

Summary of the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury: 3-7 November 2025

The Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP-6) faced a pivotal test: whether global efforts could keep pace with the ambition to end mercury use and exposure. COP-6 confronted this challenge head on, addressing how to accelerate the phase-out of mercury across products, processes, and mining while closing persistent gaps in supply and trade.

Meeting over a decade after the Convention’s adoption, Parties sought to shift from building institutions to translating scientific evidence and political ambition into concrete actions to reduce mercury emissions, strengthen implementation, and enhance cooperation across the global chemicals and waste agenda. The meeting also took place at a time of growing integration between the Minamata Convention and broader efforts to address pollution, biodiversity loss, and sustainable development.

COP-6 addressed a packed agenda, tackling technical matters inherited from previous sessions alongside emerging policy issues. Parties advanced key discussions on mercury supply and trade, mercury-added products, artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM), waste thresholds, and financing. They also adopted decisions on effectiveness evaluation, gender and health, knowledge management, and enhanced cooperation with related multilateral environmental agreements.

Delegates’ work was guided by the words of Swiss Federal Office for the Environment Director Katrin Schneeberger at the opening: “The Minamata Convention is a clear example of what nations can achieve when they work together, guided by science, with a shared vision, a lifecycle approach, and a sense of responsibility.” Her remarks set a cooperative and collegial tone that resonated throughout the week, reflected in the pragmatic spirit of compromise that enabled Parties to clear long-standing technical items and adopt 21 decisions to advance the Convention’s objective of protecting human health and the environment from mercury pollution.

Under the leadership of COP-6 President Osvaldo Álvarez Pérez (Chile), delegates succeeded in adopting decisions on nearly all agenda items. His emphasis on inclusive, small-group consultations helped bridge differences on several contentious issues, including waste, cosmetics, trade, the procedure on extensions of exemptions, and Indigenous Peoples’ engagement. Among the most notable

achievements of COP-6 was the decision to phase out dental amalgam by 2034, complemented by new interim phase-down measures—a breakthrough long championed by the African Group. Parties also agreed to tackle the continued presence of mercury-added cosmetics in trade and markets, calling for collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), and the World Customs Organization to strengthen enforcement.

On ASGM, delegates adopted new guidance emphasizing just transitions, open data, and transparency along gold supply chains, with references to the engagement of Indigenous Peoples and the use of national action plans to track progress.

Other technical and policy milestones included the adoption of updated guidance on supply sources and trade, including the development of harmonized customs codes and measures to address illegal trade; a decision on waste inviting Parties to review the current mercury threshold; and agreement on biodiversity cooperation, encouraging integration of mercury-reduction actions into national biodiversity strategies and plans. Work on declaring mercury-free alternatives for vinyl chloride monomer production

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technically and economically feasible was deferred to COP-7 following late-stage divergence of views.

Delegates further adopted decisions to strengthen the Convention's financial mechanism, providing guidance to the Global Environment Facility and inviting COP-7 to consider extending the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity Building and Technical Assistance. Decisions on knowledge management and capacity-building emphasized digital tools and cooperation with the Global Mercury Partnership, while new cross-cutting decisions on international cooperation linked Minamata's work to the emerging Global Framework on Chemicals, the newly established Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste, and Pollution, and the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

COP-6 took place in Geneva from 3–7 November 2025 and brought together over 1,000 participants in person and 4,000 online viewers, including representatives of 153 Parties, as well as observers from non-Party governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and youth. With consensus forged on most issues and key processes set in motion, COP-6 marked a decisive step toward the Convention's first effectiveness evaluation, to be considered at COP-7.

### A Brief History of the Minamata Convention

The Minamata Convention was adopted in 2013 to address mercury, a heavy metal that is persistent in the environment. As a naturally occurring element, mercury 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 fossil fuels. Mercury can also be released from mercury-containing products such as dental amalgam, electrical applications (such as switches and fluorescent lamps), laboratory and medical instruments (such as 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.

Discussions related to the need for a legal instrument to address the threats posed by mercury to human health and the environment began in earnest in 2007. The Minamata Convention on Mercury was adopted on 10 October 2013 and entered into force on 16 August 2017. It currently has 153 Parties.

### Key Turning Points

**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. Delegates' preferences for international cooperation on mercury ranged from starting a negotiating process for a legally-binding instrument to incorporating mercury into existing agreements, or concentrating on voluntary actions, especially through partnerships.

**UNEP GC-25/GMEF:** In February 2009, the UNEP GC/GMEF adopted decision GC-25/5, by which delegates agreed to further international action consisting of the elaboration of a legally-binding instrument on mercury that could include both binding and voluntary approaches. It also requested the UNEP Executive Director to

convene an Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) meeting in 2009 and an intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) commencing its deliberations in 2010, with the goal of completing its work by 2013.

**Negotiation of the Convention:** The INC met five times between June 2010 and January 2013. The UNEP GC-27/GMEF in February 2013 adopted a decision welcoming the completion of negotiations of the mercury treaty and authorized UNEP's Executive Director to provide an interim Secretariat to the instrument prior to its entry into force.

**Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury and its Preparatory Meeting:** The Minamata Convention on Mercury was officially adopted on 10 October 2013, in Kumamoto, Japan, at the Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries. During the conference, the Convention was signed by 91 countries and the European Union (EU).

**INC-6 and 7:** INC-6 convened in November 2014 in Bangkok, Thailand, during the interim period between the adoption of the Convention and COP-1. Delegates discussed issues including the Convention's financial mechanism, financial rules, rules of procedure, and possible approaches to reporting.

INC-7 convened in March 2016 at the Dead Sea, Jordan. Delegates considered issues including 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 issues including the identification of stocks of mercury or mercury compounds and sources of supply, and best available techniques (BAT) and best environmental practices (BEP) for controlling emissions.

**COP-1:** Following the Convention's entry into force, delegates met in Geneva in September 2017 to discuss institutional arrangements for operationalizing the Convention, including reporting and evaluation, its financial mechanism, and a permanent Secretariat. COP-1 agreed to locate the Secretariat in Geneva on an interim basis and established its own trust fund, the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity Building and Technical Assistance (SIP).

### Recent Meetings

**COP-2:** COP-2 took place in November 2018. Delegates agreed on permanent arrangements for a stand-alone Secretariat, based in Geneva, and approved a memorandum of understanding with the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Discussions also addressed the substantive issues of, *inter alia*, mercury waste thresholds, harmonized customs codes, contaminated sites, and interim storage.

**COP-3:** COP-3 met in Geneva in November 2019, and discussed, *inter alia*:

- guidance for completing the national reporting format;
- the financial mechanism, including the GEF and the SIP, enhancement of the SIP, and review of the financial mechanism; and
- guidance on the management of contaminated sites.

**COP-4:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, COP-4 convened in two segments: a virtual segment (COP-4.1) to address the most urgent issues and an in-person segment (COP-4.2) where parties considered the remaining items on the agenda. COP-4.1, in November 2021, adopted the 2022 programme of work and budget, and set dates for COP-4.2. Participants also discussed three other

time-sensitive issues: the Convention's effectiveness evaluation, national reporting, and the eighth replenishment of the GEF. COP-4.2 convened in Bali, Indonesia, in March 2022. Parties agreed to consult with Indigenous Peoples and local communities when developing their national action plans (NAPs) in relation to artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM). COP-4.2 also adopted a framework for the first effectiveness evaluation of the Convention and established an Open-Ended Scientific Group to develop the terms of reference (ToR). The COP adopted the Bali Declaration as a non-binding political declaration on illegal trade in mercury.

