

Minamata COP-6 Highlights: Wednesday, 5 November 2025

Delegates to the sixth meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP-6) to the Minamata Convention experienced their busiest day yet. The plenary worked hard to complete the initial discussion of the many agenda items left, while three contact groups and several sideline consultations and informal groups tackled other issues introduced earlier in the week. By the end of the day, delegates adopted four decisions on the financial mechanism, effectiveness evaluation, knowledge management, and international cooperation, with another on supply and trade awaiting final edits before it can be adopted early Thursday.

Matters for Consideration or Action by the Conference of the Parties

Financial Mechanism: At the end of the afternoon plenary, BRAZIL introduced a draft decision (CRP.8), which delegates adopted. Among other things, the decision provides additional guidance to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), asks the Secretariat to finalize its analysis of staffing and funding needs of the Specific International Programme to support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance (SIP), and for COP-7 to consider a SIP extension for an additional period not exceeding seven years.

Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining (ASGM): The ASGM Contact Group, co-chaired by Linroy Christian (Antigua and Barbuda) and Rachel Burgess (Australia), reviewed the draft decision and Brazil's proposal (CRP.7). Parties broadly supported the core text, but discussion opened with a proposal to replace some references to ASGM with broader language describing "gold mining in which mercury amalgamation is used." Some participants cautioned that this could extend the scope of the Convention beyond its current focus, while others emphasized the need for factual accuracy in describing mercury emissions sources.

Further debate addressed language on downstream accountability, terminology around "diversion" versus "trade" of mercury, and references to international initiatives on responsible gold supply chains. Proposals to elaborate on just transition principles and community livelihoods were left in brackets for further consideration. In the operative sections, additional language on capacity building prompted mixed reactions. The Co-Chairs encouraged Parties to consult informally to narrow remaining differences.

Implementation and Compliance Committee (ICC): ICC Rapporteur Musa Kuzumila Ngunila (Tanzania) presented the

Committee's report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/14), which includes recommendations to the COP on reporting issues involving primary mercury mining, stocks and sources, trade, and waste.

He noted that the ICC welcomed the strategy presented by Mexico for achieving compliance with its obligation not to allow the use of mercury or mercury compounds in chlor-alkali production after 2025 and recommended that Mexico implement it by 2028.

The EU, AFRICAN GROUP, COLOMBIA, and SAUDI ARABIA expressed appreciation for the ICC's work, noting its crucial role in the effective implementation of the Convention. IRAN called for access to finance and technology to improve data collection.

National Reporting: The Secretariat presented documents on the second short national reports (UNEP/MC/COP.6/15; UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/20) and updated guidance for completing national reports (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/21).

In the ensuing discussion, the COP President and many delegations welcomed the 86% reporting rate by Parties and encouraged Parties to submit their second national full report by the end of the year. The AFRICAN GROUP requested that the requirement for submitting National Action Plans (NAPs) on dental amalgam be implemented flexibly, allowing for a longer deadline. UGANDA suggested the GEF should provide financial support to assist countries with national-level reporting.

The ANDEAN COMMUNITY called for including smuggling and illegal trade of mercury in the updated guidelines on reporting.

The INTERNATIONAL POLLUTANTS ELIMINATION NETWORK (IPEN) recommended that national reports include: measures for the environmentally sound management (ESM) of mercury waste; actions taken to address illegal trade; clear timelines for ASGM; meaningful participation of affected communities; and collaboration with other Parties.

The WOMEN'S CAUCUS urged Parties to report on activities related to gender equality and to involve gender experts in the preparation and implementation of NAPs.

Effectiveness Evaluation: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced its progress report on the first effectiveness evaluation of the Convention (UNEP/MC/COP.6/16), the preliminary draft annotated outline of the evaluation (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/22), and an update on the work of the Open-ended Scientific Group (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/23).

In ensuing discussions on the draft decision in UNEP/MC/COP.6/16, CANADA expressed concern about the delays

observed by the working groups in receiving data in time for the reporting processes. SWITZERLAND noted the importance of the lessons learned in the final report to be presented at COP-7. CHINA stressed the two working groups fully consider and verify the validity, comparability, and accuracy of the data and their methods. The AFRICAN GROUP called for support and enhanced cooperation in establishing baseline data as part of the review process. IRAN, MALDIVES, and SRI LANKA underscored the need for capacity building as well as financial and technical assistance to support science-based and national reporting. The EU, supported by the US, suggested minor text amendments.

The WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION stressed the importance of human biomonitoring. The INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR COUNCIL, with ZERO MERCURY WORKING GROUP, underscored the need for Indigenous Peoples to be involved in all stages of research and that the Convention is missing a comprehensive monitoring framework. FUNDACIÓN GAIA AMAZONAS proposed a subgroup on mercury dumping in ecologically diverse regions. IPEN highlighted the need for more data from developing countries with ASGM.

