



Conference of the Parties to the
Minamata Convention on Mercury
Fourth meeting
Online, 1–5 November 2021*

Report of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury on the work of its fourth meeting

Online segment

Introduction

1. In the light of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and following consultations with the regions, the Bureau of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury decided that the fourth meeting would be held in two segments, the first to be held online from 1 to 5 November 2021 and the second to be held in person in Bali, Indonesia, tentatively scheduled to be held during the first quarter of 2022.
2. Accordingly, the first segment of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention was convened online from 1 to 5 November 2021.

I. Opening of the meeting

3. Ms. Claudia ten Have, Senior Policy and Coordination Officer, secretariat of the Minamata Convention, welcomed participants at 1 p.m. (Central European time)¹ on Monday, 1 November 2021.

A. Opening remarks

4. Following a video presentation showcasing various Indonesian cultural dances, opening remarks were delivered by Ms. Siti Nurbaya Bakar, Minister for Environment and Forestry, Indonesia, via video message; Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); Ms. Monica Stankiewicz, Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention and Ms. Rosa Ratnawati, President of the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting.
5. In her opening remarks, Ms. Nurbaya Bakar welcomed participants to the meeting, at which they would discuss a major global environmental concern, mercury, at the same time that another major issue, climate change, was being discussed by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its twenty-sixth session in Glasgow, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. She underscored that the interconnectivity of climate change, biodiversity and pollution required a holistic approach, as had recently been demonstrated by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Those challenges provided two lessons for the Minamata Convention: first, that the Convention needed to be adaptive and agile in responding to global environmental challenges; and second, that the Convention needed to be forward-looking despite its young age. In response to the current global situation, Indonesia was hosting the meeting in

* The resumed fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury is to convene in person in Bali, Indonesia, from 21 to 25 March 2022.

¹ All time references are to Central European time.

two parts: the present online segment, and a second, in-person, segment, to be held in Bali, Indonesia, which was scheduled to take place during the first quarter of 2022. In doing so, Indonesia intended to assist parties in resolving pressing issues, such as evaluating the effectiveness of the Convention and national reporting. Stressing the need for all countries to play their part in implementing the Convention according to their respective national circumstances, she summarized national measures being taken by Indonesia to fulfil its obligations under the Convention by reducing mercury use and emissions in the manufacturing, energy, health, and artisanal and small-scale gold mining sectors, in line with the Government of Indonesia's commitment to achieving mercury-free status for Indonesia by 2030. In addition, Indonesia proposed the adoption of a draft Bali declaration on combating global illegal trade in mercury. In concluding, she wished all the participants fruitful deliberations.

6. In her opening statement, Ms. Andersen said that the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution was placing societies, economies and the planet in grave peril. The crisis could only be addressed by working together through concerted and coordinated efforts, such as those carried out under the Minamata Convention. While science had only started untangling the links between mercury pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change, it was clear that they reinforced each other in harming human health and the environment. As part of the process of healing the planet, the use of mercury in artisanal and small-scale gold mining, medical devices, dental amalgam and industrial processes must be ended and give way to sustainable alternatives, while the global challenge of illegal mercury trade needed to be addressed through innovative thinking and collective action. In that regard, she congratulated Indonesia on its initiative in developing the Bali declaration to combat the illegal trade in mercury. On the matter of identifying more coherent and effective ways to address inherently linked environmental problems, she said that the reports commissioned by the secretariat of the Minamata Convention and the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions demonstrated the mutually effective benefits of actions to address the triple planetary crisis. It was important to seize the opportunity to promote coherent implementation across the international environmental agenda, with the 135 parties to the Minamata Convention playing their part. The work of the Convention would contribute to building positive momentum towards the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of UNEP at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972. She assured parties that UNEP would continue to support their efforts in implementing the Minamata Convention, including through the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership.

