their achievements in establishing a global instrument to address mercury, and will continue their work to find common ground in their work to protect human health and the environment from mercury pollution.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

37th Meeting of the OEWG of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol: The 37th Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (OEWG 37) will focus on the Dubai

Pathway on hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), which is intended to lead to adoption of an HFC Amendment to the Protocol at the 28th Meeting of the Parties (MOP 28) in October 2016 in Kigali, Rwanda. **dates:** 4-8 April 2016 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** Ozone Secretariat **phone:** +254-20-762-3851 **fax:** +254-20-762-0335 **email:** ozone.info@unep.org **www:** <http://ozone.unep.org/en/meetings>

International Expert and Stakeholder Workshop on the Integrated National Implementation of SDGs and International Chemicals and Waste Agreements: This workshop is jointly organized by the UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) Chemicals and Waste Branch, the Secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), the Interim Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), and the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC). It will bring together 50-60 participants from governments, intergovernmental organizations, private sector, academia and civil society to discuss the effective integration of sound management of chemicals and waste into national implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and development planning. **dates:** 11-13 April 2016 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** UNITAR Chemicals and Waste Management Programme **phone:** +41-22-917-8400 **fax:** +41-22-917-8047 **email:** cwm@unitar.org **www:** http://www.unitar.org/cwm/sites/unitar.org/cwm/files/uploads/workshop_on_sdgs_and_smcw_concept_note_jan_2016.pdf

Tenth Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention (OEWG-10): The tenth meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention (OEWG-10) will consider issues in advance of COP-13, including: strategic issues; scientific and technical matters; legal, governance and enforcement matters; international cooperation and coordination; and the programme of work and budget. OEWG-10 will consider revising the technical guidelines on e-waste adopted by COP-12 on an interim basis. **dates:** 30 May-2 June 2016 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** BRS Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8729 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **email:** brs@brsmeas.org **www:** <http://www.basel.int>

50th Meeting of the GEF Council: The GEF Council meets twice a year to approve new projects with global environmental benefits in the GEF's focal areas of biodiversity, climate change mitigation, chemicals and waste, international waters, land degradation, and sustainable forest management; and in the GEF's integrated approach programmes on sustainable cities, taking deforestation out of commodity chains, and sustainability and resilience for food security in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Council also provides guidance to the GEF Secretariat and Agencies. The GEF Council meeting will be preceded on 6 June by a consultation with civil society organizations at the same location. On 9 June the Council will convene as the 20th meeting of the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), also at the same location. **dates:** 6-9 June 2016 **location:** Washington D.C., US **contact:** GEF

Secretariat **phone:** +1-202-473-0508 **fax:** +1-202-522-3240 **email:** secretariat@thegef.org **www:** http://www.thegef.org/gef/council_meetings

OEWG 38 and ExMOP 3 to the Montreal Protocol: The 38th Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG 38) of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer will be held from 18-21 July 2016, followed by the Third Extraordinary Meeting of the Parties (ExMOP 3) from 22-23 July. These two meetings are expected to focus on efforts to conclude a hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) amendment to the Protocol in 2016. The OEWG and ExMOP will be preceded by the 56th Meeting of the Implementation Committee (ImpCom 56) on 16 July, which will review compliance with Protocol obligations, and on 17 July by a meeting of the Bureau and coordination meetings of the regional groups. **dates:** 18-23 July 2016 **location:** Vienna, Austria **contact:** Ozone Secretariat **phone:** +254-20-762-3851 **fax:** +254-20-762-0335 **email:** ozone.info@unep.org **www:** <http://ozone.unep.org/en/meetings>

Twelfth Meeting of the Chemical Review Committee (CRC-12): The 12th meeting of the Chemical Review Committee (CRC) of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade will take place back-to-back with the 12th meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee of the Stockholm Convention (POPRC). The CRC will consider draft decision guidance documents on carbofuran and carbosulfan, and review the notifications of final regulatory action for atrazine. It will also consider notifications found to meet Annex I criteria. **dates:** 12-16 September 2016 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** BRS Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8729 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **email:** brs@brsmeas.org **www:** <http://www.pic.int>

