

SUMMARY OF THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY: 24-29 SEPTEMBER 2017

The first Conference of the Parties (COP1) to the Minamata Convention on Mercury took place from 24-29 September 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Minamata Convention, which was adopted on 10 October 2013 and entered into force on 16 August 2017, bans new and phases out existing mercury mines, contains measures to control air emissions, and regulates the informal sector of artisanal and small-scale gold mining.

COP1 considered a number of issues including matters related to reporting, effectiveness evaluation, the financial mechanism, arrangements for a permanent secretariat, compliance and guidance, and guidelines related to technical aspects of the Convention. A High-Level Segment, which provided an interactive platform for high-level delegates to demonstrate political leadership and raise awareness of and support for implementation of the Convention, convened on Thursday and Friday, attended by two Heads of State and Government and 80 ministers.

Convening in a Committee of the Whole (COW) to address substantive issues still open after the last session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC), delegates were able to take important decisions on the compliance committee and on guidance to the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Great strides were taken in establishing reporting cycles, and agreeing on guidance on waste thresholds and contaminated sites.

After intense contact group deliberations, COP1 was also able to agree on interim arrangements for the secretariat, which delegates agreed would be located in Geneva until a review of these arrangements at COP2. COP1 also established a specific international programme as one part of the financial mechanism, but was unable to agree on the Memorandum of Understanding with the GEF, postponing the decision on this to COP2.

During protracted discussions on Friday evening that stretched into the early hours of Saturday morning, many delegates expressed their disappointment that they could not agree on permanent arrangements for the secretariat as well as the GEF part of the financial mechanism. Nevertheless, delegates successfully worked through most of the important procedural aspects, leaving only a few of the key foundational issues to be decided at COP2.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MINAMATA CONVENTION

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 the 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 (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (UNEP GC-24/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

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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.

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. OEWG2 convened in Nairobi, Kenya, from 6-10 October 2008 and 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 UNEP Executive Director to convene an OEWG meeting in 2009, and an intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) commencing its deliberations in 2010, with the goal of completing its work by GC-27/GMEF in February 2013.

AD HOC OEWG TO PREPARE FOR THE INC ON

MERCURY: This meeting convened from 19-23 October 2009 in Bangkok, Thailand. Delegates agreed to recommend rules of procedure to the INC, as well as intersessional work for UNEP to prepare documentation for the INC, including on options for the structure of the instrument and a description of options for substantive provisions.

INCs 1 and 2: The first and second sessions of the INC to prepare a global legally-binding instrument on mercury convened from 7-11 June 2010 in Stockholm, Sweden, and from 24-28 January 2011 in Chiba, Japan, respectively. The key outcome of INC1 was a request to the UNEP Secretariat to draft “elements of a comprehensive and suitable approach” to a legally-binding instrument, which served as a basis for negotiation at INC2, where delegates completed a first full reading of the paper and mandated the Secretariat to prepare a new draft text for further negotiation at INC3.

INCs 3 and 4: The third and fourth sessions of the INC convened from 31 October - 4 November 2011 in Nairobi, Kenya, and from 27 June - 2 July 2012 in Punta del Este, Uruguay, respectively. 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. At INC4, delegates made progress on storage, wastes and contaminated sites, but views diverged on compliance, finance and control measures for products and processes. 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 Secretariat to analyze, in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO), 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 the 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. 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. Thus, delegates successfully completed the negotiation of a new global treaty: the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

27TH SESSION OF THE UNEP GC/GMEF: UNEP GC-27/GMEF took place from 18-22 February 2013 in Nairobi, Kenya. Decision 27/L.4 welcomed the completion of negotiations of the mercury treaty, authorized UNEP’s 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 Conventions to consider the steps to facilitate cooperation and coordination with the Minamata Convention.

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. From 7-8 October 2013, an open-ended intergovernmental preparatory meeting convened. Participants negotiating resolutions on elements of the Final Act, including: promoting and preparing for the early implementation of the instrument; arrangements for the interim period before 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. During the conference, 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: The seventh session of the INC convened from 10-15 March 2016 at the Dead Sea, Jordan. Delegates considered issues including, *inter alia*: procedures for export and import of mercury; operation of the financial mechanism; and draft rules of procedure and financial rules for the COP. They also discussed 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 practices for controlling emissions. INC7 provisionally adopted technical

guidance documents related to emissions and on the identification of individual stocks of mercury and mercury compounds; and forwarded to the GEF Council a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) 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.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: The Convention entered into force on 16 August 2017, ninety days after the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. To date, there are 128 signatories to the Convention and 83 ratifications.

MINAMATA COP 1 REPORT

On Sunday afternoon, 24 September, following a traditional Swiss music interlude, Jacob Duer, Principal Coordinator, interim Minamata Secretariat, opened COP1, congratulating the countries that have ratified the Convention.

Marc Chardonens, Vice-Minister of Environment, Switzerland, indicated that the COP is a historic moment to reduce the mercury risks affecting millions of people, and urged all countries to continue to implement the Convention. Emphasizing Switzerland's commitment to reduce mercury pollution, he urged integrating the Minamata Convention into the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions "family."

Citing examples of several individuals who have suffered from mercury exposure, Ibrahim Thiaw, Deputy Executive Director, UN Environment, said that the Convention is a building block for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He underscored that the Convention would help countries protect human rights and the environment by improving waste management and switching to cleaner energy and smarter chemicals.

In their opening statements, the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) underscored that effective implementation is of "paramount importance" to reduce mercury risks, stressing the importance of establishing the specific international programme (SIP) to support capacity building and technical assistance.

The African Group supported an annual reporting process, and partial integration of the BRS and Minamata Conventions secretariats with a separate mercury branch. She also highlighted the need for transparent and accountable governance structures for the SIP to ensure adequate and easy access to financial resources.

The European Union (EU), the Russian Federation for Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), Japan, Indonesia, Iran, Palestine, Nigeria, and India congratulated the INC for its work and countries' ratification efforts, and expressed commitment to implementing the Convention.

The EU welcomed COP1 as the beginning of the journey to address the mercury problem and noted support for adopting provisional guidance and forms before considering other substantive matters. Japan highlighted the need for the SIP to become operational as soon as possible, the importance of environmentally sound management of mercury and mercury-containing wastes, and the need for assistance to non-parties experiencing difficulties in ratifying the Convention.

Iran highlighted that the synergistic approach "is negative to the progress" of implementing the Convention.

Shinobu Sakamoto, for the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) and Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG), underscored that Minamata disease is not yet over, and challenged

delegates to protect women and children from mercury exposure. The World Alliance for Mercury Free Dentistry highlighted the phaseout of amalgam use in children as vital.

Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary of the BRS Conventions Secretariat outlined areas of cooperation include waste, interim storage, best available techniques/best environmental practices, legal matters, financial resources, and support and participation of the regional centres.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Election of Officers: On Sunday, the UNEP Secretariat introduced the rules of procedure (UNEP/MC/COP.1/3).

Delegates adopted rule 22 related to the appointment of officers with no objections. Thiaw then invited nominations for the COP1 Bureau. Japan, supported by Uruguay and Zambia, proposed and delegates agreed to nominate Marc Chardonens (Switzerland) as COP1 President.

Regions then nominated nine Vice-Presidents: Bolocan Svetlana (Moldova) and Karel Blaha (Czech Republic) for the Central and Eastern Europe; Gregory Bailey (Antigua and Barbuda) and César Murillo Juárez (Mexico) for GRULAC; Nina Cromnier (Sweden) for the Western Europe and Others Group; David Kapindula (Zambia) serving also as rapporteur, and Serge Molly Allo'o Allo'o (Gabon) for the African Group; and Mick Saito (Japan) and Mohammed Khashashneh (Jordan) for the Asia and Pacific Group.

Rules of Procedure: On Sunday, the interim Secretariat noted that during the INC process the content of the rules of procedure had been provisionally agreed, with the exception of bracketed text related to voting, and that additional views on Regional Economic Integration Organizations (REIOs) were raised at INC7.

COP1 President Chardonens suggested new text for rule 45.3 (substantive or procedural issues) that: allows the COP President to rule if an issue is procedural or substantive and provides for appeals immediately after the decision, which could overturn the COP President's ruling with a majority of parties present and voting. Iran, supported by India, called for further discussion. Parties adopted the rules of procedure containing the bracketed text.

The US stated its understanding that an REIO can vote on behalf of its member states that are eligible and present in the room. The EU stated that the Convention is clear on this matter, as stated in Article 28.2 (an REIO shall exercise right to vote with number of votes equal to member states that are party to the Convention). The Russian Federation called for deliberations on REIOs and voting rules, lamenting that his country had not been given the opportunity to speak before the adoption of the rules of procedure. After considerable discussion, the legal advisor clarified that only parties may participate in decision making.

The Russian Federation lamented that this undermines the Convention's spirit, and stressed that all countries should be considered equally.

COP1 President Chardonens underlined that the COP will be conducted in an inclusive manner and that the Presidency will conduct informal consultations on the bracketed text.

Agenda and Organization of Work: Parties adopted the agenda (UNEP/MC/COP.1/1 and Add.1) on Sunday morning. They also adopted the organization of work as set out in the scenario note (UNEP/MC/COP.1/2), and agreed to establish a Committee of the Whole (COW), chaired by Fernando Lugris (Uruguay).

Credentials: Parties appointed a credentials committee, chaired by Karel Blaha (Czech Republic). On Friday evening, the COP adopted the report of the credentials committee.

REPORT ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE INC

On Monday, INC Chair Fernando Lugin (Uruguay), reported the achievements of the Committee (UNEP/MC/COP.1/4), highlighting that the INC met its goals set in 2009 by finishing the negotiations in 2013 with a balanced text that requires an implementation and compliance committee, and an innovative financial mechanism, and indicating that the COW looked forward to resolving the remaining issues throughout this week.