7. Ms. Stankiewicz, in her opening statement, welcomed participants to the online segment of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The meeting was a celebration of the global commitment to put an end to mercury pollution, built on the tragic history of those whose health had been affected by mercury, and the recognition that mercury exposure continued to place many people at risk throughout the world. To advance the work under the Convention, it was important to embrace the strong voices of civil society and indigenous peoples. It was imperative also to recognize the needs of countries with developing and transitional economies, as expressed in article 13 of the Convention on financial resources and mechanism. Multilateral, regional and bilateral sources of financial and technical assistance were urgently needed to address the triple planetary crisis referred to by the Executive Director of UNEP. In that context, she expressed gratitude to Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States of America for their contributions to the third round of the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance. The secretariat remained committed to bringing the needs of parties to the attention of donors with a view to launching a fourth round of applications to the Specific International Programme as soon as possible. It was also essential that the eighth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) trust fund was robust and ensured continued strong support to the implementation of the Convention. In conclusion, she applauded the efforts of parties in addressing such important issues as phasing out the manufacture, import and export of listed mercury-added products by the 2020 deadline, developing and implementing national actions plans for artisanal and small-scale gold mining, reducing emissions and releases, and regulating mercury supply and trade. To that end, the contributions of the European Union, Japan, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland to the special trust fund for the Minamata Convention on Mercury had enabled the secretariat to undertake capacity-building and technical assistance support activities during the intersessional period.

8. Ms. Ratnawati, in her opening remarks, said that it was an honour for her to preside over the present meeting. She recalled that, in November 2019, the Conference of the Parties, at its third meeting, had mandated Indonesia to host its fourth meeting. At that time, none could have predicted the negative impact that the COVID-19 pandemic would have on preparations for the meeting, ranging from logistical aspects to substantive matters, requiring a creative and innovative approach by the secretariat to identify solutions to the challenges faced. The present online segment of the fourth meeting would concentrate on time-sensitive issues, particularly the programme of work and budget

and the dates of the in-person segment of the meeting in Bali, Indonesia. Discussions would also be opened on evaluating the effectiveness of the Convention, national reporting and the financial mechanism related to the eighth replenishment of the GEF trust fund. The present meeting would therefore provide a strong basis for parties to reach consensus and take decisions on many substantive issues at the second, in-person segment. She accordingly urged participants to make effective use of the present online segment of the fourth meeting to exchange views, share opinions and experiences, and work constructively. Despite the challenges faced, parties could take important steps towards creating a mercury-free world, contributing to the health and well-being of present and future generations.

9. Following those remarks, the President declared the meeting officially open.

B. Individual and regional statements

10. The representative speaking on behalf of the African States, recalling that her region was one of the most affected by mercury pollution, particularly from artisanal and small-scale mining, said that the severe economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other tragedies had left the African States in need of additional financial and technical assistance in order to implement the Convention. Moreover, to enable robust discussion on items on the agenda of the second segment of the fourth meeting, including the key issue of the proposal to amend annex A with respect to mercury lamps and dental amalgam, an extra day should be set aside for meetings of the regional groups. Cognizant that the time had come to advocate more environmentally friendly products, the African States were prioritizing the protection of the health and environmental and economic interests of the people of Africa and the world by moving towards non-toxic, energy-efficient lighting and mercury-free mining and by phasing out dental amalgam. To guarantee the successful implementation of the Convention, an adequate and predictable financial mechanism was required to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition. While the African States greatly appreciated the financial assistance that they had received from the Specific International Programme and GEF, that assistance was insufficient to meet their needs. Accordingly, in the eighth replenishment of the GEF trust fund, priority should be given to funding for the implementation of the Convention, especially the management and elimination of mercury-added products and mercury waste and the identification and characterization of mercury-contaminated sites.

11. The representative speaking on behalf of the Asia-Pacific States said that despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the countries in his region remained committed to strengthening the implementation of the Convention, with the reduction of anthropogenic releases and emissions of mercury and the prevention of the improper use of the element having become national priorities. The COVID-19 pandemic required the parties to enhance cooperation and partnerships. Accordingly, the parties and international partners should scale up the provision of technical and financial assistance to developing country parties, including by making the financial mechanism under the Convention more inclusive and accessible. Partnerships and capacity-building activities were crucial in helping his region to deal with mercury pollution from artisanal and small-scale gold mining and the illegal trade in mercury, among other issues of global concern. The present online segment of the fourth meeting should pave the way for achieving consensus during the second segment. Regarding the programme of work and budget for 2022, he expressed the view that more funds should be allocated to capacity-building, especially for those parties that needed it the most. There was also a need, in implementing the Convention, for a stronger basis for consensus and more inclusive and effective frameworks to support decision-making and management. The pandemic and other challenges should not undermine efforts to achieve those objectives. Ultimately, the parties had an obligation to contribute to ensuring the health and well-being of future generations, including by reducing human exposure to mercury.

