

Ref: MC/ES/2021/93

24 November 2021

Subject: Update on the Minamata Convention on Mercury

Dear Madam/Sir,

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your participation in the online segment of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP-4.1).

The Meeting was attended by nearly 100 Parties and it approved the programme of work and budget for 2022 and the dates for the in-person meeting in Bali, Indonesia, that is 21-25 March 2021. Furthermore, Parties reflected on the 8<sup>th</sup> replenishment of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund, the draft reporting guidance to assist Parties complete their full national reports under article 21 of the Convention due by 31 December 2021, and the work remaining to give full effect to Article 22 on evaluating the effectiveness of the Convention. I thank all Parties for your tangible contribution to making this meeting a success.

This was our first fully online COP, and required additional layers of communication, outreach and information management to welcome over 1,000 participants into the digital platform to follow various work and meeting streams of the COP meeting. In total, 46 distinct online sessions were enabled, including plenary sessions in 6 UN languages. The COP-4.1 opening ceremony was broadcast live.

Moverover, the Convention website saw a 25% increase in users from previous COPs and more than 16k pageviews during the COP-4 week. On Twitter alone we had 50k impressions and a 385% increase of visits. To support Parties in their detailed preparation and participation, the Secretariat prepared an online budget forum, intranet documentation, as well as communication items such as press releases, newsletters, a media advisory, and multimedia materials. The government of Indonesia, as host country, organized a press conference, and was in charge of the logo design and branding for the event. We closely collaborated with our colleagues at UNEP, GEF, BRS Secretariat, CBD Secretariat, IISD ENB and others to help us make this meeting a success.

### International Travel Readiness Survey

As part of the preparation for COP-4.2, the Secretariat is conducting a survey to assess international travel readiness of Parties' delegates. Indonesia, as the host country, is planning to put in place rigorous policies to ensure safety of participants at COP-4.2, including a requirement for travelers to Indonesia to show proof of a WHO-approved COVID-19 vaccination and a recent negative PCR test.

In this regard, on 18 November, the Secretariat sent an email invitation to all National Focal Points to the Minamata Convention to complete **a survey on COP-4.2 International Travel Readiness** and submit the results as soon as possible but no later than **2 December 2021**. We look forward to all Parties' responses to the survey.

### Secretariat team

I am pleased to inform you that with the generous support of the Government of Italy, as of 1 November 2021, the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) position of Associate Programme Officer was filled and I had the



pleasure to welcome on board Ms. Maria Irene Rizzo as a new team member. Irene previously worked for the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species. Irene will reinforce coordination and implementation of the Specific International Programme, which in turn provides as part of the Financial Mechanism, support to eligible Parties in the implementation of obligations under the Convention.

Let me express my great appreciation to the Government of Italy for providing this valuable support for the position and for the Specific International Programme.

### **Specific International Programme and the Specific Trust Fund**

Let me also take this opportunity to reiterate my appreciation to all the donors whose contributions to the Specific Trust Fund enabled nine projects to be funded in the Third Round of applications to the Specific International Programme. Due to the very clear articulation of implementation needs expressed by applicants, it is essential that the Specific Trust Fund receive robust and timely donor contributions for the Fourth Round of applications, allowing us to launch the Fourth Round as expeditiously as possible.

Now entering its fourth year of operation, the Specific International Programme has proven to be well functioning and appreciated component of the Convention's Financial Mechanism. Twenty-four projects across all regions are now supported due to the generous contributions to the Specific Trust Fund by Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

With regard to the Specific International Programme, I would also like to draw your attention to the Executive Director's report on strengthening the Specific International Programme, which was invited by the Conference of the Parties and prepared for COP-4. The paper is available here: [UNEP/MC/COP.4/13](https://www.unep.org/press/2017/09/20170920-01).

### **National Reporting**

I would like to recall, that the first full national report pursuant to Article 21 are due by 31 December 2021, The reporting period for the reports is 16 August 2017 to 31 December 2020.

As per Decision MC-1/13, the Secretariat prepared draft reporting guidance to assist Parties to complete these reports. Please refer to UNEP/MC/COP-4/17 to access the draft guidance, and/or refer to it through the online reporting tool. Credentials to access the online reporting tool have been sent to all National Focal Points on 7 September 2021. We see many Parties active in the online reporting tool currently, and with only 40 days to go to the deadline, encourage all Parties for whom the reports are due, to begin their national reporting as soon as possible. The full reports consist of 5 parts, with Part b consisting of 43 multistep questions, some of which require also additional information in the form of attachments.

If any Party is not in possession of their log in credentials or there has been a change in National Focal Point, kindly contact the Secretariat as a matter of urgency, at [mea-minamatasecretariat@un.org](mailto:mea-minamatasecretariat@un.org).

The Secretariat prepared a number of dedicated [sessions](#) as part of Minamata Online, Season 2, to support Parties to report. Please refer to them [here](#) if you missed them. As part of this set of sessions, with 40 days to go on **22 November**, a session was held in the morning and one in the afternoon to check in with Parties in as many time zones as possible on any last questions or queries.

I would also like to take this opportunity to add that following the feedback at COP-4.1, we have also made provision for two additional top-up sessions to assist Parties in Spanish and French too. Please join us on Monday, 29 November for the top-up in Spanish, and on Tuesday, 30 November for the top-up in French.



If you need any other information from the Secretariat to support your ability to submit your national reports by 31 December 2021, please let us know.

Yours sincerely,

*Monika Stankiewicz*

Monika Stankiewicz

Executive Secretary

To: National Focal Points for the Minamata Convention on Mercury

Cc: Governments through their official channels of communication to the UN Environment Programme

Permanent Missions to the UN Environment Programme and to the UN in Geneva