**COP-5:** COP-5 met in Geneva in November 2023. Parties agreed to update Convention Annexes A (mercury-added products) and B (processes using mercury or mercury compounds) to list phaseout dates for certain types of batteries, switches and relays, fluorescent lamps, and cosmetics, and mandate the phaseout of mercury as a catalyst in polyurethane production by 2025. In addition, they agreed on language declaring mercury-free processes for production of sodium or potassium methylate or ethylate to be technically and economically feasible. They also:

- agreed on mercury waste thresholds to use as a benchmark for blocking shipments of mercury-contaminated waste;
- adopted the guidance on BAT and BEP to control releases of mercury from relevant sources;
- amended the format and guidance for national reporting;
- adopted a decision on the needs and priorities of Indigenous Peoples and local communities regarding the effects of mercury on their health, livelihoods, culture, and knowledge; and
- adopted a gender action plan.

### Minamata COP-6 Report

COP-6 opened on [Monday](#), 3 November, with statements by high-level officials, followed by regional groups' statements.

Katrin Schneeberger, Director, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland, said the Convention stands as a clear example of what nations can achieve when they work together, guided by science, with a shared vision, a lifecycle approach, and a sense of responsibility. She suggested that it can serve as a blueprint for other processes.

Elizabeth Mrema, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP, said the Minamata Convention is a prime example of a "patient collective act of humanity choosing to do better together." She called for building on what has been learned, "carrying that knowledge into every mind, every factory, every community."

Monika Stankiewicz, Executive Secretary, Minamata Convention, said it was important to expand Convention work under the GEF in its next replenishment, since most Parties will soon "feel the weight" of their Convention commitments. She declared herself "deeply optimistic" that the Convention will increase its positive impact on people everywhere.

COP-6 President Osvaldo Patricio Álvarez Pérez (Chile) urged the COP to "build on the collective commitments we have made," effectively address ASGM and supply and trade issues, and "take specific and measurable actions" on financing.

Sierra Leone, for the AFRICAN GROUP, emphasized the challenge posed by ASGM, mercury-added products, trade in mercury compounds, and the management of mercury waste. They underlined the criticality of adequate, predictable, and accessible financial resources.

For the LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GROUP (GRULAC), Mexico reiterated the region's commitment to full implementation of the Convention. He highlighted the particularly negative effects of mercury pollution on vulnerable groups, including Indigenous Peoples, women, and children.

Saudi Arabia, for ASIA-PACIFIC, reiterated the importance of the common but differentiated responsibilities and equity principles. He emphasized the need for predictable financing and technical support.

Denmark, on behalf of the EU, expressed hope for progress on issues such as dental amalgam, highlighting that measures toward its prohibition have been adopted within the EU.

Georgia, for CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE (CEE), emphasized the importance of regional collaboration and stressed the need for further synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

### Organizational Matters

**Agenda and Organization of Work:** On [Monday](#), delegates adopted the agenda ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/1/Rev.1](#)) and approved the organization of work presented by President Álvarez and detailed by the Secretariat ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/4](#)). President Álvarez announced that a new Bureau, Implementation and Compliance Committee (ICC), and Governing Board for the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity Building and Technical Assistance (SIP) would be elected later in the week, and called for all regions to submit their nominations for these positions by the end of plenary on Tuesday.

**Election of Officers:** On Friday, delegates elected Marie-Claire Lhenry (France) as President of COP-7. The following Vice-Presidents were elected to the COP-7 Bureau: Sandra Gonou (Benin) and Anne Nakafeero (Uganda) for the African Group; Khodayar Rouzbahani (Iran) and Fahmida Khanom (Bangladesh) for Asia-Pacific; Romana Grizelj (Croatia) and Irma Gurguliani (Georgia) for CEE; Linroy Christian (Antigua and Barbuda) and Arturo Gavilán (Mexico) for GRULAC; and Rachel Burgess (Australia) for the Western European and Others Group (WEOG).

The following were elected to the ICC: Mereng Bodo Eliane Marina (Cameroon), Kidus Workineh Tebikew (Ethiopia), and Oluwatoyin Olabanji (Nigeria) for the African Group; Yao Wei (China), Amit Raj (India), and Pragusdiniyanto Soemantri (Indonesia) for Asia-Pacific; Anahit Aleksandryan (Armenia), Eva Šalplachtová (Czechia), and Sonja Roglic (Serbia) for CEE; João Paulo de Sousa Vieira (Brazil), María del Mar Solano (Costa Rica), and Tania Ramirez Muñoz (Mexico) for GRULAC; and Mathieu Van der Meerschen (Belgium), Rafael Zubrzycki (Germany), and Gene Smilansky (US) for WEOG.

Elected to the SIP Governing Board were: Liliane Randrianomenjanahary (Madagascar) and Obed Meringo Baloyi (South Africa) for the African Group; Luay Sadeq Almkhhtar (Iraq) and Nazia Zaib (Pakistan) for Asia-Pacific; Donata Pipiraitė-Vališkienė (Lithuania) and Jelena Kovačević (Montenegro) for the CEE; Cecilia Aburto Schweitzer (Chile) and Michelle Astwood (Guyana) for GRULAC; and Lien Bomans (Belgium) and Eveline Verhaar (Netherlands) for WEOG.

**Report on Credentials:** On [Monday](#), the Secretariat reminded delegates that credentials must be submitted within 24 hours after the beginning of the COP.

On [Thursday](#), 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, 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.

### **Rules of Procedure and Financial Rules for the COP**

**Rules of Procedure:** On [Monday](#), the Secretariat introduced its note on the rules of procedure ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/3](#)), indicating the rules still have bracketed text in rule 45 regarding the option for Parties to take a decision by voting on matters of substance. She further explained that the text describes action that can be taken when deciding what is a matter of substance, or a matter of procedure.

**Final Outcome:** Delegates agreed to return to this at COP-7.

**Financial Rules:** On [Monday](#), the Secretariat introduced its note on financial rules ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/4](#)), noting bracketed text in the COP-1 decision ([MC-1/10](#)) regarding contributions, and in annex text regarding procedures of allocation from the Specific Trust Fund.

**Final Outcome:** Delegates agreed to return to this at COP-7.

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

**Mercury Supply Sources and Trade:** On [Tuesday](#), the Secretariat presented its note ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/5](#)) on mercury supply sources and trade, relating to implementation of Article 3, and one the draft study of the global supply, production, trade, and use of mercury compounds ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/5/Add.1](#)).

CANADA, AUSTRALIA, JAPAN, and NORWAY offered a conference room paper (CRP) with a proposal to establish an open-ended expert group (OEEG) to consider the Secretariat's study as well as information submitted by Parties and stakeholders on supply sources and trade on possible mercury compounds to be listed in an annex.

SWITZERLAND, the UK, the EU, MEXICO, the US, CAMEROON, and SAUDI ARABIA supported the proposal outlined in CRP.2.

The AFRICAN GROUP requested mercury compounds to be included in Article 3 and in a new annex.

INDONESIA, UGANDA, the US, the EU, and INDIA requested some amendments to the draft decision in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/5. The EU also called for the development of international guidance for the consistent use of harmonized system codes related to mercury and mercury compounds.

BRAZIL called for a coordinated approach to tackle illegal trade in mercury, especially in ASGM activities, requiring control, traceability, viable alternatives, and a just transition. SURINAME also stressed the links between illegal trade in mercury and ASGM.

Ecuador, for the ANDEAN COMMUNITY, supported carrying out case studies on illegal trade in mercury for consideration at COP-7.

CHINA expressed concerns over the accuracy of data used in the Secretariat's study and called for more scientific research on whether legal trade in mercury compounds compromises the objective of the Convention.

The ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATION AGENCY invited Parties to prioritize and accelerate phaseout of primary mercury mining and create an OEEG on illegal mercury flows.

The FRANKFURT ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY urged Parties to prohibit international trade in all types of mercury before 2032.