MATTERS FOR ACTION BY COP1

MATTERS STIPULATED UNDER THE CONVENTION:

Supply Sources and Trade: This agenda item was taken up in plenary on Monday. COP1 President Chardonens introduced the draft guidance (UNEP/MC/COP.1/5). Parties adopted the guidance and the decision. Iran called for further defining mercury stocks exceeding 50 metric tons, and supply sources of more than 10 metric tons/year, among other technical issues. President Chardonens suggested, and Iran agreed, that their comments will be reflected in the meeting report.

On Sunday, the COP also adopted the required content of the certification required for the import of mercury from non-parties in accordance with paragraphs 6(b) and 8 of Article 3 (UNEP/MC/COP.1/6).

Final Decisions: In the decision (UNEP/MC/COP.1/5), the COP adopts the guidance in regard to Article 3, particularly in regard to paragraphs 5(a), 6 and 8 on stocks of mercury and mercury compounds, sources of supply of mercury, and the export of mercury from parties and non-parties, as put forward by the INC.

The COP also adopted a decision on the required content of certification to be used in conjunction with the forms for the export of mercury from parties and non-parties (UNEP/MC/COP.1/6).

Emissions: This agenda item was first taken up in plenary on Sunday. COP1 President Chardonens introduced the guidance (UNEP/MC/COP.1/7). Mexico and Thailand noted the need for support for the implementation of the guidance. Sri Lanka said it would forward a conference room paper (CRP) to include household extraction of gold from waste in the Convention.

Iran suggested that two paragraphs from the guidance be duplicated in the draft decision, namely that some control measures in the guidance may not be applicable in all contexts, and the guidance is a dynamic document to be revised based on implementation experience. Uruguay suggested the draft decision could be discussed in the COW. Parties adopted the draft guidance and forwarded the draft decision to the COW.

Belarus, Colombia, Chile and Ghana requested procedural clarifications, including on the value of adopting the guidance document, but not the draft decision. COP1 President Chardonens clarified that the guidance had been adopted and the decision would be discussed by the COW.

On Tuesday in the COW, noting the specificity of the coal used in their plants, India suggested some textual changes to the draft decision prepared by the interim Secretariat to reflect local situations. The COW then approved the amended draft decision and forwarded it to the plenary for adoption.

On Friday, the COP adopted the draft decision on the guidance in relation to mercury emissions.

Final Decision: In the decision (UNEP/MC/COP.1/CRP.12), the COP, *inter alia*:

- decides to adopt the guidance with regard to Article 8, particularly paragraphs 8(a) and (b), best available techniques and best environmental practices, taking into account any differences between new and existing sources and the need to minimize cross-media effects, and on support for parties in implementing the measures set out in paragraph 5, in particular in determining goals and in setting emission limit values; and
- requests parties with experience in using such guidance to provide the secretariat with information on that experience, and the secretariat to compile such information and, in consultation with parties and others, to update the guidance as necessary.

Financial Mechanism: This item was first taken up on Sunday by the COP, and on Monday by the COW, where the interim Secretariat introduced the draft MoU between the COP and the GEF Council (UNEP/MC/COP.1/15), the guidance to the GEF (UNEP/MC/COP.1/8), and matters related to the SIP (UNEP/MC/COP.1/9 and Add.1). The COW established a contact group, co-chaired by Gillian Guthrie (Jamaica) and Gregor Filyk (Canada), which met throughout the week. On Saturday, 30 September, the COP adopted the decision on the SIP, retaining some brackets, including on eligibility.

On Sunday in plenary, the GEF reported on institutional developments to operationalize the GEF as part of the financial mechanism and on support provided, highlighting that 89 of 94 eligible countries have received support.

The EU highlighted its CRP about the decision on guidance to the GEF. Emphasizing that the Convention's financial mechanism includes two elements (the GEF and the SIP), Jamaica said she could not accept the financial mechanism without both elements being agreed.

Brazil, for GRULAC, drew attention to two CRPs, on the SIP and financial rules, respectively. He outlined that CRP.5 specifies that the SIP: be hosted by the Minamata Secretariat; not be time-limited; and have a committee as a governing body. He said the proposal includes new text on the terms of reference for the SIP and on the establishment and contributions to the SIP in the financial rules.

The US supported the Minamata Convention secretariat hosting the SIP, but suggested a time-limited programme and lighter administrative arrangements.

Stressing the importance of regional centres in supporting capacity building and technical assistance, Argentina, for GRULAC, suggested developing terms of reference for regional centres under the Minamata Convention.

On guidance to the GEF, the US agreed to remove brackets related to funding eligibility for Convention signatories. The COP adopted the guidance, but forwarded the related draft decision to a contact group. The COW agreed to the decision (UNEP/MC/COP.1/CRP.16) on Thursday, and the COP adopted it on Friday.

In the contact group, delegates focused on the draft MoU with the GEF Council, the SIP, and their related decisions.

On the draft MoU, two countries suggested new language related to "depoliticizing" decision making on the eligibility of projects for inclusion in the MoU and the draft decision. At the request of the contact group, the GEF reported that any changes to the MoU would have to go to the GEF Council for approval, then come back to the COP, and that the party suggesting the changes was represented on the GEF Council when the MoU was agreed. Many parties lamented the possible delay. A small group

consulted on this additional language, but was unable to reach agreement. The contact group forwarded the draft MoU and the decision related to it with bracketed text to the COW.

On the SIP, countries discussed: its duration, hosting arrangements and governance structure initially in the context of GRULAC's CRP. Several developed countries supported a time-bound duration, noting many provisions of the Convention are time-limited, while several developing countries supported unlimited duration. After informal consultations, many countries supported a 10-year period. Some developed and developing countries supported a possible five-year extension and two developing countries preferred a possible seven-year extension, noting the total time period for implementation including exemptions would be 17 years. After some discussion, many supported the Minamata secretariat as host.

On governance, views diverged on the need for a committee, with some expressing hesitance to creating a subsidiary body for the SIP, observing that the costs associated with a "heavy" governance structure could divert resources that could go to supporting developing countries. Views diverged on whether the costs associated with administrative support would be funded by the general or special trust fund. Views also diverged on whether a P-3 post would be dedicated to the SIP.

After informal consultations, countries agreed to name the governing body the "special international programme (SIP) Governing Board." Countries agreed that the SIP Governing Board will provide parties with application guidelines for projects under the SIP, and on the process for reporting on SIP Governing Board activities.

On the Board's membership, one developed country and one regional group preferred a 15-member Board with three members per UN region. Other preferred a 10-member Board. One non-party called for members to be nominated "by" parties, rather than "from" parties and requested that the eligibility of countries to be considered for Board membership be bracketed.

One country asked for the appendix on the SIP hosting arrangements, guidance and operations and duration, and a paragraph on the P-3 position to be bracketed, not because it objected to the content, but to express reservations pending, and noting the links with, the outcome of the deliberations on the secretariat arrangements.

One party and a non-party asked to change the eligibility requirements for the SIP, to include signatories that are not parties to the Convention, but were taking meaningful steps toward ratification. Many opposed, observing that eligibility requirements were agreed by the INC to be limited to parties only. Brackets on this paragraph remained in the draft decision sent to the COW.

On Friday in the COW, contact group Co-Chair Filyk introduced the draft decision on the SIP (UNEP/MC/COP.1/CRP.29), outlining several brackets, including reservations registered by Switzerland, on the eligibility paragraph requested by Moldova, and on the Board's membership by or from parties as requested by the Russian Federation. Switzerland said they could remove the brackets. Moldova, speaking for CEE members that are not EU member countries, said that non-parties should be eligible for the SIP, if they are signatories taking meaningful steps toward ratification.

On Saturday morning, in the COP, President Chardonens introduced the draft proposal on the SIP. Moldova, opposed by GRULAC and the EU, proposed adopting an alternative

paragraph allowing for non-party signatories to be eligible for SIP funding.

COP President Chardonens suggested adopting the decision including the bracketed text, and noting the comments in the report of the meeting. The COP adopted the decision.

Brazil stated its understanding that since the remaining brackets were in the appendix, and not the decision itself, that the SIP is fully operational.

Final Decisions: In the final decision regarding guidance to the GEF (UNEP/MC/COP.1/CRP.16), the COP: adopts the guidance to the GEF on the overall strategies, policies, programme priorities and eligibility for access to and utilization of financial resources and on an indicative list of categories of activities that could receive support from the GEF Trust Fund set out in the appendix; and requests the Secretariat to transmit the guidance to the GEF Council.

In the final decision regarding the SIP (UNEP/MC/COP.1/CRP.35), the COP:

- decides that the hosting institution is provided by UNEP;
- approves the necessary hosting arrangements, as well as guidance on the operations and duration of that programme and the terms of reference of the SIP; and
- requests the UNEP Executive Director to establish a trust fund for the SIP and to implement the governance arrangements set out in the appendix.

Compliance: This item was first taken up by the COW on Tuesday. The interim Secretariat introduced the document (UNEP/MC/COP.1/10). COW Chair Lugris requested regions to finalize their nominations to the Implementation and Compliance Committee by Wednesday.

On Friday, the COW forwarded the decision for consideration by the COP, which adopted it.