12. The representative speaking on behalf of the Eastern European States said that it was important for the Minamata Convention family to find a common way forward in the face of the challenges posed by the pandemic. Those challenges should not prevent the parties from pursuing efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention. Consequently, endorsing the budget for 2022 should be the main objective at the present online segment. She urged all countries that had not yet ratified the Convention to do so and encouraged the secretariat to continue to organize “Minamata Online” sessions, which had facilitated information-sharing and exchanges of views on decision-making, implementation and mercury science. Three parties in her region had already benefited from the Specific International Programme. She therefore wished to thank the parties that continued to provide financial support for it.

13. The representative speaking on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States said that the responsibilities incumbent on the parties to the Convention required a firm commitment and the material means to produce innovative solutions. A significant number of countries lacked programmes to address the complete life cycle of mercury and the production processes that used the element and its compounds. Furthermore, as a result of the pandemic, there had been an increase in the use of medical devices with added mercury. The countries in his region therefore exhorted the Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to ensure the availability of resources for projects focused on promoting timely and adequate compliance with Convention obligations. To that end, they would present a conference room paper containing a proposal to provide GEF with additional guidance on the negotiations concerning the eighth replenishment of its trust fund. It was vital for the parties to be guaranteed the financial resources needed to reduce anthropogenic releases and emissions of mercury. It was particularly important to ensure the financial viability of initiatives to develop local capacities for the environmentally sound treatment of mercury waste, the adoption of best environmental practices and the transfer of technology. In addition, the parties should be provided with financial support to strengthen monitoring programmes focused on mercury emissions and releases, and on the accumulation and magnification of the element in the environment and in food chains. Lastly, there was a need to support the identification of specific sectors in each country that represented a challenge in the reduction of mercury use and the environmentally sound management of mercury waste, to reinforce the capacities of the parties to comply with commitments related to mercury use and disposal, and to promote the implementation of the guidelines established under the Convention.

14. The representative speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, thanking the secretariat for the flexibility and adaptability that it had shown in organizing the present online segment of the fourth meeting, said that, with new parties having joined since the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Convention continued to grow and was becoming an increasingly global instrument. The countries in her region were grateful for the intersessional work carried out since that meeting and were committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. They recognized the importance of implementing the Convention in order to contribute to good health and well-being, an improved environment and responsible consumption and production. They looked forward to fruitful discussions during the present online segment and to a successful outcome that would lay a solid foundation for the second, in-person, segment.

II. Organizational matters

A. Adoption of the agenda

15. The Conference of the Parties adopted the following agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/MC/COP.4/1):

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Adoption of the agenda;
 - (b) Organization of work;
 - (c) Election of officers for the intersessional period and the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
 - (d) Report on the credentials of representatives to the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
3. Rules of procedure for the Conference of the Parties: consideration of rule 45.
4. Matters for consideration or action by the Conference of the Parties:
 - (a) Mercury-added products and manufacturing processes in which mercury or mercury compounds are used:
 - (i) Review of annexes A and B;
 - (ii) Information on dental amalgam;
 - (iii) Customs codes;
 - (iv) Proposals for amendments to annexes A and B;
 - (b) Artisanal and small-scale gold mining;

- (c) Releases of mercury;
 - (d) Mercury waste: consideration of the relevant thresholds;
 - (e) Financial resources and mechanism:
 - (i) Global Environment Facility;
 - (ii) Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance;
 - (iii) Review of the financial mechanism;
 - (f) Capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer;
 - (g) Implementation and Compliance Committee;
 - (h) National reporting;
 - (i) Effectiveness evaluation;
 - (j) Secretariat;
 - (k) Financial rules;
 - (l) Gender.
5. International cooperation and coordination.
 6. Programme of work and budget.
 7. Dates of the resumed fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties; venue and dates of the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
 8. Other matters.
 9. Adoption of the report of the meeting.
 10. Closure of the meeting.

B. Organization of work

16. The Conference of the Parties decided, in accordance with the proposals set out in the annotated provisional agenda (UNEP/MC/COP.4/1/Add.1) and the note by the secretariat on issues and information for the attention of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention at its fourth meeting (UNEP/MC/COP.4/2), that, owing to the online setting and the limited time available, at the present online segment of its fourth meeting the Conference of the Parties would address a limited number of agenda items that were particularly time-sensitive. The items to be considered during the online segment were: item 6 on the programme of work and budget, item 7 on the dates of the resumed fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, item 4 (e) (i) pertaining to financial resources and mechanism, and GEF, item 4 (h) on national reporting, and item 4 (i) on effectiveness evaluation. The Conference of the Parties was expected to consider the remaining items and/or resume consideration of items during the in-person segment.

