



MINAMATA PREPARATORY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY 8 OCTOBER 2013

On Tuesday, the Preparatory Meeting continued negotiations on the draft resolutions to be forwarded to the Diplomatic Conference. In the morning, delegates heard reports on the previous evening's discussions, and after further negotiations in plenary, agreement was reached on the draft resolutions. In the afternoon, the report of the meeting was adopted, after which delegates were invited to enjoy a "Swiss Break" at a reception hosted by the government of Switzerland.

PLENARY

In the morning, Chair Fernando Lujris introduced new text contained in documents UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/CONF/PM/CRP.1 and UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/CONF/PM/CRP.2, reflecting Monday's deliberations.

Cooperation and coordination and the interim

secretariat: On the arrangements for the Secretariat, contact group Chair Alf Wills noted an agreement was reached on requesting the Executive Director to provide interim secretarial services and to facilitate activities at regional and country level until COP1. He said the Executive Director is also requested to present for INC consideration a report on proposals on how the permanent secretariat's functions will be performed, including analysis of options that address inter alia: effectiveness; cost benefit; locations of the secretariat and merging the secretariat with that of the BRS Conventions; and using the services of the interim secretariat. Wills said the group debated text to make clear the importance of liaising with the BRS Secretariats, with other relevant actors, and with the Basel Convention on matters clearly within the mandate of either convention.

On revised text relating to matters pertaining to other international bodies, Chair Lujris indicated there should be minor changes to be consistent with Monday's plenary discussions, including that the Basel Convention Secretariat should be invited to "update", rather than "develop" technical guidelines for the environmentally sound management of mercury wastes.

Delegates agreed on the text as proposed, with minor changes to be consistent with Monday's plenary discussions.

BRAZIL supported the text but noted its reservations about the UNEP Executive Director's report to the INC on proposals on the performance of functions of the permanent secretariat, saying this exceeded the meeting's mandate and prejudged the

work of COP1. SWITZERLAND noted that many delegates supported explicit references to supporting an efficient and effective implementation phase, drawing on the resources of the UNEP family.

Activities required or encouraged by the Convention:

David Buchholz (US) reported on informal consultations on requesting the INC support activities required or encouraged by the Convention, and noted participants had agreed that the support be "practicable, and consistent with the priorities in the Convention." On releases, he explained participants had agreed that the first priority is guidance on the identification of sources of releases and the methodology for preparing the development of inventories of releases. He also proposed deleting a reference to the rules of procedure of the Implementation and Compliance Committee as the Convention provides for the Committee to prepare its own rules of procedure for approval at COP2.

Delegates agreed on the proposed text, including the deletion.

Financial arrangements:

Gillian Guthrie (Jamaica) reported on informal consultations on interim financial arrangements. She noted proposed text changes, including to underscore the urgency of the GEF addressing its role in contributing to the Minamata Convention's financial mechanism, and to request the INC to develop a proposal for the hosting institution of the specific international programme. She also noted text inviting the Executive Board of the Special Programme on institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the BRS Conventions, the Minamata Convention and SAICM (the Special Programme) to inform the INC on the Special Programme's implementation progress.

COLOMBIA proposed that the resolution recognize countries' financial pledges made at INC5 for supporting work during the interim period.

Delegates agreed on the text as proposed.

BAT/BEP technical expert group:

Anne Daniel (Canada) reported on informal consultations on the paragraph establishing a technical expert group to develop required guidance on emissions. She reported agreement that the group would elect two co-Chairs, shall comprise experts in pollution control, and/or one or more of the source categories in Annex D, and would operate as a subsidiary body to the INC. On composition, she noted agreement on following the 31-member model of the Stockholm Convention Persistent Organic Pollutant Review Committee (POPRC), with provisions for



the UNEP Executive Director to invite eight experts from industry and civil society to participate as observers. She explained the proposed text also requires the group to invite input from other governments, IGOs, industry and civil society organizations, noting this was envisioned as allowing for input in an intersessional process. On requests that the group address releases, Daniel reported the group would be mindful of the need to minimize cross-media effects.

Delegates agreed on the proposed text.

Other issues: On the preamble of the draft resolutions, following informal consultations, delegates agreed to delete references to the Rio+20 outcome document and the GEF Council.

