

Ref: MC/COP5/2022/95

01 July 2022

Subject: Progress of the intersessional work for the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention (COP-5)

Dear Madam/Sir,

I would like to update you on the progress of the intersessional work pursuant to the decisions of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-4) and to invite your further support to the process. I refer to my earlier [letter](#) dated 13 April 2022 and the [web page](#) the secretariat has established to provide information on the progress of the intersessional work.

You may have noticed that the advance English version of the report of the second segment of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties is available on the Convention website since 7 June 2022. I have recently been informed that due to UNON's higher than expected workload due to multiple UN meetings, the report in the remaining UN languages may only be available in late September 2022.

Annexes A and B to the Convention

My letter on 13 April 2022 included a table explaining two sets of information to be submitted. In that table, 30 June 2023 was indicated by the secretariat as the deadline for submission of information on the availability and technical and economic feasibility of mercury-free alternatives of the processes listed in part II of Annex B. However, the secretariat would like to revisit this timeline and **invite parties to submit such information by 31 December 2022**, which will ensure the timely preparation of COP-5 documentation. The letter on the website will be corrected accordingly. The secretariat will directly communicate to parties that may have relevant manufacturing processes in their territories, based on their national reports pursuant to Article 21.

Mercury releases

The group of experts on mercury releases had its first online meeting on 24 June 2022. The group will work to develop draft guidance on best available techniques and best environmental practices to control the release of mercury releases from the relevant point sources, taking into consideration the information on national regulations and industry practice, to be submitted by 30 June 2022. The secretariat has received request from some parties to slightly extend the deadline. **Interested parties are invited to submit information by 15 July 2022.**

Mercury waste thresholds

The group of experts on mercury waste thresholds had its first online meeting in two sessions on 21 and 27 June 2022. The group noted that the submission of information and data on waste contaminated with mercury or mercury compounds from parties, due by 30 June 2022, was very important for considering, as requested by the COP:

- approaches other than total mercury concentration,
- potential for differing thresholds for different waste types, and



- prioritization of wastes that are common among parties and likely to pose a risk to human health or the environment.

The secretariat has received requests from some parties to extend the deadline. **Interested parties are invited to submit information by 15 July 2022.**

The group also agreed to work in an open and inclusive manner, by inviting the rostered experts and other experts to online meetings. As noted in the email message that secretariat circulated to national focal points on 4 May, **parties and other organizations may nominate experts to the roster** by submitting a completed and signed template to the [secretariat](#).

You may recall that Decision MC-4/6 requested the group to have one face-to-face meeting subject to the availability of resources. Those resources, estimated to be about USD 85,000, have not been identified so far. Therefore, I invite parties that are in a position to do so to **contribute to the special trust fund to enable the face-to-face meeting. A pledge before September 2022 would be appreciated** for the timely planning of the meeting.

Comments to the draft Reporting Guidance

Additional comments are invited from parties and stakeholders on the draft reporting guidance (UNEP/MC/COP.4/17) as per Decision MC-4/8 by 15 December 2022. Kindly visit the intersessional page for more details, including the template for commenting.

The first effectiveness evaluation of the Convention

The Open-Ended Scientific Group had its first online meeting on 22 June 2022, and elected Mr. Dominique Bally (Cote d'Ivoire) and Mr. Terry Keating (the United States of America) as co-chairs. The group agreed to invite experts from the roster and other stakeholder groups to join the online meetings, starting at the next online meeting in September.

The roster of experts was established based on the secretariat's email communication on 4 May 2022, as explained above. **Parties and other organizations may still nominate experts to the roster** by submitting a completed and signed template to the [secretariat](#).

Regarding the intersessional process supported by the secretariat to refine the list of indicators to be used in the effectiveness evaluation, as per Decision MC-4/11, kindly visit the intersessional page for more details.

Second review of the financial mechanism

The terms of reference for the second review of the financial mechanism are set forth in Decision MC-4/7, which invites parties, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and stakeholders to submit information, consistent with the terms of reference for the review and organized by the listed performance criteria, on their experience gained through their interactions with the financial mechanism, as soon as possible and not later than 30 September 2022.

You may recall that the review covers the time period from August 2019 to July 2022. The listed performance criteria against which the effectiveness and efficiency of the financial mechanism will be assessed are as follows:

- a) Responsiveness of the Global Environment Facility and the Specific International Programme to the guidance adopted by or provided by the Conference of the Parties;



- b) Extent to which the projects funded by the financial mechanism have reduced, or are expected to reduce, the supply, use, emissions and releases of mercury, and deliver other benefits in terms of Convention implementation;
- c) Transparency and timeliness of the project approval processes;
- d) Simplicity, flexibility and expeditiousness of the procedures for accessing funds and for implementing and reporting on projects;
- e) Adequacy and sustainability of the available resources;
- f) Country ownership of activities funded by the financial mechanism;
- g) Level of stakeholder involvement;
- h) Any other significant issues raised by the parties.

I strongly encourage **submissions, organized according to the above criteria, as soon as possible and no later than 30 September 2022.**

You are likely already aware of the very successful conclusion of the GEF-8 replenishment process, whereby donors pledged a historic USD 5.33 billion for the four-year GEF-8 period. This amount includes USD 269 million for the Minamata Convention, an increase of over 30% from our GEF-7 allocation. These final results, which included additional pledges following the conclusion of formal replenishment negotiations in April, were announced and endorsed by the GEF Council at its 62nd meeting in June, in which I participated. You can learn more about the replenishment results at:

<https://www.thegef.org/newsroom/press-releases/donors-boost-global-environment-facility-contributions-5-33-billion>

I hope that the Specific International Programme, the other vital component of our financial mechanism, will enjoy similarly robust contributions in the weeks and months ahead. The SIP fills essential needs of our developing country parties and parties with economies in transition for direct support for implementation activities that are not funded by the GEF. I encourage all those who are in a position to do so to echo the ambition expressed by donors to the GEF and contribute generously to the Specific Trust Fund, so that we can launch the Fourth Round of applications as soon as possible.

As we all know, working together is how we will make a difference for human health and the environment as we make mercury history.

Should you have any queries on this follow-up letter, or to submit information, kindly contact the contact person as listed below, with a copy to: mea-minamatasecretariat@un.org.

- Annexes A and B to the Convention, mercury releases and mercury waste thresholds: Eisaku Toda (Email: eisaku.toda@un.org)
- Second review of the financial mechanism: Marianne Bailey (Email: marianne.bailey@un.org)
- Draft Reporting Guidance: Claudia ten Have (Email: claudia.tenhave@un.org)
- Effectiveness evaluation (OESG): Manoela Miranda (Email: manoela.miranda@un.org)
- Effectiveness evaluation (Indicators): Claudia ten Have (Email: claudia.tenhave@un.org)



Yours sincerely,

Monika Stankiewicz

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Executive Secretary

To: Minamata Convention National Focal Points
Members of the Bureau of the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Observers admitted to the meetings of the Conference of the Parties

Cc: Members of the group of technical experts on mercury releases
Members of the Open-Ended Scientific Group
Members of the Implementation and Compliance Committee
Members of the group of technical experts on mercury waste thresholds
Members of the Specific International Programme Governing Board
Representatives of the Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office at Geneva
Permanent Representative to the United Nations Environment Programme