INTERNATIONAL POLLUTANTS ELIMINATION NETWORK (IPEN), echoed by ZERO MERCURY WORKING GROUP, supported: CRP.2; an amendment to the Convention to end mercury trade; the creation of a working group for that purpose; and pilot projects.

The COP requested the cosponsors of CRP.2 to consult with the Parties who requested discussion or amendments on the proposal, and President Álvarez invited Parties to submit their amendments to the draft decision in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/5 by the end of the morning plenary.

On [Thursday](#), President Álvarez reintroduced the item, noting that CRP.2 had been revised and presented as CRP.9. The COP proceeded to adopt CRP.9 without further discussions.

Also on [Thursday](#), delegates considered a separate decision (CRP.14) on implementation of Convention Article 3 based on the draft decision proposed by the Secretariat in UNEP/MC/COP.6/5, but modified to reflect amendments sought by the EU, the US, and Switzerland. The COP adopted the decision without further discussion.

**Final Decisions:** In its final decision on **compounds** (UNEP/MC/COP.6/CRP.9), the COP:

- notes 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 OEEG, supported by the Secretariat, to analyze all submitted information and make recommendations ahead of COP-7.

In its final decision on **trade and supply** (UNEP/MC/COP.6/CRP.14), the COP adopts updates to:

- the guidance on the identification of individual stocks of mercury or mercury compounds exceeding 50 metric tons and sources of mercury supply generating stocks exceeding 10 metric tons per year (CRP.14/Add.1); and
- the guidance on the use of forms on import and export of mercury (CRP.14/Add.2) to assist Parties in identifying, managing, and reducing mercury trade from primary mercury mining.

The COP also decides to:

- invite Parties that reported on experiences and challenges faced in the implementation of paragraph 3 of Article 3 on primary mercury mining in their national reports under Article 21; and
- encourage Parties, including those benefiting from the ongoing GEF projects, to continue to share information with the Secretariat about experiences in preventing and combating illegal trade in mercury, including with respect to the use of forms related to Article 3 on mercury trade.

The COP further requests the Secretariat to:

- develop, in collaboration with Parties and organizations with expertise on illegal trade, a report presenting strategies to address the supply and trade of mercury for Parties not in compliance with Article 3 of the Convention; and
- develop, subject to the availability of resources, guidance for a consistent use of Harmonized System codes related to mercury-containing goods, specifically mercury, mercury compounds, and mercury waste.

The COP requests the ICC to:

- assess the reasons Parties have provided as indications that they have challenges in implementing trade-related provisions under Article 3 and consider whether recommendations that go beyond the actions already taken by COP-4 and COP-5 might be beneficial to improve implementation; and
- cooperate, as needed, with compliance bodies of other MEAs on their activities, with the aim of supporting Parties in preventing and combating illegal trade.

**Mercury-added Products and Manufacturing Processes in Which Mercury or Mercury Compounds are Used:** On [Monday](#), President Álvarez introduced the documents ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/6/Add.1](#), [Add.2](#), [Add.3](#); [UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/8](#), [INF/9](#), [INF/10](#), [INF/42](#) and [INF/44](#)), noting that dental amalgam, cosmetics, and vinyl chloride monomer (VCM) are holdover items from COP-5.

**Amendments to Annex A:** On [Monday](#), via video, US Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said the US is eliminating the use of thimerosal in vaccines. He called for other Parties to do likewise and for the Convention to revisit the exclusion of thimerosal from Annex A.

The US, the EU, NORWAY, PHILIPPINES, SWITZERLAND, AUSTRALIA, BANGLADESH, BRAZIL, URUGUAY, SURINAME, PANAMA, PERU, WHO, ZERO MERCURY WORKING GROUP, and WORLD ALLIANCE FOR MERCURY-FREE DENTISTRY supported the AFRICAN GROUP's proposal to phase out dental amalgam by 2030 and add more phasedown measures to Part II of Annex A. The UK, IRAN, and SINGAPORE expressed concerns about the cost of a switch to alternatives for their national dental health care programs. INDIA said alternatives have high costs and low-quality control. ARGENTINA urged taking into account national capacities to transition to alternatives.

The matter was referred for further discussion to a Technical Matters contact group co-chaired by David Kapindula (Zambia) and Claudia Dumitru (Romania). The group worked on the issue throughout the week, with a key stumbling block being the phaseout date: all but two Parties called for 2030, one called for 2034, and another suggested not setting a date. Participants also disagreed on the list of phasedown measures that would be added to part II of Annex A. In the end, the contact group settled on a 2034 phaseout date when the “no date” proponent dropped their suggestion and it became clear the advocate of 2034 would not budge.

A revised proposal (CRP.23/Rev.1) was presented to plenary on [Friday](#) and it was adopted without further discussion.

**Final Decision:** In its final decision (UNEP/MC/COP.6/CRP.23/Rev.1), the COP:

- adds dental amalgam to Annex A of the Minamata Convention, setting a phaseout date of 2034, after which the manufacture, import, or export of dental amalgam will not be allowed;

- allows an exception for cases when its use is considered necessary by the dental practitioner based on the needs of the patient; and
- requests the Secretariat to draft a revised reporting format under Article 21 to reflect the amendments to Annex A, as well as to revise the reporting guidance and the online electronic format thereon.

**Cosmetics Listed in Part I of Annex A:** On [Monday](#), the Secretariat presented this agenda item ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/6/Add.1](#) and [UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/8](#)).

The AFRICAN GROUP presented its proposal (CRP.4) on advancing work related to mercury-added cosmetics. They stressed that activities such as mobilizing technical and legal assistance, border and customs controls, raising public awareness, and adequate financial resources are needed to ensure effective implementation.

In ensuing discussions, the PHILIPPINES, THAILAND, UGANDA, ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, MEXICO, ZAMBIA, NORWAY, REPUBLIC OF KOREA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, BANGLADESH, PAKISTAN, INDIA, and SRI LANKA supported CRP.4, stressing its importance in protecting human health and the environment. JAPAN, the EU, and the US welcomed CRP.4 as a basis for further discussion, noting the need for reformulation and streamlining of several elements, including the request to the Secretariat to review national legislation as being out of its customary role, and to insert “subject to the availability of resources” when activities in the CRP request additional financial resources.

President Álvarez asked Gabon, with the support of other African Group delegates, to consult with Parties that wanted amendments to CRP.4 and to propose a clean text to the plenary. The resulting revised proposal (CRP.15) was presented to plenary on Friday and adopted without further amendment.

**Final Decision:** In its final decision (UNEP/MC/COP.6/CRP.4), the COP:

- encourages Parties to inform the Secretariat of implementation challenges *vis-à-vis* obligations regarding mercury-added cosmetics;
- encourages the Global Mercury Partnership (GMP) to compile and disseminate information related to the presence of mercury in cosmetics;
- invites the Secretariat to provide COP-7 with information on mechanisms for supporting enforcement and the identification of the presence of mercury in cosmetics;
- invites the Secretariat to work with the World Customs Organization and INTERPOL to investigate sources of illegal trade in mercury; and
- invites the WHO to share lessons on ongoing projects on the elimination of mercury-added cosmetics and prepare an illustrative national public health, system-wide strategy focused on the reduction of the use of these products.

**Consideration of the Feasibility of Mercury-free Alternatives for Manufacturing VCM:** On [Monday](#), the Secretariat presented this agenda item ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/6/Add.2](#) and [UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/9](#)).

The EU presented its proposal, cosponsored by NORWAY and the US (CRP.5), containing a draft decision establishing that alternatives to mercury in VCM production are technically and

economically feasible, and that Parties should therefore phase out the use of mercury for that purpose within five years.

The PHILIPPINES, the AFRICAN GROUP, the UK, THAILAND, SWITZERLAND, AUSTRALIA, UGANDA, and IRAN supported the proposal.

