

## Minamata COP-6 Highlights: Thursday, 6 November 2025

Delegates to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-6) to the Minamata Convention spent most of the day in a plethora of contact groups, informal groups, and sideline consultations trying to resolve sticking points on outstanding issues. They did convene briefly in plenary long enough to adopt six decisions and hear updates on the state of play.

### Organizational Matters

**Credentials:** Credentials Committee Chair Rachel Burgess (Australia) reported that 121 Parties had submitted valid credentials. She noted that 14 Parties had not submitted valid credentials and therefore would participate as observers, namely, Cameroon, Comoros, Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eswatini, Guinea, Lebanon, Malawi, Portugal, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, and Zimbabwe. The plenary adopted the report of the Credentials Committee as orally presented.

### Matters for Consideration or Action by the Conference of the Parties

**Mercury Supply Sources and Trade:** COP-6 President Osvaldo Patricio Álvarez Pérez (Chile) reintroduced the item, noting that the original proposal by Canada, Australia, Japan, and Norway (CRP.2) had been revised and presented as CRP.9. The COP proceeded to adopt CRP.9 without further discussions.

The decision, noting the obligation under Convention Article 3(13) to evaluate whether trade in certain mercury compounds threatens human health or the environment:

- encourages Parties to consider creating an additional Convention annex to regulate such trade;
- invites Parties and stakeholders to submit information by 31 March 2026 on mercury compound supply, trade, and potential candidates for listing in the annex; and

- establishes an open-ended expert group to analyze all submitted information and make recommendations ahead of COP-7.

### Mercury-added Products and Manufacturing Processes in Which Mercury or Mercury Compounds Are Used:

**Cosmetics Listed in Part I of Annex A:** GABON reported that a new conference room paper (CRP) had been submitted. President Álvarez said the CRP would be uploaded to the intranet portal in the evening and considered by plenary on Friday morning.

**Extensions for Exemptions:** President Álvarez reported that Bangladesh submitted a revised request for extension, and INDIA confirmed they would submit a revised request in the evening.

**Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining (ASGM):** The ASGM Contact Group continued negotiations on the draft decision and Brazil's proposal (CRP.7). Discussions opened on a proposal to broaden references to "ASGM" to encompass "gold mining and processing in which mercury amalgamation is used to extract gold from ore." Some Parties cautioned that such changes could extend the scope of the Convention beyond Article 7, while others stressed the importance of reflecting the reality of mercury use in both small- and larger-scale but illicit mining operations. After extended debate, a drafting compromise was proposed to reference pollution from both ASGM and other gold mining and processing using mercury amalgamation.

Further discussion focused on language highlighting the need for a just transition for communities dependent on ASGM. Views diverged on whether to emphasize protection of livelihoods or to retain more explicit reference to "ensuring a just transition," with text remaining bracketed pending further consultations.

In the operative section, Parties discussed references to capacity building and digital reporting platforms. Some noted that these issues were already covered under existing decisions and expressed concern about creating additional mandates and budgetary implications, while others underscored the continuing

need for targeted support to assist countries in implementing national action plans.

Negotiations also addressed new text on supply chain transparency and accountability in the gold sector, including due diligence, open data, and traceability mechanisms. Some Parties proposed simplifying prescriptive elements while maintaining recognition of the need for stronger measures to prevent mercury use and trade in illicit gold supply chains.

A new paragraph was proposed encouraging engagement with Indigenous Peoples and local communities in addressing mercury use in ASGM. The proposal drew on previous COP decisions and highlighted the importance of awareness-raising, inclusion, and protection of vulnerable populations affected by mercury exposure. Some Parties raised procedural concerns about introducing new text at a late stage in the negotiations, cautioning against overlap with other ongoing decisions. Others viewed its inclusion as an essential update reflecting the impacts of ASGM on Indigenous Peoples.

With several paragraphs still bracketed, a drafting group was convened to continue work into the evening.

**Mercury Waste:** An informal group worked throughout the afternoon on a proposal (CRP.3) co-sponsored by Japan, Australia, and Norway to propose new requirements on the environmentally sound management (ESM) of mercury waste and request the Secretariat to prepare a summary analysis on the effectiveness of the 15mg/kg threshold established at COP-5. Participants decided to remove an operative paragraph inviting Parties to consider proposing amendments to the Convention regarding ESM, and to remove another on submitting scientific and regulatory data and information regarding the effectiveness of the threshold for protecting human health and the environment.

**Mercury and Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF):** Delegates resumed discussion of this agenda item referring to the revised draft decision (CRP.10), which incorporated comments provided by Argentina, Brazil, and the EU. With these changes, the COP adopted the decision.

The decision welcomes the Road Map for enhancing co-benefits from implementation of the Minamata Convention and the GBF by 2030 and requests Parties and relevant stakeholders to undertake the actions suggested in the Road Map. It also encourages Parties to integrate actions on reducing mercury pollution from ASGM into national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

**International Cooperation and Coordination:** President Álvarez introduced a revised draft decision incorporating inputs

received from Canada, the EU, and Indonesia (CRP.13). The COP adopted the revised decision without discussion. The decision asks the Secretariat to, *inter alia*:

- establish partnership and cooperation with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste, and Pollution, including seeking observer status;
- conduct a scoping study on how to strengthen the science-policy interface for mercury for consideration at COP-7;
- enhance coordination with the Global Framework on Chemicals; and
- seek membership in the Inter-Organization Programme for Sound Management of Chemicals.

**Venue and Dates of COP-7:** The Secretariat, noting no offers from a Party to host COP-7, suggested in the morning plenary that it be held in Geneva on 14–18 June 2027, with preparatory meetings on 13 June 2027.

In the ensuing discussions, the EU, supported by NORWAY, requested the Secretariat to facilitate preparations for a high-level segment of no more than one day in duration. The US, citing budgetary constraints, suggested that no high-level segment be held and that the focus instead remain on activities deemed strictly necessary.

The plenary decided to defer the item to the Contact Group on the Programme of Work (PoW) and Budget for further discussion. When the plenary reconvened later, President Álvarez announced that the original draft decision language would be used. Delegates decided to hold the next COP in Geneva on 14–18 June 2027.

### *In The Corridors*

The day started productively, with three new decisions quickly adopted. Some had expressed concern over the bewildering proliferation of small and informal groups and sideline consultations in the two prior days, but as one participant put it, “you can’t argue with results.” Plenary was suspended mid-morning so that small groups could meet throughout the day to resolve the remaining sticking points on cosmetics, waste, Indigenous Peoples, and extensions of temporary product exemptions from phaseout commitments. The rest of the day was no less productive, as delegates adopted three additional decisions during the short afternoon plenary on women and children’s health, supply sources and trade, and the venue and dates for COP-7. Another decision on cosmetics was announced as being readied for adoption first thing Friday morning.

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of COP-6 will be available on Monday, 10 November 2025 at [enb.iisd.org/minamata-convention-mercury-cop6](https://enb.iisd.org/minamata-convention-mercury-cop6)