Final Decision: In its decision (UNEP/MC/COP.1/CRP.30), the COP elects to the Implementation and Compliance Committee: Hanitriniaina Liliane Randrianomenjanahary (Madagascar); Mohamed Abdoulai Kamara (Sierra Leone); Bianca Hlob'sile Dlamini (Swaziland); Wang Qian (China); Heidar Ali Balouji (Iran); S.M.D.P. Anura Jayatilake (Sri Lanka); Boyko Malinov (Bulgaria); Inga Poroghin (Moldova); Claudia Sorina Dumitru (Romania); Diego Henrique Costa Pereira (Brazil); Vilma Morales Quillama (Peru) (1st year) and José Antonio Piedra Montoya (Ecuador) (2nd year); Arturo Gavilan Garcia (Mexico) (1st year) and Alejandra Acosta (Argentina) (2nd year); Janine van Aalst (Netherlands); Mark Govoni (Switzerland); and Jennifer Landsidle (US).

Reporting: This agenda item was first taken up by the COW on Monday and subsequently addressed in a contact group on reporting and effectiveness evaluation, co-chaired by David Kapindula (Zambia) and Silvija Kalniņš (Latvia) from Monday to Thursday.

The interim Secretariat introduced the document (UNEP/MC/COP.1/11) on Monday. GRULAC suggested allowing countries to submit additional information in the reports. China underscored that the content of the reports should not go beyond the Convention's mandate. The EU stressed that reporting should be as simple as possible, but with sufficient information.

On frequency, Thailand, Colombia, China, the US, Iran, Switzerland, Chile, Indonesia, Mexico, Australia, and the Basel Convention Regional Centre in the Russian Federation (BCRC-Russian Federation) supported a four-year cycle. Drawing attention to their CRP, the EU supported a four-year

cycle for most issues, and proposed, supported by IPEN, annual reporting on other issues, such as mercury supply and trade. Ghana expressed preference for a one- or two-year cycle. Japan suggested the Convention allow each country to choose its reporting year.

Switzerland and Lebanon, opposed by the US, highlighted the importance of aligning reporting requirements with those of the BRS Conventions. The Philippines favored a reporting frequency similar to the Basel Convention. Supporting an electronic format, Colombia preferred submitting initial reports within the first year of the Convention.

Several developing countries emphasized the need for capacity building and financial and technical assistance for parties to perform their data collection and management to support reporting obligations.

Belarus underlined the potential for burdensome reporting requirements, noting that similar information is required under the Basel Convention. BCRC-Russian Federation called for reporting also by non-parties. IPEN called for a mandatory reporting requirement.

Several countries expressed willingness to continue deliberations on reporting frequency and format in a contact group. Canada requested a “clear mandate” for a contact group that includes that unbracketed text should not be reopened, unless it solves a problem. Iran preferred discussing both unbracketed and bracketed text.

In the contact group, delegates agreed to a four-year cycle for full reporting, with the first report due on 31 December 2021, and a two-year cycle to report on key issues including supply sources and trade and wastes. The group also agreed on the text relating to the reporting format.

On Friday, the COP adopted the draft decision on reporting.

Final Decision: In the decision (UNEP/MC/COP/1/CRP.17), the COP, *inter alia*:

- decides that each party shall report every four years using the full format marked by an asterisk in Annex 1, and report every two years with respect to the questions in that format by 31 December of the following year;
- decides that each party shall submit its first biennial short report using available information by 31 December 2019 and its first full report by 31 December 2021 for consideration by the COP at its subsequent meeting;
- adopts the format for reporting pursuant to Article 21 set forth in the annex to the present decision;
- encourages each party, when submitting its report, to provide the secretariat with an electronic version of its report; and
- requests the secretariat to make available to parties the above-mentioned format for reporting, make available an electronic version of the party’s previous report to be updated as appropriate, and provide information, including the reporting rate to the COP to assist in its review.

Effectiveness Evaluation: This agenda item was first taken by the COW on Monday and subsequently addressed in the contact group on reporting from Monday to Thursday.

The interim Secretariat introduced the report on the establishment of arrangements for providing comparable monitoring data (UNEP/MC/COP.1/12). The EU suggested using 2013 data as a baseline. Canada introduced text proposing: a draft indicative effectiveness evaluation planning timeline; a revised draft roadmap; draft terms of reference for an *ad hoc* expert

group; and a draft decision. Republic of Korea supported the proposed roadmap.

Discussing the *ad hoc* expert group, the Marshall Islands, supported by Kiribati, suggested including civil society representatives, with ZMWG and IPEN calling for the inclusion of academics and non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives. The US proposed that the group identify existing data and methodologies to achieve data comparability. Switzerland suggested establishing two expert groups to develop monitoring plans and performance indicators.

China indicated that evaluation should consider the effectiveness of the entire Convention, including capacity building and technology transfer and assistance. Mexico encouraged countries to draw lessons from the Stockholm Convention. The African Group underscored the need to establish a global monitoring programme.

The WHO reported on the development of harmonized methodologies and standard operating procedures for human biomonitoring of exposure to mercury in the context of the UN Environment/WHO/GEF Global Monitoring Project. UN Environment discussed, *inter alia*, its Global Mercury Assessment and the Global Environment Monitoring System. ZMWG emphasized that a draft effectiveness evaluation strategy should be considered at COP2. The International Society of Doctors for the Environment noted that it was important to use action indicators from the health sector.

In the contact group, participants considered the proposal submitted by Canada. One country suggested to have two, rather than one, *ad hoc* expert groups during the intersessional period between COPs 1 and 2. Highlighting the need to work on both monitoring data and an effectiveness evaluation framework, one regional group suggested that the mandate be to “develop a framework for the effectiveness evaluation, including performance indicators and terms of reference for the first effectiveness evaluation, taking into account the experience of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).” Several countries opposed, underscoring that, for practical reasons, priority should be given to understanding data availability and comparability, with the framework being agreed at a later stage.

On the task of the expert group, one country questioned whether the draft plan needs to identify opportunities for future enhancements to monitoring by parties, urging countries to focus on the data that is available for the effectiveness evaluation, rather than draw from resources that could be used for the implementation of the Convention. Several countries opposed, noting the need to set up a dynamic process. After some deliberation, delegates agreed to establish an *ad hoc* expert group between COPs 1 and 2 for providing the COP with comparable monitoring data, and elements of an effectiveness evaluation framework, and prepared a clean draft decision.

On Friday, the COP adopted the draft decision on effectiveness evaluation.

Final Decision: In the decision (UNEP/MC/COP/1/CRP.19), the COP, *inter alia*

- adopts the draft road map for establishing arrangements for providing the COP with comparable monitoring data, and elements of an effectiveness evaluation framework, and the draft terms of reference for an *ad hoc* group of experts on the arrangements for providing the COP with comparable monitoring data, and elements of an effectiveness evaluation framework; and

- requests the secretariat to support the work outlined in the draft road map and the draft terms of reference.

Financial Rules and Provisions: This issue was discussed by the COW on Tuesday and in the contact group on Programme of Work and budget from Wednesday to Friday, co-chaired by Reginald Hernaus (the Netherlands), and Sam Adu-Kumi (Ghana). The interim Secretariat introduced the financial rules (UNEP/MC/COP.1/13 and INF.9). The EU called for the rules to be clear and leave no room for interpretation. Brazil, for GRULAC, drew attention to CRP.6 that includes text on the SIP in the financial rules.

On Saturday morning, the COW forwarded the draft financial rules containing bracketed text to the COP. The COP adopted the financial rules (UNEP/MC/COP.1/CRP.37), including the unresolved text pertaining to references to the specific needs and the special circumstances of least developed countries and small island developing states.

Final Decision: In the final decision (UNEP/MC/COP.1/CRP.37), the COP decides to adopt the financial rules for the COP and its subsidiary bodies. The annex contains the financial rules, and includes bracketed text.

MATTERS STIPULATED BY THE CONFERENCE

OF PLENIPOTENTIARIES: Provisions for the Permanent Secretariat: This agenda item was first taken up by the COW on Monday, and subsequently addressed in a Friends of the Chair group for the rest of the week.

In the COW, UN Environment introduced the document (UNEP/MC/COP.1/14), noting the proposed location of the secretariat, as well as three staffing options: full integration with the BRS Conventions Secretariat (option 1a), partial integration (option 1b), and a stand-alone secretariat (option 2). Switzerland presented its proposal for hosting the secretariat in Geneva (UNEP/MC/COP.1/INF/7 and 8). Most countries welcomed Switzerland's offer to host the secretariat. Kenya noted that it could host the secretariat, given the numerous mercury-related issues affecting developing countries, and supported the stand-alone secretariat option.

The EU, Norway, Colombia, Sri Lanka, Nicaragua, Chile, the Philippines, Viet Nam, Mexico, Afghanistan, and Japan supported full integration, with the EU underscoring that the Minamata Convention COP meetings would remain separate from the BRS TripleCOPs.

Jordan, Belarus, the African Group, Republic of Korea, Armenia, Dominican Republic, Australia, and Iran supported partial integration.

Highlighting the need for undivided support for the Minamata Convention and the high staffing costs in Geneva, the US objected to integration with the BRS Secretariat. Canada suggested that full or partial integration at this stage would reduce the effectiveness of the Convention. China expressed reservations on integration.

Jamaica asked for clarification on: the differences in the duty-station related costs; whether the Swiss contribution of CHF100,000 to a stand-alone secretariat also included their assessed contribution; and the difference in countries' assessed contributions for all three options.

Delegates mandated a Friends of the Chair group to further discuss this issue with a view to making progress towards a final decision at this COP.

On Tuesday, COW Chair Lugris reported on the discussion in the Friends of the Chair group, and identified "common

directions" including that there: are policy and financial aspects; is desire to continue cooperation and coordination in the chemicals and wastes cluster; is a need to maintain the legal autonomy of the Convention; and is a need for better understanding of staff costs. He announced that Sverre Thomas Jahre (Norway) and Yingxian Xia (China) will co-facilitate the group and asked delegations to make their heads of delegation available for informal consultations with the co-facilitators.