CHINA lamented the high uncertainty surrounding the economic and technical feasibility of mercury-free catalysts and, supported by INDIA, called for further discussion in a contact group.

Delegates agreed to request the Technical Matters contact group to prepare a draft decision on this matter. The Group worked throughout the week but was unable to reach consensus. One Party refused to recognize the validity of evidence on feasibility and called instead for a report on the criteria and indicators by which feasibility could be determined. Others opposed the proposal, pointing out it is not called for by the Convention text and could set a dangerous precedent.

In the end, the Group recommended a draft decision text (CRP.26) calling for COP-7 to reconsider the matter. On Friday, delegates adopted the decision without further discussion.

**Final Decision:** In its final decision (UNEP/MC/COP.6/CRP.26), the COP notes that it has not been possible to reach consensus to establish the economic and technical feasibility of mercury-free catalysts in VCM production and decides that the issue will be reconsidered at COP-7.

**Extensions for Exemptions:** On [Tuesday](#), BANGLADESH (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/44), INDIA (CRP.6), and THAILAND (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/42) presented requests for a five-year extension of their exemptions from the phaseout obligation for certain mercury-added products listed in the Convention's Annex A. Several delegates raised doubts that the requests met the requirements set out in the Convention, while the AFRICAN GROUP called for a COP decision setting out clear procedures for any future temporary exemption requests.

Noting the concerns raised, President Álvarez asked Bangladesh, India, and Thailand to consult with others to see if a consensus could be reached on their requests. As for the African Group's suggestion for a decision on procedure, he formed a Friends of the President group, facilitated by Eva Šalplachtová (Czechia), to formulate a draft decision on the topic. The outcomes of both processes were presented to Friday's plenary and adopted without further discussion.

**Final Decisions:** In its final decision on the **exemption extension requests** (UNEP/MC/COP.6/CRP.22), the COP grants the extensions, and notes that, apart from the three extensions granted by COP-6, all registered exemptions from the 2020 phaseout dates listed in Annexes A and B to the Convention will expire on 31 December 2025 and cannot be requested again.

In its final decision on the **procedure** for requests to extend exemptions (UNEP/MC/COP.6/CRP.24), the COP calls for any request for an extension to be submitted at least six months, but no less than two months, before the last COP held before the expiry date of the exemption. The request is expected to contain the information specified in paragraph 6 (a), (b), and (c) of Article 6 of the Convention for each mercury-added product or process included in the request. The Secretariat may consult as needed with the Party submitting the extension request.

**ASGM:** On [Tuesday](#), the Secretariat introduced its note (UNEP/MC/COP.6/7) on implementation of decision MC-5/7 on national action plans (NAPs) and effective engagement with Indigenous Peoples, and on challenges identified from national reporting. The Secretariat also introduced the draft sections on the review of the implementation of Article 7 for inclusion in the ASGM NAP guidance (UNEP/MC/COP.6/7/Add.1), and draft provisional guide on the effective engagement of Indigenous Peoples and of local communities in the development, implementation, and review of NAPs (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/11).

BRAZIL noted the complexity and importance of developing a NAP on ASGM, highlighted national actions such as operations to protect Indigenous territories from illegal mining and mercury pollution, and introduced and called for a contact group to discuss their proposal (CRP.7), which outlines amendments to the draft decision in UNEP/MC/COP.6/7 through measures such as enhancing traceability of gold and support for just transitions of families reliant on ASGM.

In ensuing discussions, COLOMBIA, INDONESIA, ECUADOR, the PHILIPPINES, PAKISTAN, SURINAME, MEXICO, SAUDI ARABIA, and the AFRICAN GROUP supported the draft decision and Brazil's proposal (CRP.7). UGANDA, ZAMBIA, NIGERIA, and BOTSWANA further highlighted the importance of access to technology and finance for the development of effective NAPs.

The EU, the US, and the UK welcomed CRP.7 but indicated that a contact group on this topic was needed for further discussion.

The ASGM contact group, co-chaired by Linroy Christian (Antigua and Barbuda) and Rachel Burgess (Australia), met [Wednesday](#), [Thursday](#), and Friday and conducted a paragraph-by-paragraph review of the draft decision and Brazil's proposal (CRP.7). Agreement was reached on all preambular paragraphs, including compromise language recognizing pollution from mercury use in gold mining and on "ensuring a just transition for communities...when transitioning from the use of mercury in ASGM." Operative paragraphs were also cleared, with the deletion of a proposed digital platform and agreement on text on open data, supply chains, and Indigenous Peoples.

The draft decision developed by the contact group (CRP.25) was adopted without discussion on Friday.

**Final Decision:** In its final decision (UNEP/MC/COP.6/CRP.25), the COP, *inter alia*:

- calls on Parties to submit their final NAPs to the Secretariat as soon as possible;
- adopts the amended sections on the review of the implementation of Article 7, as presented in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/7/Add.1, for inclusion in the guidance document on developing NAPs;
- calls on all Parties that have submitted their NAPs to provide a review of the progress made in meeting their obligations under Article 7;
- invites Parties that have notified the Secretariat pursuant to paragraph 3 of Article 7 to make use of the provisional guide on the effective engagement of Indigenous Peoples and of local communities to provide feedback on the guide;
- requests the Secretariat to report on measures taken to implement NAPs, and to identify successful strategies and activities, achievements in implementation, and challenges and barriers encountered;

- encourages Parties to adopt or strengthen environmentally sustainable management of gold supply chains and measures to identify buyers and intermediaries and make them more responsible in the full lifecycle of these supply chains; and
- requests the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, in coordination with relevant international initiatives, to compile comparative experiences on supply-chain transparency and certification, and how such practices could impact the use of mercury in gold mining.

**Mercury Waste:** On [Tuesday](#), the Secretariat introduced this agenda item ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/8](#) and [UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/12](#)). JAPAN introduced a proposal (CRP.3), co-sponsored by Australia and Norway, to invite Parties 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. The EU, CANADA, JORDAN, PAKISTAN, MALDIVES, SAUDI ARABIA, and IRAN supported the proposal. Others called for more in-depth discussion to better understand the implications of the proposals in CRP.3.

An informal group facilitated by Japan was tasked with considering amendments to CRP.3. In group deliberations on [Wednesday](#) and [Thursday](#), 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.

JAPAN introduced the revised proposal (CRP.20) on [Friday](#). President Álvarez proceeded to seek consensus to remove the bracketed words “as appropriate” from the last preambular paragraph in the decision, since decisions are supposed to be clear of brackets. After approval by delegates, the COP adopted the decision without further discussion.

**Final Decision:** In its final decision (UNEP/MC/COP.6/CRP.20), the COP requests Parties and relevant stakeholders to submit any proposed updates to the lists of wastes covered by paragraph 2 (definition) of Article 11 on waste. It also requests the Secretariat to compile and summarize submissions regarding scientific and regulatory data on the effectiveness of the threshold for wastes contaminated with mercury or mercury compounds, as well as on challenges and experiences related to its use, for consideration by COP-7.

**Financial Resources and Mechanism:** Delegates took up this agenda item on [Monday](#), addressing matters regarding the GEF, the SIP, and the review of the financial mechanism.

**Global Environment Facility:** The Secretariat introduced its note on matters related to the GEF ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/10](#)), the report of the GEF to the COP ([UNEP/MC/COP.5/INF/13](#)), and the executive summary of the GEF’s report ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/10/Add.1](#)). Chizuru Aoki, GEF Secretariat, highlighted, *inter alia*, that the GEF allocated USD 155.5 million for the implementation of the Minamata Convention within the eighth replenishment reporting period (1 July 2022 to 30 June 2025) and the projects approved are expected to reduce 911 metric tons of mercury.

**Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-building and Technical Assistance:** The Secretariat presented the relevant documents ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/11](#), [UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/15](#),

[INF/16](#), and [INF/40](#)). SIP Governing Board Co-Chair Andrew Clark (US) highlighted the importance of SIP project impacts.

