Participants

Present: Ms. Claudia Sorina Dumitru (Romania, for Eastern European States, President), Ms. Anahit Aleksandryan (Armenia, for Eastern European States), Mr. Roger Baro (Burkina Faso, for Africa), Ms. Oarabile Serumola (Botswana, for Africa), Dr. Saeed A. Alzahrani (Saudi Arabia, for Asia Pacific), Mr. Syed Mujtaba Hussain (Pakistan, for Asia Pacific), Mr. Osvaldo Patricio Álvarez Pérez (Chile, for Latin America and the Caribbean), Ms. Cheryl Eugene-St. Romain (Saint Lucia, for Latin America and the Caribbean), Ms. Marie-Claire Lhenry (France, for the Western European and Others), Mr. Sverre-Thomas Jahre (Norway, for the Western European and Others), Ms. Paulina Riquelme (former Chair of the Implementation and Compliance Committee, Ex officio member) and members of the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

1. Opening of the meeting

- Ms. Claudia Sorina Dumitru, the President of the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention (COP-5), welcomed the members of the Bureau and thanked them for being present at the meeting.

- Ms. Monika Stankiewicz, the Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, added her warm welcome to the members of the Bureau.

- The agenda of the meeting was adopted without change.

2. Items for preparation/consideration prior to COP-5 (lessons learnt from organizing COP-4)

- The Executive Secretary presented information on experiences from organizing COP-4 and how they were being considered in the preparation of the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The presentation included information on substantive preparations, logistics, regional preparatory meetings, meetings of the Bureau, COP plenary and contact groups, in-session documents and paperless, media and communications, registrations, ICT, and side-events.

- In her presentation the Executive Secretary also informed of the new developments, such as efforts to enhance the environmental sustainability of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties (‘greening’ of COPs), renewal of the agreement with the CBD Secretariat to ensure a long-term solution for servicing the Convention’s registration and participant management system (KRONOS), and issuing of the Code of Conduct to Prevent Harassment at Events organized under the Minamata Convention.

- Upon President’s invitation, several Bureau members shared their observations and proposals on the COP-5 preparation and conduct. The following issues were highlighted:
  - Efficient conduct of COPs, including avoiding late night negotiations depends on all participating Parties; allocating some time for informal consultations during COP could be a one way to achieve progress in negotiations.
- A side event to inform on the content of the Code of Conduct, including presenting practical examples, could be organized by the Secretariat, to promote the environment whereby delegates are free to work and present their national positions without being intimidated.

- A session to present the work by the Implementation and Compliance Committee could be organized by the Secretariat, including to present lessons learnt, results of the recent meetings and how conclusions were adopted by the Committee.

- Pre-COP preparations by the Secretariat were well received. It was noted that it was useful to have side-events ahead of the COP when they were specifically linked to the decisions at the COP; experiences of the Ozone Secretariat could be utilized in organizing side events.

- The number of contact groups working in parallel should be minimized as much as possible to enable Parties with fewer delegates to participate; identifying chairs of the contact groups well in advance and finalizing the work of the contact groups by 11 p.m. at the latest were seen as a good practice; a budget contact group needs sufficient time for its work; the BRS Secretariat training for chairs and negotiators, including training material, was seen as very useful.

- Bureau works as a team and supports the President in consistently monitoring progress of the COP and discussing how to address issues, and is part of the discussion on the COP schedule, which is communicated through Bureau members to the regional meetings on each day of the COP; the Secretariat could help Bureau members to prepare for the regional meetings during COP by summarizing activities and tasks for the day.

- Decisions for which voting might arise require advance planning.

- ENB video coverage of the COP was considered a good practice.

- It was seen as a good practice to have the Minamata Convention website mobile friendly, while further developments of the specific COP webpage could be undertaken by the Secretariat to make the COP documents easier to find.

- The Secretariat could seek ways to have immigration authorities informed of an upcoming COP, in particular for COPs hosted outside of Geneva.

- A post-COP survey could be done by the Secretariat to collect feedback and ideas for future.

- The President and the Executive Secretary thanked the Bureau members for their feedback and suggestions, which will be taken into account in preparations of COP-5.

- One Bureau member suggested providing training to new National Focal Points (NFPs) of the Convention, for example during regional preparatory meetings for the COPs. Other Bureau members pointed out that such training – possibly to be funded through the Specific International Programme - could benefit all NFPs and include information on activities and examples of internal organization of work to strengthen implementation of the Convention, and training on specific technical and other issues for customs authorities (as often provided within other MEAs). One Bureau member pointed out the role of NFPs to communicate information received from the Secretariat to different competent national authorities. Another Bureau member pointed out that a decision by COP would be needed for the organization of training if it has budgetary implications.

3. Consideration of key issues for COP-5

   a. Status of intersessional and other work in the run-up to COP-5

   - The Secretariat presented the ongoing intersessional work including amendment to annexes A and B; artisanal and small-scale gold mining; mercury releases; waste thresholds; knowledge management; second review of the financial mechanism; capacity-building and technical assistance; national reporting; Implementation and Compliance Committee; effectiveness
evaluation; gender; international cooperation and coordination; status of contributions of the general trust fund; overview of pre-COP-5 events.

- One Bureau member, reflecting on the second review of the financial mechanism, noted the critically low level of current contributions to the Specific International Programme which are insufficient to allow the SIP Governing Board to launch the Fourth Round of applications to the SIP. Other Bureau members shared this concern, noted challenges, and discussed options, such as themes, for highlighting resource mobilization for implementation needs.

- On gender mainstreaming, Bureau members pointed out the importance of mainstreaming gender-related activities into existing activities planned under the Programme of Work rather than planning them as a separate track.