On Wednesday, COW Chair Lugris reported that "confessionals," which he described as candid bilateral talks with concerned parties, were ongoing, and encouraged delegations to come forward with new ideas. On Thursday, Co-Facilitator Yingxian Xia emphasized that the outcome document was "a delicate balance." COW Chair Lugris announced that an open-ended meeting of the Friends of the Chair group would convene to hear progress on bilateral deliberations in the morning.

On Friday afternoon in the COW, Costa Rica introduced CRP.32, that: requests the UNEP Executive Director to perform the functions by establishing a secretariat of the Minamata Convention located in Geneva; decides to review the organizational arrangements at COP2; and requests that in the interim, the secretariat cooperates and coordinates, as appropriate, with other relevant actors, including the secretariat of the BRS Conventions and the relevant units of UNEP in order to make full use of relevant experience and expertise. Japan, Ghana, El Salvador, Ecuador, Jordan, Zambia, Gabon, Mexico, Burkina Faso, and Canada supported the CRP.

Noting that delegates should not make this decision in haste, the US stated that they were "comfortable" with the proposal's idea, but asked for textual changes in the decision to clarify the understanding of what issues would be reviewed at COP2.

Switzerland supported the CRP, noting it is a good compromise and proposed to resolve the issue in the COW. He asked if the proposal is to review the organizational arrangements at COP2 or adopt a decision on the secretariat for only one year.

Costa Rica reread her first intervention, indicating that the intention of the group is to find a transitory solution for a permanent secretariat in Geneva and hope a decision can be made at COP2. Zambia, Namibia, Ghana, and Jordan noted that the group wanted Geneva to be the location of the permanent secretariat and only the organizational arrangements would be considered at COP2.

The US disagreed, noting that the location is a part of the organizational arrangements on which the decision should be postponed to COP2, and proposed new language.

Norway asked for more time to consider the new proposal. Switzerland noted that the proposed text provided a "review of the organizational arrangements at COP2," which he noted could address the US concerns as organizational arrangements also include the location of the permanent secretariat.

Chair Lugris suggested that the contact group on Programme of Work and budget reconvene to work on the assumption of Geneva-based costs, and suspended the COW at approximately 5:15 pm to allow the US to submit their proposed text.

When the COW reconvened around 5:45 pm, the US introduced a revised text (CRP.33), in which the COP, *inter alia*, welcomes Switzerland's offer to host the secretariat in Geneva between COP1 and COP2, and decides to postpone the decision regarding the location and other arrangements for the permanent secretariat to COP2. The African Group opposed, noting that calling into question the Swiss proposal to host the permanent

secretariat would have consequences for the Convention's functions in the future.

Norway asked if the host country contribution would stay as CHF1 million irrespective of the decision made at COP2 on secretariat arrangements. The EU suggested that the COP agree on Geneva as the permanent location of the secretariat, and called on Switzerland to increase its host country contribution to CHF1.5 million.

Many, including the African Group, underscored their preference for the secretariat to be permanently located in Geneva, and to work on the basis of CRP.32. Chile, supported by many, suggested a textual change in CRP.32 to request the UNEP Executive Director to perform the functions "initially through" a secretariat which, he said, would accommodate the interests of any who did not support Geneva as the permanent host.

The US underscored that CRP.33 does not preclude Geneva as the permanent seat of the secretariat, but also does not prejudge a different location.

Switzerland recalled its pledge of CHF1 million to the SIP, pending a good solution on the secretariat, noting that the current discussion did not bode well for a good solution. He highlighted that the revised proposal (CRP.33) would create uncertainty for the Convention secretariat.

At 6:10 pm, Chair Lugris suspended the COW once again to allow for informal consultations to reach a compromise. After consultations in a small group setting, the COW reconvened at approximately 7:15 pm. Chile reported the final compromise text based on CRP.32, in which the COP, *inter alia*, requests the UNEP Executive Director to perform the functions initially through the Minamata secretariat located in Geneva, and decides to review the organizational arrangements, including location and host country contribution at COP2. The COW agreed on the revised draft decision and forwarded it to the COP.

On Friday at 11:08 pm, the COP adopted the decision on the secretariat.

Final Decision: In its decision (UNEP/MC/COP.1/CRP.34), the COP, *inter alia*:

- decides that 60% of the host country contribution will be allocated to the general trust fund and 40% will be allocated to the special trust fund to support developing country participation;
- requests the Executive Director of UNEP to perform the functions initially through a secretariat of the Minamata Convention located in Geneva;
- decides to review at its second meeting the organizational arrangements, including location and the host country contribution, in accordance with the spirit of the offer of the Government of Switzerland to host the permanent secretariat; and
- requests that, in the interim, the secretariat continue to cooperate and coordinate, as appropriate, with other relevant actors, including BRS Conventions Secretariat and the relevant units of UNEP in order to make full use of relevant experience and expertise.

Draft MoU between the COP and the GEF Council: This issue was addressed in plenary on Sunday, and in a contact group on the financial mechanism. In plenary, noting agreement at INC7, the EU, supported by Japan but opposed by Iran, proposed adoption of the draft MoU (UNEP/MC/COP.1/15). Seeing no consensus, COP1 President Chardonnes suggested deferring the issue to the COW.

The COW referred this matter to the contact group on financial mechanism, discussions of which are summarized above. (See page 4.)

On Saturday, COW Chair Lugris suggested forwarding the draft MoU to the COP for further consideration, noting that the brackets remained in place on language that states: "Recalling paragraph 8 of Article 13, the GEF Council, in evaluation of the eligibility of parties and signatories of projects, shall only give due consideration to the technicality of the potential mercury reductions of the proposed activity related cost of such projects, and refrain from subjecting the developing countries and countries with economies in transition projects to political consideration or unilateral coercive action that hampers or restricts the developing countries and countries with economies in transition rights to implement their obligations under the Convention."

In the COP, COP1 President Chardonnes observed that there are brackets remaining in the decision and the MoU, and proposed that the decision (UNEP/MC/COP.1/CRP.31) be deferred to COP2.

The US stated that the MoU is necessary to operationalize the GEF component of the financial mechanism. She called for removing the text in brackets and adopting clean text, supported by Canada, Norway, the EU, Switzerland, and Japan, all of which noted that the delay caused by a non-decision could risk future GEF funding for the Convention.

Iran opposed, lamenting that the "unilateral" action by one party to the GEF Council to reject projects for non-technical reasons requires a "depoliticization of the GEF decision-making process." He suggested that the interim GEF funding would remain in place.

The GEF reported that the current arrangements had been agreed on a provisional basis until COP1. She said that without the MoU, the GEF would not have the provisions to serve as the financial mechanism.

COP1 President Chardonnes observed no agreement or flexibility, and proposed forwarding the issue to COP2.

The US underlined that deferral would put the GEF part of the financial mechanism "into jeopardy," with implications for the Convention. The US, supported by Canada, Norway, Switzerland, and the EU, opposed sending the bracketed text to COP2 and supported forwarding the previous clean text.

Zambia expressed disappointment at the outcome, citing the importance of the GEF in enabling developing countries to access necessary financing, and called for a clean text.

Iran supported deferring the issue to COP2 and suggested the GEF Council could consider the MoU with the bracketed text.

COP1 President Chardonnes reported that there is no consensus, that the issue will be deferred to COP2, and that the COP Presidency will be available to facilitate consultations on this issue in the coming year.

The Russian Federation supported Iran and expressed hope that more transparency will help make the GEF a "truly global facility."

MATTERS RECOMMENDED BY THE INC: Exemptions: This agenda item was taken up by the COP on Sunday. The COP adopted the formats to be used in registering an exemption from the phase out dates listed in Annex A and Annex B, including the information to be provided upon registering for an exemption, and for the register of exemptions (UNEP/MC/COP.1/16).

Final Decision: In the final decision (UNEP/MC/COP.1/16), the COP:

- adopts the formats for registering for an exemption and the formats for the register of exemptions;
- requests the secretariat to make the formats for registering for an exemption available to states and REIOs; and
- instructs the secretariat to establish the register of exemptions as per the above-mentioned formats, maintain the register, and make it available to the public.

Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) National Action Plans (NAPs): On Wednesday, the interim Secretariat introduced the documents (UNEP/MC/COP.1/17) and the COW approved the guidance, forwarding it to the plenary for formal adoption. On Friday, the COP adopted the guidance.

Final Decision: In its decision (UNEP/MC/COP.1/17), the COP agrees to the use of the guidance on the preparation of NAPs by parties addressing the issue of ASGM that is more than insignificant and welcomes the work of the WHO on guidance on the development of public health strategies for ASGM.

Location of the Secretariat: This issue was addressed under the provision of a permanent secretariat, as summarized on page 7.

Open Burning: On Monday, the interim Secretariat introduced the document on open burning (UNEP/MC/COP.1/19). Guinea, Gabon, Burkina Faso, Mexico, Nigeria, Macedonia, and IPEN requested that the interim Secretariat provide further information on mercury emissions from open burning. Kenya highlighted the potential for synergies with the Stockholm Convention and called for the development of a toolkit on mercury emissions from open burning.

The US suggested that this issue be addressed at COP5, while IPEN called for further consideration at COP2. Syria called for financial and technical assistance from the UN Development Programme (UNDP). The Gambia called for technology transfer to developing countries to curb open burning, with Indonesia also calling for knowledge sharing. Côte d'Ivoire and Togo called for a comprehensive approach to address solid waste disposal in developing countries.

The UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) noted that the data collected on emissions on open burning is not sufficient for a comprehensive analysis, and called for urgent action. World Federation of Public Health Associations called for awareness creation, particularly for medical waste.