Twelfth Meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Committee (POPRC-12): The 12th meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Committee (POPRC) of the Stockholm Convention will take place back-to-back with the 12th meeting of the CRC of the Rotterdam Convention. The Committee will consider the draft risk profiles for dicofol and pentadecafluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), further information related to Annex F for decabromodiphenyl ether (decaBDE), and the draft risk management evaluation for short-chained chlorinated paraffins (SCCPs), among other topics. **dates:** 19-23 September 2016 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** BRS Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8729 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **email:** brs@brsmeas.org **www:** <http://www.pops.int>

28th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol: The 28th Meeting of the Parties (MOP 28) to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer is scheduled to consider, *inter alia*, a HFC amendment, nominations for critical-use and essential-use exemptions, and other draft decisions forwarded from the OEWG. **dates:** 10-14 October 2016 **location:** Kigali, Rwanda **contact:** Ozone Secretariat **phone:** +254-20-762-3851 **fax:** +254-20-762-0335 **email:** ozone.info@unep.org **www:** <http://ozone.unep.org/en/meetings>

Eleventh International Conference on Waste Management and Technology (ICWMT 11): Organized by the Basel Convention Regional Centre (BCRC) for Asia and the Pacific, and hosted by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the Stockholm Convention Regional Centre for Capacity-Building and the Transfer of Technology in Asia and the Pacific, China's Ministry of Environmental Protection and others, ICWMT 11 participants will discuss the theme of 'Green - Low-carbon - Circular - Development,' including such issues as e-waste management and recycling, end-of-life vehicle management and recycling, persistent organic pollutants waste management and disposal, management and disposal of wastes containing heavy metals, hazardous waste management, technology transfer, circular economy design and implementation, and regional chemicals management and emergency response. **dates:** 21-24 October 2016 **location:** Beijing, China **contact:** BCRC for Asia and the Pacific **phone:** +86-10-62794351 **fax:** +86-10-62772048 **email:** icwmt@tsinghua.edu.cn **www:** <http://2016.icwmt.org/ICWMT2016/indexen.asp?id=3099>

51st Meeting of the GEF Council: The 51st meeting of the GEF Council will be preceded on 24 October by a consultation with civil society organizations (CSOs) at the same location. On 27 October the Council will convene as the 21st meeting of the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) also at the same location. **dates:** 24-27 October 2016 **location:** Washington D.C., US **contact:** GEF Secretariat **phone:** +1-202-473-0508 **fax:** +1-202-522-3240 **email:** secretariat@thegef.org **www:** http://www.thegef.org/gef/council_meetings

Seventh Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific: The Regional Forum is organized and co-hosted by the UN Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD). The Forum is intended to serve as a framework for 3R (reduce, reuse, recycle) policy dialogue among high-level government representatives from Asia-Pacific countries, city mayors and administrators and other professionals, as well as technical assistance for country projects, and information sharing and networking for the promotion of 3R policies in Asia and the Pacific. **dates:** 2-4 November 2016 **location:** Adelaide, Australia **contact:** UNCRD Secretariat **phone:** +81-52-561-9377 **fax:** +81-52-561-9375 **email:** rep@uncrd.or.jp **www:** <http://www.uncrd.or.jp>

Thirteenth Meeting of the COP to the Basel Convention, the Eighth Meeting of the COP to the Rotterdam Convention and the Eighth Meeting of the COP to the Stockholm Convention: These meetings will convene back-to-back in 2017 to discuss issues for each Convention, and joint issues shared among the Conventions. **dates:** 23 April - 5 May 2017 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** BRS Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8729 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **email:** brs@unep.org **www:** <http://www.basel.int>, <http://www.pic.int>, <http://www.pops.int>

First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP1): COP1 of the Minamata Convention will be held within one year of entry into force of the Convention, and is thus expected to take place in 2017. Dates will be confirmed by the interim secretariat. **dates:** September 2017 (TBC) **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** Sheila Logan **phone:** +41-22-917-8511 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** mercury.chemicals@unep.org **www:** <http://www.mercuryconvention.org>

For additional meetings, see <http://chemicals-l.iisd.org/>

GLOSSARY

ASGM	Artisanal and small-scale gold mining
BAT	Best available techniques
BEP	Best environmental practices
BRS	Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions
COP	Conference of the Parties
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GRULAC	Latin American and Caribbean Group
INC	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee
IPEN	International POPs Elimination Network
LDCs	Least developed countries
MEAs	Multilateral environmental agreements
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
REIO	Regional economic integration organization
SIDS	Small island developing states
SIP	Specific international programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
WHO	World Health Organization
ZMWG	Zero Mercury Working Group