**Review of the Financial Mechanism:** The Secretariat introduced the draft terms of reference (ToR) for the third review of the financial mechanism ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/12](#)).

In ensuing discussion, the EU, on behalf of Brazil, Norway, and Switzerland, presented their proposal (CRP.1) on the draft decision in document [UNEP/MC/COP.6/10](#), suggesting amendments such as leaving the choice of extending the SIP to COP-7. BRAZIL stressed the importance of culturally grounded implementation of the Convention. The AFRICAN GROUP called for more guidance for the GEF to support developing countries and countries in transition. PAKISTAN recommended a mechanism for information sharing and best practices for developing countries. SOUTH AFRICA suggested a contact group to develop a proposal for a dedicated global programme to eliminate dental amalgam.

Regarding the draft ToR for the third review, SURINAME, ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, SRI LANKA, COLOMBIA, MALDIVES, INDONESIA, and ECUADOR supported the draft decision, welcoming assistance from the GEF and other financial mechanisms. IRAN emphasized that support from the SIP should be global and non-discriminatory, noting it has not yet received any. Delegates agreed to adopt the draft decision, pending confirmation from the budget group on related implications.

Regarding the draft decision on the financial mechanism, many countries highlighted the importance of the GEF and the SIP, calling for their replenishment and extension. The US objected to references in the draft decision to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and climate change, requesting their removal. CANADA stressed the importance of maintaining Indigenous Peoples prominently among vulnerable populations, noting they disproportionately bear the burden of mercury pollution.

President Álvarez formed a small group including the CRP.1 sponsors and other interested Parties to address outstanding issues. On [Wednesday](#), BRAZIL introduced a revised draft decision developed by the small group (CRP.8), which delegates adopted.

**Final Decision:** In its final decision, the COP (UNEP/MC/COP.6/CRP.8), *inter alia*:

- highlights the importance of the ninth GEF replenishment for the Parties to the Convention for the period 2026–2030 *vis-à-vis* their respective obligations and deadlines to be met under the Convention;
- provides additional guidance to the GEF by adding the updating of the Minamata Initial Assessments and the monitoring of human exposure to mercury and environmental concentrations of mercury to the list of activities to implement the provisions of the Convention, and recalling the importance of providing support to address challenges arising from the obligations related to dental amalgam;
- recalls its guidance to the GEF, in decision MC-5/11, to take into account the time frames to which Parties must adhere for the implementation of mandatory obligations in developing its programming directions and resource allocations for the ninth replenishment period, and in further developing projects and programmes under the programming directions for the eighth replenishment;
- encourages the GEF, in reporting project results, to provide data and information on mercury reduction and avoidance, and on

efforts to advance the effective engagement and participation of Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities, and women and youth;

- requests the Secretariat, working with the SIP Governing Body, to finalize its analysis of staffing and funding needs of the SIP, and draft recommendations for consideration by COP-7; and
- agrees to consider at COP-7 a SIP extension for an additional period not exceeding seven years.

#### **Capacity-building, Technical Assistance, and Technology**

**Transfer:** The Secretariat introduced the document containing a draft decision ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/13](#)) and the desk study on the overview of alternative technologies under the Convention ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/18](#)).

In the ensuing discussion, SIERRA LEONE, JAPAN, SAUDI ARABIA, KENYA, CAMEROON, UGANDA, IRAN, SENEGAL, MOZAMBIQUE, SRI LANKA, JORDAN, and BANGLADESH supported the draft decision and stressed the importance of, *inter alia*, targeted regional capacity-building, mercury laboratories, South-South and triangular cooperation, and training of customs and port officials.

The EU, the US, COLOMBIA, and URUGUAY requested minor amendments to the draft decision.

ZERO MERCURY WORKING GROUP highlighted their 20-year programme supporting governments worldwide in phasing out mercury-added products, such as skin-lightening creams, and promoting mercury-free alternatives.

The COP agreed to the changes suggested by Uruguay, the US, the EU, and Colombia, and adopted the decision.

**Final Decision:** In its final decision ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/13](#)), the COP, *inter alia*:

- invites developed-country Parties and other Parties to take into account the challenges identified with regard to the uptake of alternative technologies, specifically in promoting and facilitating the development, transfer, and diffusion of up-to-date environmentally sound alternative technologies to developing-country Parties and Parties with economies in transition;
- encourages Parties, in their national reports, including their second full national reports, to include specific information on the development, transfer and diffusion of, and access to, alternative technologies, as well as on the challenges they have experienced in accessing and transferring technology, to assist in a future review of challenges and progress; and
- calls on Parties, and invites non-Parties to the Convention and others in a position to do so, to contribute to the special trust fund for the Convention, to enable the implementation of the capacity-building activities described in the 2026–2027 programme of work and budget activity fact sheet for capacity-building and technical assistance.

The COP also requests the Secretariat to:

- further collect and analyze, in collaboration with the GMP, information on existing initiatives and progress made in relation to alternative technologies, as well as related needs and challenges; and
- continue to provide capacity-building and technical assistance support to Parties, including through active and sustained engagement with the GMP.

**Implementation and Compliance Committee:** On [Wednesday](#), 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 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 effective implementation of the Convention. IRAN called for access to finance and technology to improve data collection.

**Final Outcome:** The COP took note of the ICC's report and recommendations.

**National Reporting:** On [Wednesday](#), the Secretariat presented documents on the second short national reports ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/15](#) and [UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/20](#)) and updated guidance for completing national reports ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/21](#)).

In the ensuing discussion, President Álvarez and many delegations welcomed the 86% reporting rate by Parties and encouraged Parties to submit their second full national report by the end of the year. The AFRICAN GROUP requested that the requirement for submitting 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.

IPEN recommended that national reports include: measures for the 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.

Delegates adopted the draft decision.

**Final Decision:** In its decision ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/15](#)), the COP, *inter alia*:

- encourages Parties to achieve a high rate of reporting for the second full reports, due by 31 December 2025;
- reiterates its call to Parties that have received consent to export mercury to Parties and/or non-Parties to provide to the Secretariat either copies of the consent forms used or other suitable information in their reports submitted; and
- requests the Secretariat to collect information on best practices for reporting on informal or illegal activities that do not conform with the provisions of the Convention, with a view to identifying information that would be helpful for assessing their scale and nature, and to explore how such information could inform tools or reporting elements to support Parties facing such challenges.

**Effectiveness Evaluation:** On [Wednesday](#), 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 WHO 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 the draft decision.

**Final Decision:** In its final decision ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/16](#)), the COP requests Parties to submit their full national reports under Article 21 of the Convention to the Secretariat by 31 December 2025, in order to ensure that the most recent information is available for the first effectiveness evaluation.

**Cross-cutting Matters: Implementation of Decision MC-5/1:** On [Wednesday](#), 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](#)).

During ensuing discussions, several Parties and observers suggested amendments to the draft decision contained in [UNEP/MC/COP.6/17](#). The COP established a small group composed of Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, the EU, Indonesia, Mexico, the US, and two representatives of Indigenous Peoples, tasked with further developing the draft decision.

On Friday, delegates considered the draft decision as amended by the small group (CRP.18/Rev.1). The COP adopted the decision without further discussion.

**Final Decision:** In its final decision ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/CRP.18/Rev.1](#)), the COP urges Parties to provide support for the effective participation of Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities in work and meetings under the Convention. It also requests the Secretariat to:

- seek advice from Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities, through Indigenous Peoples' organizations accredited to the Convention, local communities' organizations accredited to the Convention, and the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Mercury;
- communicate with them regarding opportunities for engagement; and
- collaborate with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Secretariat of the CBD, and other relevant partners to further strengthen effective engagement regarding mercury pollution.