COW Chair Lugris suggested, and delegates agreed, to request the interim Secretariat to prepare a draft decision on this issue. The COW approved the draft decision on mercury emissions related to open burning of waste on Thursday. On Friday, the COP adopted the final decision.

Final Decision: In its decision on mercury emissions related to the open burning of waste (UNEP/MC/COP.1/CRP.13), the COP, *inter alia*:

- recognizes that the guidance on best available techniques/best environmental practices states that open burning of waste is considered bad environmental practice and should be discouraged;
- invites parties and others to submit to the secretariat information on mercury emissions from open burning of waste; and
- request the secretariat to continue to compile information on mercury emissions from open burning of waste, particularly from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, including information from inventories and mercury initial assessments, emission factors and real measurements of

emissions submitted by parties, and any relevant information developed by the Basel and Stockholm Conventions, and to submit that information to Minamata COP2.

Programme of Work and Budget for 2018-2019: This issue was taken up in the COW on Tuesday and in the contact group on programme and work and budget, co-chaired by Reginald Hernaus (the Netherlands) and Sam Adu-Kumi (Ghana).

The interim Secretariat introduced the documents (UNEP/MC/COP.1/20, 21 and Add.1, 2, 3/Rev.1 and 4) in the COW on Tuesday. The EU and Switzerland observed that some costs were higher than expected, including the cost of meetings, with Switzerland also citing high staff costs and non-consistent methodologies for calculating staff costs. The US further requested information on planned activities.

The UN Environment Global Mercury Partnership Advisory Group reported on its activities to facilitate capacity building. UNITAR highlighted its assistance to 22 countries in their acceleration of their ratification and early implementation of the Convention. On behalf of the Inter-Organization Programme on Sound Management of Chemicals, UNITAR also reported on its activities, including support to 105 countries to develop Minamata Initial Assessments.

The UN Economic Commission for Europe, the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and UNDP provided updates on activities performed with parties and partner agencies in support of Minamata Convention implementation at national to international levels. The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization highlighted the need for more work on mercury in the Amazon. Chair Lugris highlighted that a contact group would be established to further consider this issue.

The contact group reviewed the costs associated with meetings for the 2018-2019 biennium. Several developed countries drew comparisons with the costs of hosting the BRS COPs and requested a breakdown of costs, with comparisons between the estimates for Minamata COPs with BRS COPs. The interim Secretariat presented a comparative analysis between the Minamata budgeted costs for COP2, and historical and comparable BRS COP costs in Geneva. Delegates discussed the proposed costs, considering the possibility of reducing interpretation hours, the potential of shortening COP2 meeting days and overall venue costs.

On regional preparatory meetings for the COPs, several developed and developing countries affirmed the utility of these meetings, including as a means to increase the efficiency of the COPs by facilitating regional groups to develop shared positions. Responding to a request to compare their estimates to the costs of the BRS preparatory meetings, the interim Secretariat provided the comparison, and noted that the BRS budget supports two delegates per country per meeting, and that the Minamata process responds to parties' requests regarding the duration of the regional meetings. One country suggested joint BRS/Minamata preparatory meetings when possible. Delegates then considered costs associated with intersessional meetings.

Discussions on the SIP and on staff costs did not take place in this contact group since there was no consensus on those matters in the contact group on financial mechanism or the Friends of the Chair on the secretariat arrangements.

Delegates agreed on a meetings package for COP2 that would include: 300 pages of pre-session documents; 11 sessions of interpretation; five-day duration of the COP; six days at the venue; 100 pages of in-session documents; and 170 pages of post-

session documents. Delegates debated the need for a contingency line in the meetings package, and agreed to add 7% contingency to the security budget line.

On Friday, the contact group worked throughout the day to make progress on the costs related to the organization of COPs 2 and 3 and to produce clean text in the draft decision on the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2018-2019. Due to protracted discussions in the COW on the permanent arrangements of the secretariat and on the SIP, the group was unable to progress, and paused to seek further clarification from the COW on the way forward. The COW recommended that the group reconvene, and use the assumption that the secretariat would be based in Geneva. With these instructions, the contact group reconvened and began consideration of staffing tables and a line-by-line reading of the budget and Programme of Work.

The COW approved a draft decision (UNEP/MC/COP.1/CRP.36) on the Programme of Work and budget in the early hours of Saturday morning, which was adopted by the COP.

Final Decision: In its decision on the Programme of Work of the secretariat and budget for the biennium 2018-2019 (UNEP/MC/COP.1/CRP.36), the COP, *inter alia*:

- approves the programme budget for the Minamata Convention for the biennium 2018-2019 of US\$3,916,524 for 2018 and US\$3,843,074 for 2019;
- approves the indicative staffing table for the secretariat for the biennium 2018-2019 used for costing purposes to set the overall budget; and
- requests parties and invites non-parties and others in a position to do so, to contribute to the Special Trust Fund to enable support for capacity-building and technical assistance activities, and to support the participation of developing country parties in the meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies.

Regional Centres: This issue was first suggested on Monday in the context of the financial mechanism, and later addressed through informal consultations facilitated by María Florencia Grimalt (Argentina).

In the COW, stressing the importance of regional centres in supporting capacity building and technical assistance, Argentina, for GRULAC, suggested developing terms of reference for regional centres under the Minamata Convention and considering all issues related to the financial mechanism in a contact group.

On Friday, the COW agreed to forward the draft decision to the COP, which subsequently adopted it without amendment.

Final Decision: In its final decision (UNEP/MC/COP.1/CRP.28/Rev.1), the COP, *inter alia*, recognizes the capacity building and technical assistance delivered through other multilateral and bilateral means and requests the secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to collect information on work done by existing regional, sub-regional and national arrangements in delivering capacity building and technical assistance to assist parties in implementing their obligations, and report for consideration by COP2.

MATTERS STIPULATED BY THE CONVENTION FOR ACTION BY THE COP

TRADE IN MERCURY COMPOUNDS: The interim Secretariat introduced this document (UNEP/MC/COP.1/22) on Tuesday in the COW. On Article 3 (supply sources and trade), the EU and Japan suggested that the COP consider trade in mercury compounds in the future. ZMWG proposed, opposed by the US, considering the inclusion of mercury compounds at COP3. COW

Chair Lugris proposed, and delegates agreed, to re-examine the issue of trade in mercury compounds at future meetings of the COP.

REVIEW OF ANNEXES A AND B: The interim Secretariat introduced the document (UNEP/MC/COP.1/22) on Tuesday. On mercury-added products, delegates agreed to request the secretariat to compile information provided by parties and prepare a report regarding the possible inclusion of additional mercury-added products in Annex A for review at COP4.

On manufacturing processes, delegates agreed that the COP should request the secretariat to compile information provided by parties and prepare a report regarding the possible inclusion of additional manufacturing processes in Annex B for review at COP3.

EMISSIONS CRITERIA GUIDANCE: On Sunday, the COP adopted the guidance in relation to mercury emissions referred to in paragraphs 9(a) and 9(b) of Article 8 contained in UNEP/MC/COP.1/23.

Final Decision: In the final decision emissions criteria guidance (UNEP/MC/COP.1/23), the COP adopts the guidance with regard to Article 8, particularly with regard to guidance on criteria that parties may develop pursuant to the methodology for preparing inventories of emissions, as put forward by INC7.

RELEASES: This issue was introduced by the interim Secretariat on Tuesday (UNEP/MC/COP.1/24). Switzerland and Norway, supported by Gabon, highlighted the need to collect information to better understand the point source releases and to compile this information by COP2. The US noted that the identification of relevant sources should be done by parties and that the compilation should be done by the Secretariat by COP2. Drawing attention to training carried out domestically, Democratic Republic of the Congo indicated its plan to work on inventories of different point sources.

The COW requested the interim Secretariat to prepare a draft decision on the matter, which was adopted by the COP on Friday evening.

Final Decision: In its decision (UNEP/MC/COP.1/CRP.23), COP1 encourages parties to identify relevant point sources at the national level pursuant to Article 9.2b (relevant sources) as soon as possible, and to submit information to the secretariat on the identified relevant sources; and requests the secretariat to compile submissions from parties and provide such information to COP2.

INTERIM STORAGE GUIDELINES: This issue was addressed in the COW on Monday and in a contact group on technical matters on Tuesday and Wednesday, co-chaired by Karissa Kovner (US) and Teeraporn Wiriwutikorn (Thailand). The Secretariat introduced the draft guidelines (UNEP/MC/COP.1/25). The US, Uganda and Togo all requested a time limit with respect to the revision of the guidelines. Indonesia called to include the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities while Mexico noted the need for financial support towards implementation of the guidelines.

The COW forwarded the matter to the technical contact group and a draft decision on the interim storage guidelines that provides for a process to revise the documents was finalized on Wednesday. The COP adopted the decision on Friday.

Final Decision: In its decision (UNEP/MC/COP.1/CRP.24), COP1:

- requests the secretariat to undertake further revision of the draft guideline, as follows: seek technical input from relevant experts, including technical experts from the Basel Convention,

by 31 December 2017, amend the guidelines and publish on the Minamata Convention website a revised draft version by 1 March 2018, obtain further comments from the experts, parties and others, by 1 May 2018, and submit the revised guidelines to COP2; and

- encourages the use of the draft guidelines in the interim and on a provisional basis, as appropriate.

WASTE THRESHOLDS: This issue was taken up by the COW on Tuesday and in the contact group on technical matters from Tuesday to Thursday.

The interim Secretariat introduced the compilation of additional information on the use of mercury waste thresholds (UNEP/MC/COP.1/26 and Add.1), the informal process led by Japan (UNEP/MC/COP.1/INF/10) and report on the outcomes of the Mercury Waste Project (UNEP/MC/COP.1/INF/6).