Parties adopted a decision on progress in the first effectiveness evaluation of the Convention, which invites parties to submit their second full national reports by 31 December 2025.

Cross-cutting Matters: Implementation of Decision MC-5/1: The Secretariat presented its note on strengthening the effective engagement of Indigenous Peoples as well as local communities under the Convention ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/17](#)), and the results of the survey on the needs and priorities of Indigenous Peoples and local communities ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/24](#)).

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ORGANIZATIONS lamented that the discovery of gold on Indigenous Peoples' territories has led to centuries of "violence, displacement, and death" and announced the establishment of the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Mercury.

BRAZIL supported, and the US and MEXICO objected to, establishing a voluntary Indigenous Peoples funding mechanism. AUSTRALIA, CANADA and BRAZIL supported creating an interim ad hoc advisory group, which the EU opposed.

INDONESIA noted it is essential to ensure the equal recognition of local communities, who also face disproportionate effects from mercury pollution.

ASIA INDIGENOUS PEOPLES PACT (AIPP) argued that the Secretariat's draft decision is "offensive" to Indigenous Peoples, as it does not distinguish them from local communities. Echoed by GUATEMALA, CHILDREN AND YOUTH INTERNATIONAL, INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR COUNCIL, and INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ORGANIZATIONS, they requested that the decision separate both groups.

The UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE QUERETARO asked for the decision to mention that no Indigenous People should be involved in forced labor in mercury mining.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH INTERNATIONAL deplored that children and youth are not mentioned in the decision and asked for dedicated funding.

FUNDACIÓN GAIA AMAZONAS expressed concerns about the way members of the interim *ad hoc* advisory group

would be selected and emphasized the importance of the Amazon.

DMUN FOUNDATION urged delegates to make resource commitments at COP-7 to ensure the Indigenous Peoples' funding mechanism and the *ad hoc* advisory group do not remain "institutional symbols."

The OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (OHCHR) asked Parties to, *inter alia*: eliminate mercury in ASGM; meaningfully include Indigenous Peoples in decision-making; and keep a standing agenda item to consult with Indigenous Peoples.

The COP established a small group composed of Canada, the EU, Australia, the US, Mexico, and Brazil, tasked with further developing the draft decision.

Implementation of Decision MC-5/15: The Secretariat presented its notes on activities to address health concerns of women and children in the biennium 2026–2027 ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/18](#)) and the implementation of decision MC-5/15 during the 2024–2025 biennium ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/25](#)).

The WOMEN'S CAUCUS said adoption of the Gender Action Plan is important precisely because in no other chemical convention are the impacts of chemical and waste pollution so clearly interconnected with social and biological gender aspects. She urged the establishment of a Women's Delegate Fund to ensure equitable representation of women in all Convention work.

The UK, with the EU and NORWAY, asked why the proposed decision was focused narrowly on the health of women and children and did not touch on all aspects of the Gender Action Plan. Executive Secretary Stankiewicz explained that it intended to propose different focuses for each biennium, but other parts of the Plan can also be implemented if resources allow.

UGANDA welcomed the draft decision. The US supported the draft decision as proposed. ARGENTINA suggested changing the focus to addressing the health concerns of vulnerable populations, including women and children. CHILDREN AND YOUTH, supported by BAHAMAS, suggested amending the decision to request the Secretariat to develop, in consultation with youth, an action plan for meaningful youth engagement with the Convention.

OHCHR welcomed the proposed focus in the biennium on health concerns of women and children and called for integrating human rights in the Gender Action Plan. IPEN said that the importance of the enhanced role of women's engagement in the implementation of the Convention cannot be overemphasized. The UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE QUERETARO lamented the lack of mention of women's role in mining in the Secretariat's documents.

President Álvarez offered to meet during lunch with those expressing a desire to tweak the draft decision to see if compromise language could be agreed.

Knowledge Management: The Secretariat introduced the document and draft decision on knowledge management and digitalization to support parties to the Minamata Convention ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/19](#)) and a proposal for the Minamata Convention Exchange Platform ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/26](#)). She noted that the Secretariat plans to pilot the Platform as a key tool for inclusive information exchange during the 2026–2027 biennium.

The EU emphasized the need to link these initiatives to the availability of financial resources. The US highlighted the importance of exploring the potential use of artificial intelligence in the implementation of the digital strategy.