**Implementation of Decision MC-5/15:** On [Wednesday](#), 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](#)).

In the ensuing discussion, many delegates proposed minor changes to the draft decision suggested in [UNEP/MC/COP.6/18](#). President Álvarez offered to meet with those expressing a desire to amend the draft decision to see if compromise language could be agreed.

On [Thursday](#), President Álvarez introduced the revised text (CRP.16), which was adopted without amendment.

**Final Outcome:** In its final decision ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/CRP.16](#)), the COP invites Parties to:

- continue their implementation of decision MC-5/15, including carrying out activities to address health concerns of women and children during the biennium 2026–2027, and to share with the Secretariat their related experiences and good practices; and
- provide comments, as appropriate, on possible activities to be carried out by the Secretariat, Parties, and other stakeholders during the biennium 2028–2029.

The decision also requests the Secretariat to carry out activities to address health concerns of women and children, as listed in annex I to document [UNEP/MC/COP.6/18](#) (as revised during COP-6), during the biennium 2026–2027. As revised, the list of activities includes developing, in consultation with youth, a Children and Youth Engagement Action Plan to mainstream youth engagement in the Convention.

The decision further requests the Secretariat to report to COP-7 on its implementation and to propose possible activities to be carried out by the Secretariat, Parties, and other stakeholders during the biennium 2028–2029.

**Knowledge Management:** On [Wednesday](#), the Secretariat introduced the document and draft decision on knowledge management and digitalization to support Parties to the 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.

**Final Outcome:** In its final decision ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/19](#)), the COP:

- requests the Secretariat to continue implementation of the Convention's digital strategy in accordance with the programme of work and budget;
- agrees to support the development of the Minamata Exchange Platform for the purpose of information exchange, subject to the availability of resources;
- work with the GMP to advance shared knowledge initiatives concerning mercury-related issues;
- encourages the Secretariat to continue cooperation and coordination activities with the GMP to advance shared knowledge initiatives concerning mercury-related issues,

- including the joint development of data products, communication tools, and knowledge platforms, while ensuring complementarity;
- requests the Secretariat to continue collaborating with the Secretariats of other MEAs and other partners, including the United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements initiative, on knowledge management, digitalization, and information exchange;
- requests the Secretariat to cooperate with the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Secretariat to exchange information and share experiences and best practices relating to knowledge management and digitalization; and
- requests the Secretariat to report on progress in the implementation of the digital strategy at COP-7.

#### Mercury and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity

**Framework (GBF):** On [Wednesday](#), 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 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. The EU suggested deleting the stakeholders listed in the decision to allow countries full flexibility in choosing relevant partners to implement the Road Map at national level. ARGENTINA and BRAZIL, recalling the voluntary nature of the Road Map, suggested edits to the decision to emphasize 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. The 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 in writing to the Secretariat.

Delegates adopted the revised decision (CRP.10) on [Thursday](#).

**Final Decision:** In its final decision (UNEP/MC/COP.6/CRP.10), the COP:

- welcomes the Road Map for enhancing co-benefits from implementation of the Minamata Convention and the GBF by 2030 prepared by the Secretariat;
- encourages Parties and relevant stakeholders to undertake the actions suggested in the Road Map;
- encourages Parties, and invites other governments that have submitted notifications pursuant to paragraph 3 of Article 7 on ASGM, to integrate actions on reducing mercury pollution from ASGM into national biodiversity strategies and action plans;

- requests the Secretariat to initiate cooperation with the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, without duplication of existing work under the Minamata Convention, with a view to exploring possible ways in which the work of the Platform might support the implementation of the Convention;
- encourages Parties to engage in the Bern Process and actively promote cooperation and policy coherence among MEAs at the national level; and
- requests the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to contribute to the implementation of the Road Map and to continue its engagement in the Bern Process, in collaboration with other MEAs and UNEP, without creating new obligations for Parties and subject to adequate financial and technical support, particularly for developing countries.

#### International Cooperation and Coordination

On [Wednesday](#), the Secretariat presented:

- a note on information on activities undertaken by the Secretariat to cooperate and coordinate with other entities ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/21](#) and [UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/28](#));
- a note on cooperation and coordination between the secretariats of the Minamata Convention and of the BRS Conventions ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/22](#) and [UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/29](#));
- the report of the UNEP Executive Director to COP-6 ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/30](#));
- the report of the WHO and the International Labour Organization ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/31](#));
- a report on the mercury-related activities of relevant international bodies ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/32](#));
- a report on activities undertaken within the GMP ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/33](#));
- a report on activities undertaken within the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC) ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/34](#)); and
- an update on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste, and Pollution ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/35](#)).

On **cooperation between the Minamata and the BRS Conventions**, Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary of the BRS Conventions, 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 cooperation should preserve the autonomy of each Convention and not generate additional burdens, particularly for developing countries.

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

The COP adopted the decision.

**Final Decision:** In its final decision ([UNEP/MC/COP.6/22](#)), the COP requests the Executive Secretary to:

- cooperate with the BRS Secretariat on relevant administrative, programmatic, scientific and technical, and technical assistance matters, in accordance with the programme of work and budget, and to explore ways of further strengthening cooperation and collaboration;

- continue to implement the sharing of services and of the purchase of relevant services with the BRS Secretariat on a cost recovery basis; and
- report on the implementation of the decision, including on a stable framework for cooperation and for the sharing of services, providing an outline of the cooperation activities planned under such a framework for the biennium 2028–2029, for consideration at COP-7.

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. UNEP and the INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION summarized their efforts to support the Convention, while UGANDA highlighted the work of the GMP.

The OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS invited Parties to consider: a programme of work on trade; health care services; meaningful participation of rights 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 explained how its activities can support the Convention, including by 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. On **Thursday**, delegates adopted the revised draft decision (CRP.13).

**Final Decision:** In its final decision (UNEP/MC/COP.6/CRP.13), the COP requests 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;
- carry out activities that provide mutual benefits to the implementation of the Minamata Convention and the GFC and further enhance cooperation and coordination with the GFC Secretariat;
- take the necessary steps for membership and participation in the Inter-Organization Programme for Sound Management of Chemicals; and
- continue cooperation and coordination with the GMP, the CBD, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, the International Atomic

Energy Agency, and UNICEF on issues of common interest, and with other international bodies in areas of relevance to the Minamata Convention.

### **Programme of Work and Budget**

On **Tuesday**, the Secretariat presented the relevant documents in plenary (UNEP/MC/COP.6/23; UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/36, INF/37, and INF/38). Executive Secretary Monika Stankiewicz indicated the Secretariat faced unexpected staff costs challenges related to fluctuations in key currency exchange rates. She explained that temporary measures were put in place, such as a hiring freeze and not filling one position; as a result, the Secretariat’s financial situation is healthy.

For the 2026–2027 biennium, the Secretariat presented two budget scenarios, one maintaining the 2024–2025 level in nominal terms (the zero-nominal-growth scenario) and the other reflecting a 5% increase over the 2024–2025 level (“the 5% scenario”).

In the ensuing discussion, the EU emphasized how the lack of contributions by some Parties is undermining the smooth implementation of activities. The AFRICAN GROUP supported the 5% scenario.

The COP established a contact group, co-chaired by Miriam Medel Garcia (Mexico) and Eveline Verhaar (the Netherlands).

On **Friday**, the contact group Co-Chairs Medel and Verhaar reported agreement on the final programme of work and budget.

Delegates adopted the programme of work and budget for the 2026–2027 biennium as presented by the contact group (CRP.19/Add.1).