Japan introduced CRP.8 that, *inter alia*, proposes establishing an *ad hoc* intersessional working group. Several countries supported intersessional work, with many calling for regional balance. Switzerland announced it was ready to make a “substantial technical contribution.” India suggested the inclusion of non-parties in the expert group.

The EU and Norway observed the complexity of the work, including different types of thresholds and waste categories, with the EU saying that the group should identify if all products or only mercury-added products should be deemed mercury waste. Thailand suggested that threshold values may not be necessary for wastes consisting of or containing mercury or mercury-added products. Mexico and the Gambia noted that thresholds should consider specific local situations.

ZMWG indicated that no threshold is necessary for waste consisting of, or containing mercury or mercury compounds, and, with IPEN, called for the inclusion of civil society in the expert group. Highlighting mercury waste in Kyrgyzstan, Independent Ecological Expertise said the thresholds should be low to prevent extraction of mercury from wastes.

On Thursday, the COW approved the draft decision on the definition of mercury waste thresholds, and forwarded it to the plenary for formal adoption. COP1 adopted the decision on Friday evening.

Final Decision: In the final decision (UNEP/MC/COP.1/CRP.26), the COP, *inter alia*:

- welcomes the Basel Convention decision on the technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of wastes consisting of, containing or contaminated with mercury;
- establishes an open-ended process to initiate work on the relevant thresholds, with the following terms of reference to: identify the types of waste that fall within the categories specified in paragraph 2 of Article 11, and provide related information; and prioritize the types of waste identified that are most relevant for the establishment of waste thresholds, mindful of the objective of the Convention; and identify possible approaches to establishing any needed thresholds for the waste prioritized; and
- requests the secretariat to, among others: circulate an open call to all parties, non-parties and other relevant stakeholders for the nomination of experts to participate in the process, by 1 November 2017; call for submissions by the experts by 30 December 2017; circulate the compilation to experts by 15 February 2018, with a request for input by 15 April 2018; and consolidate the input received from the experts by 15 May

2018, and provide the consolidation to the experts, with a request for the submission of possible approaches by 15 July 2018; and

- provide a report to COP2 on the outcomes to date of the open-ended process.

CONTAMINATED SITES: This issue was taken up by the COW on Tuesday and in a contact group on technical matters on Tuesday to Thursday. The interim Secretariat introduced the guidance on the management of contaminated sites (UNEP/MC/COP.1/27). Colombia, Malaysia, Dominican Republic, China, IPEN, and the BCRC-Russian Federation supported the development of the guidance. Many countries expressed support for the draft roadmap. The US characterized the roadmap as “a bit ambitious.”

Thailand, Switzerland, the US, the African Group and others expressed interest in participating in intersessional work. Brazil called for regional balance and involvement of experts from both the health and environment sectors. The EU called for the guidance to provide information on addressing contaminated sites with limited resources, with Mexico expressing willingness to share its experiences. The African Group called for work on definitions. Switzerland highlighted the need for the guidance to include financing possibilities for remediation, including levies on waste disposal. Indonesia called for the guidance to include information on contaminated soils.

Chile noted the need for public awareness and capacity building, and a participatory approach to risk assessment. Honduras noted that the guidance that could be used to formulate national guidelines. Syria stressed the importance of including information on contamination due to war.

Dominican Republic, supported by Peru, emphasized the need for consideration of prevention of contamination and urged for technical assistance and capacity building in this area. IPEN urged COP1 to reach consensus on the way forward on the guidance.

On Thursday, the COW approved the draft guidance on the management of contaminated sites and forwarded it to the plenary for formal adoption, with delegates agreeing to task the secretariat to update the annexes, and also agreeing that the COP “decides” rather than “agrees” to develop draft guidance on managing contaminated sites. COP1 adopted the guidance on Friday evening.

Final Decision: In the final decision (UNEP/MC/COP.1/CRP.9), the COP agrees to the development of draft guidance. Annex 1 contains the draft roadmap for the preparation of the guidance document on the management of contaminated sites, and Annex 2 contains the draft structure and content of the guidance.

CAPACITY BUILDING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER: This item was introduced by the interim Secretariat on Tuesday as part of an omnibus document (UNEP/MC/COP.1/22). Delegates agreed that the COP requests the secretariat to request submissions and reports from parties and other stakeholders and to present the information received to COP2 for its consideration.

COLLABORATION ON HEALTH-RELATED ASPECTS: This agenda item was taken up by the COW on Tuesday. The interim Secretariat introduced the document (UNEP/MC/COP.1/22).

WHO highlighted the collaboration opportunities with the Convention secretariat. The African Group supported the secretariat’s continued collaborations, with Ghana specifically

requesting more active engagement with International Labour Organization (ILO). The COP agreed to request the secretariat to continue working in cooperation and collaboration with WHO and ILO and to ensure that any list of health-related issues presented to future meetings of the COP for its consideration is developed in a collaborative manner.

VENUE AND DATE OF COP2

On Saturday morning, delegates agreed to hold COP2 from 19-23 November 2018 in Geneva, Switzerland.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

A High-Level Segment convened on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning, with delegates meeting in an opening session, breaking out into closed ministerial dialogues and reporting back to the high-level plenary on Friday morning. Jacob Duer, Principal Coordinator, interim Secretariat of the Minamata Convention, opened the high-level segment, acknowledging the presence of two Heads of State and Government, and 80 Ministers.

Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Confederation and Minister for the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communication, noted that the Minamata Convention is a celebration of a global solution and is a success story for multilateralism. She highlighted the fact that the Minamata Convention was the first multilateral environmental agreement negotiated in the 21st century, noting that it builds upon elements already present in other agreements in the chemicals and wastes cluster. She shared Switzerland's implementation of the provisions of the Convention, and called on all countries with the ability to do so to contribute to the financial mechanism. Emphasizing that the Convention needs strong implementation assistance, Leuthard announced that Switzerland would contribute CHF1 million to the SIP pending a good outcome on the permanent secretariat of the Convention.

Erik Solheim, Executive Director, UN Environment, expressed gratitude to those who had helped shape the Convention, including those who had suffered under the weight of Minamata disease and thus created awareness of the dangers of exposure to mercury. Stating that the Convention is a "triumph of multilateralism," he said that the global community can solve any environmental problem by working together. He acknowledged the political will of several governments in the fight against pollution, including the governments of China, Chile, Kenya, Rwanda, and Guyana. He reported that the theme of the UN Environment Assembly in December 2017 is "beat pollution," and urged countries to work towards a pollution-free planet.

The high-level segment then broke into eight ministerial roundtables where Ministers engaged in closed-door interactive discussions around the themes of mercury in land, air and water. At each roundtable, Ministers designated a representative to report back to the COP on the "action messages."

Chardonnens opened the report-back session on Friday. In a keynote address, M. Sanjayan, Chief Executive Officer, Conservation International, lauding the entry into force of the Minamata Convention, and emphasized that the trajectory set today will change the world in ten years. He noted that environmentalism is about saving people, and pointed to the Minamata Convention as a landmark example of this.

Sierra Leone reported that her roundtable called for high-level commitment to implement the Convention with robust action plans; proposed further work on awareness raising, capacity

building and partnerships; and made a link between mercury and Sustainable Development Goals. The UK indicated that her group had stressed the importance of setting clear directions about ending mercury use including through providing implementation timetables, raising public awareness and engaging the private sector, and asked for more cooperation to make "a cleaner and safer mercury-free world." Recognizing little awareness among ministers in their group about mercury problems, Palau reported that his group highlighted the need for, *inter alia*, long-term programmes going beyond political term limits, cross-sectional and inter-ministerial cooperation, more regional actions, support of developed countries, and science-based policies.

Sweden reported that her roundtable agreed that action on mercury is urgently needed, and could go hand-in-hand with efforts to promote the green economy and sustainable consumption and production. Citing the ban of mercury-containing products in Sweden, she stressed the importance of raising public awareness and engaging with industry. Iraq encouraged countries to use and build on multilateral and bilateral partnerships for implementation in areas such as monitoring and technology transfer, building on existing platforms and tools. Côte d'Ivoire highlighted key take-home messages for the group, including the need for all stakeholders to cooperate with one another in order to introduce alternative practices and technologies to phase out mercury. Afghanistan noted that there is a duty to protect the most vulnerable and to take and ensure actions. Peru highlighted the importance of regional approaches in addition to national ones, the need to have an integrated approach, and the importance of ensuring transparency.

In their statements, many ministers and other high-level officials reiterated their commitment to implementing the Minamata Convention. Japan drew attention to the country's experiences with Minamata disease, and noted efforts to develop and share technologies to address mercury pollution. The UK announced a contribution of US\$150,000 to the SIP, in addition to their financial contributions through the GEF.

Uganda called for support for awareness raising on emission sources including from open burning, stronger collaborations, and political will at the regional, sub-regional and national levels to promote successful implementation. The EU called for national legislation to augment international agreements in order to meet the common goal of addressing mercury pollution.

Côte d'Ivoire noted illegal gold mining as a regional issue affecting thousands of people, and indicated the country's action on awareness raising and training and on gold mining regulation. Calling for capacity building and adequate financial resources, he announced the country's willingness to host a future meeting of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM).

Jordan emphasized his country's political commitment and strategic planning for environmental protection, particularly reduction and prevention of mercury pollution. Kiribati indicated that people in small island countries suffer from mercury pollution due to fish consumption, calling for commitment and partnerships within and across national borders.

Finland drew attention to mercury pollution in the Arctic region due to long-range transport, underscoring the synergies within the cluster of chemicals and waste management. Kuwait pointed to national legislation to regulate the import of mercury-containing products, especially cosmetics, and stressed his country's commitment to protect the most vulnerable, including

embryos and newborns. Nigeria announced that, in partnership with the GEF, UNIDO, and UNITAR, his country has concluded its Minamata Initial Assessment, and stressed the need to build partnerships and synergies, develop a sustainable ASGM sector, engage in reliable data sharing, and the develop practical guidelines to ensure the success of the Convention.