On a call to provide financial and technical assistance, BRAZIL, supported by INDONESIA, suggested the assistance be to “developing countries and economies in transition” rather than to States. PALESTINE, opposed by the US and the EU, requested a reference to “countries under occupation,” explaining that other UN bodies have adopted this in their text. After some informal discussion between COLOMBIA and the US, COLOMBIA proposed that the assistance be to meet the objective of “enhancing relevant institutional structures.”

On inviting the GEF Council’s support in facilitating early ratification of the Convention, NORWAY agreed to also invite support for early implementation.

Delegates agreed on the proposed text, with some additional minor amendments.

As all the draft resolutions had been agreed upon, Chair Lugris explained they would be compiled in a single document for consideration in the afternoon.

CHILE stated its support for health and environmental protection, and for sustainable mining practices, and underscored that while banning primary mercury mining is a fundamental decision of the Convention, it is a unique and exceptional instance.

In the afternoon, Chair Lugris introduced the draft resolutions, explaining the document reflected the morning’s deliberations (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/CONF/PM/CRP.4). The Meeting adopted the document without further amendments.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

Chair Lugris then introduced the draft report of the meeting (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/CONF/PM/L.1 and L.1/Add.1). On the report of the informal group on financial arrangements, Jillian Guthrie asked to make it clear that relevant additions to the resolution were checked and confirmed with the GEF Secretariat. On the establishment of the BAT/BEP technical expert group, Anne Daniel asked to clarify that the group’s meetings will be held in English and asked the Secretariat include the date by which expert nominations would be due from regional groups. The Secretariat asked that nominations be submitted to the Secretariat through the Bureau by 30 November 2013.

The Meeting adopted the report of the meeting with these and other minor amendments.

CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

Chair Lugris underscored that the convention will be of a very dynamic nature, and its implementation will be fundamental for all member states and regions. He highlighted that work will continue in Kumamoto as the Diplomatic

Conference convenes on Thursday, 10 October. Nicaragua, on behalf of GRULAC, thanked Japan, Spain, and Switzerland for making it possible for the group to have interpretation at its daily regional coordination meetings and thanked countries that have supported regional meetings prior to INCs.

Jordan, speaking on behalf of the ASIA-PACIFIC REGION, thanked Japan for its support throughout the long negotiating process and for hosting the Preparatory Meeting, noting that the meeting had crowned significant work with a successful conclusion. He urged parties to take steps to ensure the early entry into force of the Minamata Convention which would bring an end to suffering from mercury poisoning.

The EU thanked Chair Lugris for his able work and UNEP for its support throughout.

Mali, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, congratulated Chair Lugris and other members of the bureau on their successful work. He paid respect to the victims of Minamata Disease and thanked the Government of Japan for its support in this and earlier meetings as well as to UNEP. The AFRICAN GROUP looked forward to early entry into force and expressed the hope that activities consistent with the convention could be funded in the interim period.

Chair Lugris, in closing the meeting, recognised the hard work that had been done over many years but stressed that entry into force would now become an immediate focus going forward. He thanked all the Bureau members of the Preparatory Meeting for their work, noting that it continued their good work during the five INCs, which provided the impetus to the process of moving forward in developing a global treaty on mercury.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The successful completion of the Preparatory Meeting around 5:00 pm allowed the “early implementation” of the “Swiss Break.” As many delegates fondly recalled the earlier “breaks” that punctuated the arduous INC negotiations, highlighting memories of tangos and alphorns, they underscored that this time they did not have to rush off to continue their work in evening contact groups. Indeed, there was a palpable air of satisfaction amongst delegates for having completed the task at hand. While delegates completed this work in plenary, well-attended side events were evidence that for many the focus is already on implementation and monitoring.

Earlier in the day, delegates cheered at the announcement that the plans for “Minamata Day” on Wednesday will not be hindered by typhoon Danas as first feared. As the week shifts from its preparatory phase and welcomes plenipotentiaries, participants will travel to nearby Minamata and take part in remembrance ceremonies and tours to learn more about the history of Minamata Disease and current activities for the revitalization of Minamata. This will build on the moving account of Shinobu Sakamoto, a victim of Minamata Disease, who took part in the the Citizens Against Chemicals Pollution/IPEN side event on Tuesday. On Wednesday evening, the ceremonial opening at the Minamata City Cultural Center will officially launch the Diplomatic Convention, and the visit to Minamata will be another powerful reminder of why the world is moving to address mercury pollution.