With these considerations, the COP adopted the draft decision in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/19, which, among other things, asks the Secretariat to continue:

- implementation of the Convention's digital strategy;
- work with the Global Mercury Partnership to advance shared knowledge initiatives concerning mercury-related issues;
- collaborating with the secretariats of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) on knowledge management, digitalization, and information exchange; and
- developing the Minamata Exchange Platform for the purpose of information exchange.

Mercury and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF): The Secretariat introduced the draft Road Map for enhancing co-benefits from implementation of the Minamata Convention and the GBF ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/20](#)), a note on integrating action to reduce mercury pollution from ASGM into the GBF ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/27](#)), and recent relevant decisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/41](#)).

The EU, JAPAN, CHILE, SRI LANKA, and INDONESIA welcomed the Road Map and commended efforts to improve coherence and synergies among MEAs. ARGENTINA and BRAZIL, recalling the voluntary nature of the Road Map, emphasized the importance of avoiding duplication and additional reporting burdens – especially for developing countries – while ensuring full respect for national sovereignty. COLOMBIA called for urgent access to information on how mercury pollution is affecting ecosystems, especially in areas impacted by illegal mining. UGANDA called upon the COP to request the GEF to consider allocating financial aid to support data collection and the evaluation of national frameworks.

IPEN welcomed the promotion of integrated actions to reduce mercury pollution through national biodiversity strategies. The WOMEN'S CAUCUS emphasized the importance of integrating a gender approach in national plans and strategies. FRANKFURT ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY drew attention to the need to adopt indicators linking biodiversity and health.

President Álvarez noted that there was good support for the document and the draft decision. He invited the EU, ARGENTINA, and BRAZIL to submit their proposed edits to the Secretariat, confirming that these edits would be incorporated into a new conference room paper, which will be posted on the website once finalized.

International Cooperation and Coordination

The Secretariat introduced the relevant documents ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/21](#); [UNEP/MC/COP.6/22](#); [UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/28](#); [INF/29](#); [INF/30](#); [INF/31](#); [INF/32](#); [INF/33](#); [INF/34](#); and [INF/35](#)).

On **cooperation between the Minamata and the Basel, Stockholm, and Rotterdam (BRS) Conventions**, Rolph Payet, BRS Executive Secretary, reminded delegates that the Basel Convention updated its technical guidelines on the ESM of mercury waste following the adoption of a mercury waste threshold. He also highlighted areas of collaboration with the

Minamata Secretariat, including mercury waste, financial and technical assistance, and trade.

BRAZIL said that cooperation should preserve the autonomy of each Convention and not generate additional burden, particularly for developing countries.

UGANDA called upon all donors to enhance the budget of the Secretariat to strengthen its collaboration with the BRS and the Rio Conventions.

The COP adopted the decision in UNEP/MC/COP.6/22, which, among other things, calls for the Secretariat to explore ways of further strengthening cooperation and collaboration.

On **international cooperation and coordination**, the EU requested that the draft decision clarify that the activities will be carried out “subject to the availability of resources,” to which GUINEA objected.

CANADA requested that the draft decision clarify that the Secretariat should receive input from “Parties, Indigenous Peoples and other relevant stakeholders, as well as experts.” INDONESIA called for a mention of local communities. CANADA asked for more time to consider Indonesia's request.

The UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP) and the INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION summarized their efforts to support the Convention, while UGANDA highlighted the work of the Global Mercury Partnership.

OHCHR invited Parties to consider: a programme of work on trade; health care services; meaningful participation of right holders; and expertise on human rights in future partnerships.

The GLOBAL FRAMEWORK ON CHEMICALS stressed areas of convergence with the Convention, including: capacity-building and technical assistance; supply chains and product lifecycles; and communication and knowledge exchange.

INTERPOL presented how its activities can support the Convention, including facilitating information exchange and disseminating global alerts on high-risk shipments.

The ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATION AGENCY invited Parties to request the Secretariat to cooperate with the Financial Action Task Force, INTERPOL, and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. CHILDREN AND YOUTH suggested collaboration with UNICEF.

The COP allowed more time for Canada and Indonesia to work on the draft decision.

In The Corridors

The day began on a celebratory note, with delegates commending the work of the Implementation and Compliance Committee and the 86% submission rate of national short reports. However, a draft decision on strengthening the effective engagement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities was met with strong dissatisfaction from Indigenous Peoples' organizations, which objected to being grouped together with “local communities,” and from youth organizations, which called for more meaningful engagement. A seasoned observer remarked: “The Convention seems more relevant than ever! Everyone wants a seat at the table!”

Throughout the day, confusion mounted as the order of plenary agenda items shifted and the number of sideline consultations and small group discussions multiplied. With the meeting now past its halfway point, delegates are rushing to tackle a mounting list of outstanding tasks while eyeing the clock.