Sierra Leone noted that the ASGM sector provides thousands of jobs in least developed countries, stressing the political significance of the sector in addressing mercury, and underlined the need for unwavering resolve at the national and international level to ensure that the Convention is beneficial to all. Pointing to ASGM, Chad highlighted the country's constitutional principle for managing pollution levels which, he noted, addresses both the human and environmental aspects of development.

Myanmar highlighted his country's development of guiding documents and master plans for hazardous waste management, including those for mercury and cyanide. South Africa reiterated commitment to collective actions to address mercury, and drew attention to national efforts to ratify the Convention.

Closing the high-level segment, Chardonnens emphasized that mercury management should be integrated into public health and local level pollution strategies and control measures, and stressed the need for multi-stakeholder participation.

CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

The closing plenary began at 3:08 am on Saturday morning, after the closure of the contact group on Programme of Work and budget, and protracted discussions on issues that the COW had been unable to resolve.

In the closing plenary, the COP adopted the report of the meeting (UNEP/MC/COP.1/L.1). COP1 President Chardonnens expressed gratitude for all the work done at COP1 and the achievements made, underscoring that "together we can move mountains." He noted that his thoughts were with the people awaiting implementation of the Convention, including newborns, children, and those suffering from Minamata disease.

Chardonnens asked countries to submit their closing statements in written form to the interim Secretariat, noting the lateness of the hour, and closed the meeting at 3:15 am.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF COP1

If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.
— Henry David Thoreau

Minamata COP1 was the first COP for a new environmental convention in 12 years. While the first COP is traditionally a time for celebration, delegates had little time to rest on their laurels. To realize the promise of their new Convention, delegates had considerable boulders to maneuver to build the foundation necessary to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury.

Many of the issues left unresolved from the seventh meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC7) were procedural, from reporting formats to secretariat arrangements and the financial mechanism. These procedures, however, are not minor details left unattended after the technical work is complete. Rather, these issues are vital components necessary for the future success of the Minamata Convention and it was clear they would involve careful political choices. At the end of INC7, some

delegates had floated the possibility of an INC8 to try to reach agreement on these issues. But, instead, they were elevated to the level of a COP.

This brief analysis considers the extent to which COP1 built the foundations for a successful Convention able to reach its objective of protecting human health and the environment from anthropogenic mercury emissions. With the technical work either provisionally agreed at INC7, or quickly addressed by COP1, the remaining cornerstones of the foundation involved weighty choices. Allusions to children and babies recurred, as many delegates felt the need to make the right choices for this Convention in its infancy. And, as it is often difficult to change course in global diplomacy—future decisions tend to follow the path laid by previous choices—COP1 was both path-breaking in its celebrations and path-setting in its decision making.

VALUE OF CELEBRATION

The first COP marks a rare opportunity to celebrate a new treaty. For the Minamata Convention, this celebration was especially warranted. Mercury was barely recognized as a global environmental problem in the early 2000s. After considerable scientific effort and national and international leadership, there is now a treaty regulating the lifecycle of mercury production and waste management. In just eight years, the world went from an agreement to start negotiations to a fully-realized Convention that has entered into force to protect both the environment and human health.

The Minamata Convention starts with several advantages, including: a built-in compliance mechanism, clear timelines for phase down and phase out of mercury, and strong links to, and partnerships with, the health community. At COP1, more than 80 ministers, and other high-level delegates, including two Heads of State, celebrated this unique and new global convention. Surely, much to celebrate, but lasting reductions in mercury emissions cannot come from receptions and speeches. INC7 left several issues that the Convention specifies must be resolved at COP1. With this pressure, seasoned delegates characterized the negotiations on several issues as "very difficult, often emotional."

BUILDING THE BASE OF ITS OWN CASTLE

From the beginning, the Minamata Convention has often been likened to other chemicals and wastes MEAs in the same "family," particularly the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. One can understand the temptation to use the successes and experience of other MEAs as molds to cast the Minamata Convention's foundation and future. References to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions permeated many discussions, from wastes to reporting, and secretariat arrangements to financial arrangements, as these conventions serve as touchstones for many delegates and underscore the links and ongoing cooperation among the chemicals and wastes cluster.

Perhaps the most obvious case of learning from the past was on effectiveness evaluation. The Stockholm Convention—one of the few MEAs that specifies a process to assess its success vis-à-vis performance indicators—was a strong inspiration for the Canadian proposal for the Minamata effectiveness evaluation. Ultimately, the effectiveness evaluation bears a resemblance to the Stockholm Convention, in that the Minamata Convention's evaluation process will include a science-based monitoring component that is a key part of the overall evaluation framework that will inform the overall evaluation. Many delegates left confident that, like in the Stockholm Convention's evaluation,

additional, policy-related information from national reports and other sources would be included. Also, in a Minamata-specific twist, indigenous peoples, recognizing their traditional knowledge, will also be eligible for the committee, to contribute their expertise.

The reporting framework is another win for this COP. Coming into COP1, views on reporting ranged from providing information narrowly on efforts to implement the Convention's obligations, to asking for supplemental information to help gain an overall picture of the implementation. Delegates struck the balance between gathering comprehensive information, through voluntary provision of supplemental information, and not creating an onerous reporting burden to gather information from a range of sources and sectors. Parties will provide full reports every four years and partial reports every two years for issues where information is easier to obtain, such as on trade, eschewing synergizing with the BRS Conventions reporting cycles.

For the most part, delegates sought "made-for-Minamata" solutions. Despite the somewhat omnipresence of the BRS Conventions in the minds of delegates, and several nods in the decisions, the direct application of other chemicals and wastes lessons was fairly limited. Countries that are party only to the Minamata Convention, particularly the US, were wary of a wholesale adoption of models from the BRS Conventions. The unique constellation of interests, specific needs of countries, and particular provisions of the Minamata Convention, also led delegates to solutions that constructed a house suitable for governing mercury, rather than an extension of the BRS complex.

Nowhere were these singularities of the Minamata Convention more on display than the negotiations on the financial mechanism. Starting out the EU cited possible models drawing from the technical assistance programmes of the BRS Secretariat, to the Quick Start Programme and the special programme that also aim to support capacity building in chemicals and wastes issues and are both administered by UNEP. Alternatively, the GRULAC proposal mostly started from scratch. The outcome, a time-bound, voluntary fund administered by the Secretariat through the guidance of a governing board, combines elements of these models. It is time-limited and overseen by a board, like the Quick Start Programme and special programme, but hosted by the Secretariat, which will report to the COP, like the BRS technical assistance programme. With early pledges of US\$250,000, finding a Minamata-specific solution proved effective for the SIP, a key institution in the Convention to boost support for developing countries to meet the imminent deadlines for phase-out of many mercury-added products by 2020.

On the other, and larger, part of the financial mechanism, the unique constellation of interests and parties led to an incomplete and weak foundation. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the GEF was blocked by Iran, with the support of a non-party, the Russian Federation. While Iran has raised its concerns over the "politicization" of GEF decision making in other forums, including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, its position at COP1 proved intractable. As multiple delegates said during the final hours of the COP, the non-decision to defer the MoU with the GEF to COP2 "jeopardizes" the largest part of the Convention's financial mechanism. The GEF was quick to point out that the funding for the Convention thus far was only an interim arrangement that expired at the end of COP1. The text of the MoU (which was never adopted) would have provided the GEF with the necessary provisions to serve as part of the

financial mechanism. Without those provisions, it is unclear how the GEF can fulfill this role. Further, several delegates from donor countries worried that this non-decision sends a negative message to the GEF, and there may be lasting repercussions. As negotiations for the GEF's seventh replenishment cycle are already underway, some delegates worried that the Minamata Convention will struggle to secure GEF funding as it competes with other MEAs that have secure and operational arrangements with the GEF.

The secretariat arrangements—a fundamental pillar of any MEA—also remains on uncertain ground. The US characterized these negotiations as "deep and difficult," while others used adjectives like "emotional," and "surprisingly, so tough." Many parties supported Geneva as the permanent location of the secretariat, and partial integration with the BRS Secretariat. Proponents for a degree of synergies pointed out that the experience and expertise of the BRS Secretariat could help the Minamata Convention find its feet quickly, thus helping countries to meet the Convention's deadlines. Others, most vocally the US, cited the unique provisions of the Convention as lying outside BRS expertise. The tentative agreement struck—dubbed by one of the co-facilitators as "the most significant compromise of the COP"—seemed to meet the needs of both sides. The secretariat would stand on its own, but "rely heavily" on the BRS Secretariat for some operational aspects of its programme of work: addressing the "how" of facilitating an MEA, not the "what" of its substantive work. Yet, as one delegate lamented "it's trite but true that the proverbial devil was in the details," as views differed on what "rely heavily" might entail in practice, and the associated costs. These details proved too burdensome and the tentative deal dissolved.

At COP2, delegates will again address the issue of the permanent secretariat, its location and its structural arrangements independent or integrated with the BRS Secretariat. In the interim, the secretariat will continue to be located in Geneva, under the purview of UN Environment's Chemicals and Wastes branch. Many noted that this is not ideal, given that the secretariat must move from servicing negotiations to facilitating implementation, requiring more staff with different skills. Yet, many pointed out that an interim arrangement that leads to a more coherent permanent solution at COP2 is preferable to a hasty decision taken at COP1. Given the fundamental importance of the secretariat, the cement needs more time to set on this key aspect of the Minamata Convention's foundation.