**Final Decision:** In its final decision (UNEP/MC/COP.6/CRP.19/Add.1), the COP, *inter alia*:

- invites Parties to make every effort to pay any outstanding contributions as soon as possible;
- requests the Secretariat to report to COP-7 on the progress achieved owing to the efforts made by Parties;
- encourages Parties to the Convention, and invites non-Parties to the Convention and others in a position to do so, to contribute to the special trust fund; and
- requests the Executive Secretary to organize, subject to the availability of resources, a high-level event to mark the tenth anniversary of the Convention during the eighth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

The COP also requests the Executive Secretary to, *inter alia*:

- prepare a budget for the biennium 2028–2029 for consideration by COP-7; and
- prepare a report, subject to the availability of resources, for consideration by COP-7, presenting options for cost saving measures.

### **Venue and Dates of COP-7**

On **Thursday**, the Secretariat, noting no Party had offered to host COP-7, suggested 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 the focus instead remains on activities deemed strictly necessary.

The plenary decided to defer the item to the contact group on the programme of work and budget for further discussion. When the plenary reconvened, President Álvarez announced the original draft decision language would be used, without a reference to a high-level segment.

**Final Decision:** In its decision, the COP decides to hold the next COP in Geneva, Switzerland, from 14–18 June 2027.

### ***Adoption of Meeting Report and Closing***

On Friday, the Secretariat presented the meeting report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/L.1 and UNEP/MC/COP.6/L.1/Add.1), which delegates then adopted with minor amendments.

Sierra Leone, for the AFRICAN GROUP, said they were pleased to have advanced issues of great concern for the region, such as mercury in products, effectiveness evaluation, and the financial mechanism, and would continue to advocate for capacity building, technical assistance, technology transfer, and financial assistance.

Mexico, for GRULAC, expressed satisfaction with the adoption of the decisions on dental amalgam, ASGM, trade, waste, and synergies with the GBF.

Romania, for CEE, welcomed progress made, especially on dental amalgam.

Pakistan, for ASIA-PACIFIC, emphasized the need to accelerate action to implement the Convention and for viable and predictable financial and technical support, in line with the common but differentiated responsibilities principle.

The EU regretted that the decision on VCM “does not reflect consensus” on the availability of alternatives.

CHINA expressed appreciation for the mutual respect shown by countries throughout the meeting, including on VCM. They remarked that without supporting data or a scientific assessment, the phaseout process of mercury use in VCM production would be questioned by their national authorities.

SAUDI ARABIA reiterated their commitment to the Convention and to promoting the use of BAT and BEP to protect human health and the environment for future generations. INDIA thanked all Parties for the support of their request for an extension of the exemption on mercury-added products.

IRAQ said they would appreciate support to address the long-term effects of mercury pollution, noting difficulties in cleaning up sites where plants using mercury for VCM production have closed.

UKRAINE highlighted the environmental damage of mercury pollution from Russian armed aggression and noted “environmental protection and human health cannot be compromised even in the face of aggression.” URUGUAY applauded the progress made on eliminating dental amalgam.

In closing, Executive Secretary Stankiewicz praised the success of COP-6, noting it “opened the door of another chapter of the mercury history book,” applauded the COP-6 President for his leadership both in plenary and in facilitating informal consultations, and recognized the leadership of the African Group on the successful phaseout of mercury-added products.

In closing remarks, President Álvarez, said “we managed to tackle every twist in our agenda with grace and maybe with just a little suspense,” applauded delegates for their flexibility and discipline, and said “you made sure the Convention is more inclusive, dynamic, and important than ever.”

President Álvarez declared COP-6 closed at 5:38 pm.

### **A Brief Analysis of Minamata COP-6**

Eight years after its entry into force, the Minamata Convention has made tangible progress. Many mercury-added products and processes are now banned, guidance on best available techniques and best environmental practices has been adopted, and national emission inventories are underway. Against the backdrop of a broad crisis in multilateral governance and the difficult plastics negotiations in August, delegates were relieved to see the collegial spirit of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention persist at its sixth meeting (COP-6), with delegates reaching consensus on a number of difficult issues. Both the Secretariat and delegates expressed confidence that the forthcoming effectiveness evaluation of the Convention, scheduled to take place at COP-7, will confirm this progress.

As debates unfolded, a “three-speed” dynamic became increasingly visible: developed countries eager to accelerate phaseouts (with some exceptions on dental amalgam), countries with economies in transition weighing industrial competitiveness and feasibility, and developing countries seeking to leapfrog to mercury-free technologies through enhanced access to finance, technical support, technology transfer, and capacity-building. These differing capacities and priorities often defined the pace of progress across agenda items, from dental amalgam and artisanal small-scale gold mining (ASGM) to vinyl chloride monomer (VCM).

This analysis considers how the COP is shifting from commitments to implementation, explores the deeper challenges that surfaced at COP-6, and reflects on how Parties are working to sustain cooperation and ambition.

### ***Crossing the Threshold***

As delegates convened in Geneva, many wondered how effectively the Convention could balance ambition with the practical realities of treaty implementation. A number of commitments were delayed for several years, reflecting the negotiators’ recognition that some obligations would be politically, economically, and/or technically difficult to achieve, and that time would be needed to lay the groundwork for their effective implementation. However, as these commitments came due and entailed increasing costs, it became clear that some countries remained unprepared.

2025 marked a key deadline for countries that had obtained five-year extensions to the phaseout of mercury-added products listed in Annex A to the Convention. Unable to meet this deadline, a number of middle-income and developing countries requested further extensions, emphasizing the need for equity, flexibility, and support. The COP—called to consider their requests for the first time—found the task challenging. In the words of one observer, it “was difficult because there is no established procedure for handling such cases.” Other delegates voiced frustration, arguing that the countries concerned had sufficient time and financial support to complete the phaseout.

Another example is VCM, an industrial chemical that is a key ingredient of polyvinyl chloride (PVC). Production of VCM is the largest remaining industrial process using mercury. A Secretariat study found that ethylene-based methods are available and feasible alternatives in VCM production. However, acknowledging their feasibility would have triggered the obligation for Parties to phase out mercury use in VCM production by 2030. The three-speed dynamic became apparent when, in the Technical Matters contact

group, one upper-middle-income country fiercely opposed such recognition. At stake were 70 VCM plants in the country still using mercury, and the delegation refused to concede even that the science supports a phaseout, let alone that it is economically feasible. Delegates ultimately decided to defer the issue to COP-7 in 2027, noting that Parties are already required to end primary mercury mining by 2032.

The longstanding issue of dental amalgam was another difficult threshold to cross. Dental amalgam remains widely used for dental fillings and poses public health concerns, particularly to vulnerable populations such as pregnant women and children. However, the African Group's proposal to phase it out by 2030, first introduced at COP-4, led to protracted discussions. African delegates warned that the region's "porous borders" and "weak legislation" could turn Africa into a dumping site for amalgam waste. Yet, several developed countries, which have been slow to introduce mercury-free alternatives and have been opposing the measure for years, prolonged the debate, advocating a later phaseout date of 2034. As one delegate explained, "This is not a question of science for developed countries, but a question of immense administrative work and access to alternatives in rural regions." Several countries with economies in transition also voiced reservations about the 2030 timeline. In the end, delegates adopted the long-awaited and historic decision, accommodating less prepared countries with a 2034 phaseout date.

### *Into Deeper Waters*

Beyond the pressure of looming deadlines, COP-6 had to tackle several challenging issues carried over from COP-5. One of these was mercury sources and trade. Several delegates pointed to a regulatory gap allowing mercury compounds to be produced and traded largely without restriction, since the Convention only restricts the supply and trade of elemental mercury. COP-6 made some headway on this issue, adopting a decision that encourages Parties to consider establishing a new annex for mercury compounds to the Convention. However, this effort is likely to encounter significant challenges down the line. While developed and developing countries supported the addition of an annex, some upper-middle income countries have already expressed doubts that legal trade in mercury compounds undermines the Convention's objective, a criterion for the inclusion of new annexes. Once again, the three-speed dynamic revealed significant economic stakes for countries with economies in transition, some of which continue to rely heavily on mercury-based industrial processes. According to one observer: "This issue will require a lot of time, effort, coordination, and money."