- On the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Secretariat noted that the report, which was requested in decision MC-4/12, was being prepared along with a study on the socio-economic impacts of mercury on fisheries and livelihoods, which are both being undertaken with the financial support from Norway.

- Upon invitation of the President, the Bureau members of Africa region presented the three amendment proposals submitted by Burkina Faso and Botswana on behalf of their region, to be considered by the Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting: on dental amalgam, on cosmetics and on fluorescent lamps. The proposals have been circulated to all Parties and the Depositary and are available on the Convention’s website.

- The President thanked the Bureau members for their presentation and noted the Bureau members can be approached by Parties with any comments or questions regarding the proposals.

- One Bureau member advised that the proponents for the amendment reach out to Parties considering the positions they expressed at COP-4.

b. Organization of work during COP-5

- The Secretariat presented the COP-5 overall timetable and an initial draft of the tentative schedule of work.

- President invited the Bureau members to provide comments on the presented COP-5 timetable and schedule.

- One Bureau member suggested the work of the budget contact group would start earlier during the week, as budget discussions at the upcoming COP would include an issue of outstanding contributions to the general trust fund of the Convention and thus more time would likely be needed for the group to conclude its work. Further, the Bureau member informed that for some delegations, negotiation of the proposed amendments to the annexes of the Convention and of the effectiveness evaluation would be conducted by the same persons, and preferably these negotiations would not overlap.

- The President invited the Bureau members to provide any further possible comments on the initial schedule to the Executive Secretary by 12 May 2023. The Secretariat informed that the further developed schedule, taking into account comments received from the Bureau, will be shared with the Bureau members via e-mail correspondence, and that the aim was to finalize the schedule in collaboration with the Bureau.

c. Election and confirmation of officers

- The Secretariat presented the note on expected election of Bureau members and members of the Implementation and Compliance Committee, and confirmation of member of the SIP Governing Board.
• One Bureau member sought clarification from the Secretariat on the terms of office of the members of the Implementation and Compliance Committee (ICC) as opposed to the terms of office of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs nominated by the Committee. The Secretariat clarified that while each COP elects for two terms new Committee's members to replace those members whose period of office is about to expire, the Chair and Vice-Chair are elected by the Committee and commence their term of office at the closure of the meeting at which they are elected until the closure of the following meeting of the Committee.

• The Secretariat invited Bureau to take note of the information regarding the hosting of COP-6.

• A Bureau member inquired whether the Secretariat had already received offers to host COP-6, the Secretariat responded that no official offer had been received yet. The President encouraged Bureau members in the GRULAC region to share information on the matter with their constituencies and explore options for hosting COP-6 in 2025.

d. Any other issues as may be raised by the Bureau

• One Bureau member suggested to identify a theme for COP-5, in line with BRS Conventions practice, to highlight the need for funding for the Specific International Programme (SIP). Other Committee members shared the idea of finding ways to highlight the need for funding for the SIP at COP-5 but pointed out that having a theme for COP-5 on the matter might not attract enough attention.

• Another Bureau member pointed out that it would be helpful if the Secretariat could provide, in preparation for each Bureau meetings during the week of the COP, a couple of slides with relevant updates to be shared with regional groups later during the day.

• A Bureau member repeated the suggestion to organize a webinar to present the Code of Conduct to Prevent Harassment at Events organized under the Minamata Convention in preparation for COP-5.

4. Update on the regional preparatory meetings

• The Secretariat provided an update on the dates and venues of the COP-5 regional preparatory meetings as follows: for Asia and the Pacific the confirmed dates are 5-6 September, in Bangkok, Thailand; for Africa the confirmed dates are 12-13 September in Nairobi, Kenya; for Eastern European States, the confirmed dates are 19-20 September in Yerevan, Armenia; and for Latina America and the Caribbean the confirmed dates are 5-6 October while the venue is to be confirmed.

• Further Secretariat explained the proposed organization and the tentative agenda of the in-person regional preparatory meetings.

• President thanked the regions’ involvement in offering to host the regional preparatory meetings and expressed her appreciation to Switzerland and Sweden for providing funding to support travel of sponsored delegates to the meetings.

5. Logistical aspects of organizing COP-5

• Secretariat briefed Bureau on the ongoing logistical preparations for COP-5, including the registration process and credentials, COP-5 webpage, side events and “Greening of COPs” efforts.

• In response to Bureau question on credentials, Secretariat explained that any change in the delegation of a Party has to be reflected in the Party’s credentials which has to be submitted according to the stated procedures. The President sought clarification whether she would need

1Note by the Secretariat: After this meeting has been held, Brazil confirmed the offer to host the regional preparatory meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean
special credentials for her to perform her duty of President at COP-5 and the Secretariat clarified that no special requirements were in place.

- In response to the Bureau question on language accessibility of the COP-5 webpage, the Secretariat explained that the webpage is already updated in English and shortly it will also be available in French and Spanish. COP-5 working documents, final report and decisions will be uploaded in the six UN official languages.

- Bureau members took note of the information by the Secretariat on the planned online pre-COP-5 side events to be held during week of 9-13 October and that such arrangement for the side events was planned based on the positive COP-4 experiences and feedback. Several Bureau members suggested also organizing a limited number of events during COP-5.

6. **Any other business**

- Bureau members bid farewell to Claudia ten Have, Senior Policy and Coordination Officer of the Secretariat, and congratulated her for her inspiring and long-standing contribution to the implementation of the Convention. After a warm round of applause, Bureau members wished her all the best for her future endeavors as Secretary at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

7. **Closure of the meeting**

- Following her closing remarks, the President thanked the members of the Bureau and the Secretariat for their work and declared the meeting closed at 16.00 (Geneva time).