Interim or now, the secretariat has its work cut out for it in the year ahead. It must initiate and shepherd the consideration intersessional work established by delegates. In addition to the effectiveness evaluation committee, intersessional work on contaminated sites, waste thresholds, and other items including preparing to start accepting funds and proposals for the SIP. This work over the next year has the potential to take meaningful steps to operationalize the ideals and commitment expressed in the Minamata Convention.

BUILDING ON THE PAST, FOR THE FUTURE

Delegates often refer to the Minamata Convention as a "happy" Convention, owing to the positive spirit that has always characterized the negotiations. The result of those negotiations was an ambitious Convention with rapidly-approaching deadlines. By 2018, countries are to end mercury as a catalyst in acetaldehyde production. And 2020 is a significant deadline to phase out manufacture and trade of many mercury-added

products, and to submit national action plans on artisanal and small-scale gold mining. Then, parties aim to cease mercury use in chlor-alkali production by 2025. A prompt start is required to meet these deadlines, and support from the secretariat as well as the requisite funding is crucial.

In this context, the mixed results of COP1 may mean mixed results in meeting these deadlines. The SIP will be valuable, but relies on voluntary contributions. Without the GEF, developing countries may struggle to keep up with their commitments. After COP3, scheduled for 2019, parties could be assessing how to improve its performance, in lieu of implementation struggles, or considering ways to build on its successes. The strong results of the reporting and evaluation framework will help assess the extent of the potential problems created through the weaker parts of the Minamata Convention's foundations. By the effectiveness evaluation, slated for 2023, it may already be clear if COP1 set a path toward a dynamic, still "happy" Convention able to incorporate new sources of mercury, or a small Convention trying to catch up to its ambition and ideals, sitting as a castle still in the air.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Thirteenth Meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants

Review Committee: The Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC13) will review the possible listing of hazardous chemicals under the various annexes of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. **dates:** 17-20 October 2017 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** BRS Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8729 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **email:** brs@brsmeas.org **www:** www.pops.int

8th SETAC Africa Biennial Conference: The 8th Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) Africa Biennial Conference (SAF 2017) seeks to provide a forum for novel discoveries and approaches related to environmental research for Africans and by Africans. The theme is "Quality of African Environment: the Roles of Science, Industry and Regulators." This meeting will consist of lectures and presentations on landmark scientific research, professional training opportunities, and networking to promote new collaborations. Conference participation is expected to be a mix of academia, industry and government agencies. **dates:** 17-19 October 2017 **location:** Calabar, Nigeria **contact:** SETAC Europe Office **phone:** +32-2-772-72-81 **fax:** +32-2-770-53-86 **email:** setaceu@setac.org **www:** https://saf2017.setac.org/

Thirteenth Meeting of the Rotterdam Convention Chemical

Review Committee: The Chemical Review Committee (CRC13) will review chemicals and pesticide formulations for possible listing under Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention. **dates:** 23-27 October 2017 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** BRS Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8218 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **email:** brs@brsmeas.org **www:** www.pic.int/

World Resources Forum 2017: The World Resources Forum (WRF) 2017 offers first-hand information about emerging issues, global trends, progress and innovation in resources and raw materials management. **dates:** 24-25 October 2017 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** WRF Secretariat **phone:** +41-71-554-0900 **email:** info@wrforum.org **www:** www.wrforum.org

First International Conference on the Toxicological Aspects of Mercury on Human Health and the Environment: This meeting aims to reflect on mercury and its utilization in dental fillings. **dates:** 9-10 November 2017 **location:** Rio de Janeiro,

Brazil contact: National School of Public Health Sergio Arouca (ENSP) **email:** seminariointer.pspma@ensp.fiocruz.br **www:** https://iaomt.org/meetings/other-conferences/

38th SETAC North American Annual Meeting: The theme of the 38th SETAC North American Annual Meeting is "Toward a Superior Future: Balancing Chemical Use and Ecosystem Health," this meeting will consist of lectures and presentations on landmark scientific research, professional training opportunities, and networking to promote new collaborations. Conference participation is expected to be a mix of academia, industry and government agencies. **dates:** 12-16 November 2017 **location:** Minneapolis, Minnesota, US **contact:** SETAC North America Office **phone:** +1-850-469-1500 **fax:** +1-888-296-4136 **email:** setac@setac.org **www:** https://msp.setac.org/

29th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol:

The Joint 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention and the 29th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol is scheduled to consider HFC management, implementation, and other matters. **dates:** 20-24 November 2017 **location:** Montreal, Canada **contact:** Ozone Secretariat **phone:** +254-20-762-3851 **fax:** +254-20-762-0335 **email:** ozone.info@unep.org **www:** http://ozone.unep.org

53rd Meeting of the GEF Council: The GEF Council will approve projects to realize global environmental benefits in the GEF's focal areas, provide guidance to the GEF Secretariat and implementing agencies, and to discuss its relations with the conventions for which it serves as the financial mechanism. In addition, the 23rd Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund Council Meeting will be held on Thursday, 30 November. On Monday, 27 November, there will be a consultation with Civil Society Organizations. **dates:** 28-30 November 2017 **location:** Washington DC, US **contact:** GEF Secretariat **phone:** +1-202-473-0508 **fax:** +1-202-522-3240/3245 **email:** secretariat@thegef.org **www:** www.thegef.org/events/53rd-gef-council-meeting

UN Environment Assembly (UNEA): The third meeting of the Assembly, with the overarching theme of pollution, aims to deliver a number of tangible commitments to end the pollution of air, land, waterways, and oceans, and to safely manage chemicals and waste. Four events will take place in Nairobi in conjunction with the Assembly, including the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (27-28 November), the Open-ended Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (29 November - 1 December), Science, Policy and Business Forum (2-3 December), and Sustainable Innovation Expo (4-6 December). **dates:** 4-6 December 2017 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** UN Environment Secretariat **phone:** +254-20-762-1234 **email:** beatpollution@unenvironment.org **www:** www.unep.org/environmentassembly/assembly

SAICM Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting for the 2nd Meeting of the Intersessional Process: This regional meeting of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) is tentatively scheduled to convene in 2018 in preparation for the second meeting of the SAICM intersessional process and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. **dates:** 23-26 January 2018 **location:** tbd **contact:** SAICM Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8273 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** Brenda.koekkoek@unep.org **www:** www.saicm.org

SAICM Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Meeting for the 2nd Meeting of the Intersessional Process: This regional meeting is tentatively scheduled to convene in

2018 in preparation for the second meeting of the SAICM intersessional process and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. **dates:** 29 January-1 February 2018 **location:** Panama City, Panama **contact:** SAICM Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8273 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** Brenda.koekkoek@unep.org **www:** www.saicm.org

SAICM African Regional Meeting for the 2nd Meeting of the Intersessional Process: This regional meeting is tentatively scheduled to convene in 2018 in preparation for the second meeting of the SAICM intersessional process and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. **dates:** 6-9 February 2018 **location:** Abidjan, Ivory Coast **contact:** SAICM Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8273 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** Brenda.koekkoek@unep.org **www:** www.saicm.org

SAICM EU-JUSSCANNZ Regional Meeting for the 2nd Meeting of the Intersessional Process: This regional meeting is tentatively scheduled to convene in 2018 in preparation for the second meeting of the SAICM intersessional process and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. **dates:** 9 February 2018 **location:** Paris, France **contact:** SAICM Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8273 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** Brenda.koekkoek@unep.org **www:** www.saicm.org

SAICM Central and Eastern Europe Regional Meeting for the 2nd Meeting of the Intersessional Process: This regional meeting is tentatively scheduled to convene in 2018 in preparation for the second meeting of the SAICM intersessional process and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. **dates:** 19-21 February 2018 **location:** Lodz, Poland **contact:** SAICM Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8273 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** Brenda.koekkoek@unep.org **www:** www.saicm.org

Second meeting for SAICM intersessional process and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020: This meeting is tentatively scheduled to convene in 2018 in advance of the second meeting of the SAICM Open-ended Working Group (OEWG). **dates:** 12-16 March 2018 (tentative) **location:** Bangkok, Thailand (tentative) **contact:** SAICM Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8273 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** saicm.chemicals@unep.org **www:** www.saicm.org

12th International Conference on Waste Management and Technology: The 12th International Conference on Waste Management and Technology (ICWMT) is an important platform for specialists and officials to discuss scientific problems related to solid waste management, exchange experiences, and to look for innovative solutions. Initiated by Basel Convention Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific and approved by the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the People's Republic of China, ICWMT has been held 11 times since 2005. With the theme of "Overall Control of Environmental Risks," national and international participation are expected from government, research institutions, academia, and industry and business interests. **dates:** 27-30 March 2018 **location:** Beijing, China **contact:** Shi Xiong, Basel Convention Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific **phone:** +86-10-82686410 **fax:** +86-10-82686451 **email:** icwmt@tsinghua.edu.cn **www:** http://2017.icwmt.org

Second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury: COP2 is scheduled to convene in 2018. **dates:** 19-23 November 2018 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** Interim Secretariat of the Minamata Convention **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** mercury.chemicals@unep.org **www:** www.mercuryConvention.org

For additional meetings, see sdg.iisd.org

GLOSSARY

ASGM	Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining
BCRC	Basel Convention Regional Centre
BRS	Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
COP	Conference of the Parties
COW	Committee of the Whole
CRP	Conference Room Paper
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GRULAC	Latin American and Caribbean Group
INC	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee
IPEN	International POPs Elimination Network
MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
REIO	Regional Economic Integration Organization
SAICM	Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management
SIP	Specific International Programme
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNEP	UN Environment
UNIDO	UN Industrial Development Organization
UNITAR	UN Institute for Training and Research
WHO	World Health Organization
ZMWG	Zero Mercury Working Group