Another contentious issue at COP-6 was ASGM, which aims to eliminate the use of mercury in such a practice. The complexity of the matter prompted the establishment of an unscheduled contact group on Tuesday that met until midday Friday. At earlier COPs, delegates recognized that there was no one-size-fits-all solution to the problem. As a result, countries were required to develop national action plans. However, as countries continue to experiment with different approaches, the issue has grown increasingly complex and remains far from resolved, driven both by record-high gold prices and the growing involvement of organized criminal networks. Although some developing countries emphasized that ASGM is vital to local livelihoods and proposed measures on traceability,

due diligence, and just transition, several delegations cautioned against language they viewed as overly prescriptive or legalistic, questioning both the feasibility and scope of such measures.

The discussions on ASGM also showed how the "three-speed" pattern of implementation is further complicated by regional realities. In some parts of the world, mercury use stems from medium-scale illicit operations beyond the Convention's scope, while elsewhere mining legislation only distinguishes between small- and large-scale activities. These definitional gaps have made it difficult to craft common approaches, underscoring that implementation speed is shaped as much by local governance contexts as by economic realities.

These challenges make clear that achieving the Convention's objective of "making mercury history" will require closing persistent financial, governance, and technical gaps in mercury trade and ASGM, as well as addressing waste management, which remained relatively peripheral this year. These issues account for a large portion of global mercury use and emissions and may undermine the treaty's long-term effectiveness.

### *Keeping the Course*

With decisions adopted on all contentious issues except VCM, COP-6 maintained the momentum generated at COP-5. In closing remarks, the Executive Secretary said that COP-6 "showed the promise of multilateral action at a time it is most urgently needed." COP-6 also strengthened the Convention's linkages with the wider chemicals and waste architecture, enhancing coordination with the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions and the emerging Global Framework on Chemicals. It further connected mercury control to the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the forthcoming Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste, and Pollution. These developments illustrated the Convention's institutional maturity and reaffirmed that cooperation across multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) remains both possible and necessary in an increasingly fragmented multilateral landscape.

On the last day of COP-6, many delegates congratulated one another on "a successful COP" as they crossed paths between plenary sessions. Many noted that this positive outcome was due in large part to the leadership of the COP President, whose use of small-group discussions, avoidance of more unwieldy contact groups whenever possible, strict time management, and personal involvement in several informal consultations proved effective in building consensus and securing agreement across most difficult items. The broad consensus on the dangers of mercury to human health and the environment, coupled with the Convention's focus on a single substance, also simplified negotiations.

Despite the progress achieved, COP-6 leaves considerable work for COP-7, including on VCM, mercury compounds, ASGM, and waste. The greatest challenge lies in controlling diffuse and economically entrenched sources, with ASGM still accounting for the largest share of global mercury emissions and industrial processes continuing to emit and recycle mercury across complex supply chains. Sustaining the Convention's momentum will require continued cooperation across all "speeds" and scales of implementation to ensure that the goal of making mercury history remains within reach.

## Upcoming Meetings

**OECP-7 and UNEA-7:** The seventh session of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives and the seventh session of the UN Environment Assembly will meet back-to-back. UNEA-7 will convene on the theme “Advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet.” **dates:** 1-5 and 8-12 December 2025 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** [unep.org/environmentalassembly/unea7](http://unep.org/environmentalassembly/unea7)

**70th GEF Council Meeting:** The Global Environment Facility’s Council meets twice annually to develop, adopt, and evaluate the operational policies and programmes for GEF-financed activities, and review the work program. The event will include the 5th Global Biodiversity Framework Fund Council Meeting, and the 39th Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund Council meeting. **dates:** 15-19 December 2025 **location:** virtual **www:** [thegef.org/events/70th-gef-council-meeting](http://thegef.org/events/70th-gef-council-meeting)

**ISP-CWP Plenary:** The first session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution will meet to begin its work. **dates:** 2-6 February 2026 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** [unep.org/isp-cwp](http://unep.org/isp-cwp)

**14th meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention (OEWG-14):** OEWG-14 will consider options for improving the functioning of the prior informed consent procedure; challenges to implementing the plastic amendments to the Convention annexes; possible revisions to the national reporting format regarding cases of illegal traffic closed in the prior year; addressing issues related to waste containing nanomaterials; and draft updated technical guidelines on pneumatic tires. **dates:** 22-26 June 2026 **location:** TBD **www:** [basel.int](http://basel.int)

**22nd meeting of the Chemical Review Committee to the Rotterdam Convention:** The Chemical Review Committee will review notifications of final regulatory action concerning pesticides from Mozambique and Malaysia that were deferred by CRC-21, and other notifications. **dates:** 29 September - 2 October 2026 **location:** Rome, Italy **www:** [pic.int](http://pic.int)

**22nd meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee to the Stockholm Convention:** The Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee will review draft risk profiles for polybrominated dibenzo-p-dioxins and dibenzofurans (PBDD/Fs) and mixed polybrominated/chlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins and dibenzofurans (PBCDD/Fs). **dates:** 5-9 October 2026 **location:** Rome, Italy **www:** [pops.int](http://pops.int)

**Montreal Protocol MOP 38:** The 38th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol will review issues related the implementation of the Protocol, commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Kigali Amendment and adopt the 2027–2029 replenishment of the Multilateral Fund. **dates:** 2-6 November 2026 **location:** Kigali, Rwanda **www:** [ozone.unep.org/meetings](http://ozone.unep.org/meetings)

**First International Conference (IC-1) of the Global Framework Convention on Chemicals (GFC):** IC-1 will discuss GFC implementation, including which Implementation Programmes and indicators to adopt, which issues of concern the GFC will address, the status of the GFC Fund, resource mobilization, guidelines for national focal points, the launch of the Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides, and the mandate and modalities of the GFC’s Open-ended Working Group going forward. **dates:** 4th quarter of 2026 (TBD) **location:** TBD **www:** [unep.org/global-framework-chemicals/international-meetings](http://unep.org/global-framework-chemicals/international-meetings)

**Basel Convention COP18, Rotterdam Convention COP13, and Stockholm Convention COP13:** The COPs to the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions will meet jointly and back-to-back to address proposed listings to the respective conventions’ annexes, as well as issues of joint concern, such as financial and technical assistance. **dates:** 19-30 April 2027 (tentative) **location:** Panama City, Panama (tentative) **www:** [brsmeas.org](http://brsmeas.org)

**Minamata Convention COP-7:** COP-7 is expected to consider a possible SIP extension; the effectiveness evaluation; ESM of mercury waste; enforcement mechanisms for the phaseout of mercury-containing cosmetics; and whether mercury-free alternatives to mercury catalysts in VCM production are technically and economically feasible. **dates:** 14-18 June 2027 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** [minamataconvention.org](http://minamataconvention.org)

For additional meetings, see [sdg.iisd.org](http://sdg.iisd.org)

## Glossary

ASGM	Artisanal and small-scale gold mining
BAT	Best available techniques
BEP	Best environmental practices
BRS	Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRP	Conference room paper
ESM	Environmentally sound management
GBF	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFC	Global Framework on Chemicals
GMP	Global Mercury Partnership
GRULAC	Latin American and Caribbean Group
ICC	Implementation and Compliance Committee
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
IPEN	International Pollutants Elimination Network
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
NAP	National action plan
OEEG	Open-Ended Expert Group
OEWG	Open-Ended Working Group
SIP	Specific International Programme to Support Capacity Building and Technical Assistance
ToR	Terms of reference
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
VCM	Vinyl chloride monomer
WEOG	Western European and Others Group
WHO	World Health Organization