17. The Conference of the Parties decided, in accordance with the proposals set out in the annotated provisional agenda (UNEP/MC/COP.4/1/Add.1), that it would meet on Monday, 1 November 2021 from 1 to 3 p.m. and from 3.30 to 5.30 p.m.; on Wednesday, 3 November from 1 to 3 p.m.; and on Friday, 5 November from 1 to 3 p.m. and from 3.30 to 5.30 p.m.

18. The representative of Indonesia extended an invitation to all interested parties to participate in a consultation on the proposed draft Bali declaration. The outcome of the consultation, which took place on Tuesday, 2 November, from 2 to 3.30 p.m., is summarized in paragraph 86 of the present report.

C. Attendance

19. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following 90 parties: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, European Union, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro,

Netherlands, Nicaragua, Niger, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zambia.

20. In addition, the meeting was attended by representatives of the following observer States: Australia, Bangladesh, Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Gambia, Guatemala, Guinea, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Morocco, Myanmar, New Zealand, Nigeria, Oman, Poland, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Spain, Sudan, Turkey, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Yemen, Zimbabwe.

21. The following United Nations entities and specialized agencies were represented as observers: Global Environment Facility, International Atomic Energy Agency, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Institute for Training and Research, United Nations Office at Nairobi, World Health Organization.

22. The following intergovernmental organization was represented as an observer: Regional Organization for the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

23. A number of governmental bodies and agencies, regional and subregional centres, non-governmental organizations, private-sector entities and academic institutions were represented as observers. The names of those organizations are included in the list of participants (UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/28).

D. Report on the credentials of representatives to the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties

24. Presenting the report of the Bureau on credentials, Ms. Oarabile Serumola said that the Bureau had examined the credentials submitted by parties in accordance with rules 19 and 20 of the rules of procedure and had found that, as at 5 November 2021, the representatives of 90 of the 100 parties registered to participate in the online segment of the meeting had submitted copies of credentials issued either by a Head of State or Government or by a minister for foreign affairs or, in the case of a regional economic integration organization, by the competent authority of that organization, on the understanding that originals would be submitted as soon as possible. The remaining 10 parties had not communicated the information on their representatives.

25. The Conference of the Parties adopted the report of the Bureau on credentials.

III. Matters for consideration or action by the Conference of the Parties

A. Financial resources and mechanism

Global Environment Facility

26. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat recalled the intention that only one aspect of GEF, in its role as part of the financial mechanism of the Minamata Convention, would be considered at the present online segment of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, namely the eighth replenishment of the GEF trust fund. Other items relevant to the financial mechanism, relating both to GEF and to the Specific International Programme, would be taken up at the resumed segment of the fourth meeting, in 2022.

27. Recalling that the period covered by the eighth replenishment would be 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2026, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to notes by the secretariat on the eighth replenishment of the GEF trust fund (UNEP/MC/COP.4/10) and on the related draft programming directions and strategic positioning framework (UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/8). The former document covered the timeline, funding priorities and draft programming directions for the eighth replenishment, which were the subject of ongoing deliberations within the GEF Assembly, and the latter provided the full draft texts of the strategic positioning framework and draft programming directions as at 30 August 2021. She informed participants that the various elements of the eighth replenishment that were presently in draft form were due to be finalized at the third meeting on the replenishment, expected to take place in February 2022, and thus noted that a number of decisions related to the replenishment would be taken prior to the in-person segment of the fourth meeting of the Conference

of the Parties to the Minamata Convention. She further noted that any statements made by parties on the current agenda item would be reflected in the present report, adding that parties might also wish to make use of the information provided in the context of their national processes relative to the GEF replenishment.

28. Ms. Chizuru Aoki, Lead Environmental Specialist, GEF Programming Unit, delivered additional information on the eighth replenishment. She highlighted that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic had prevented the convening of certain meetings of the conferences of the parties to conventions for which GEF acted as the financial mechanism, and thus the replenishment process was taking place without guidance from some of those conferences of the parties. Nevertheless, GEF had been working closely with the secretariats of those conventions, as it had with the secretariat of the Minamata Convention, to ensure coherence. She recalled also that the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention, at its first meeting, had provided GEF with guidance on its clearly defined priorities, which GEF had followed when supporting parties in implementing the Convention, including in terms of enabling activities through the Minamata initial assessments and national action plans for artisanal and small-scale gold mining. GEF had been supporting efforts to make mercury history since 2010, first through the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury and later through the Convention. The eighth replenishment would build on the experience accumulated and the guidance provided by the Conference of the Parties in terms of programming priorities, and work would be undertaken with parties on issues that needed to be addressed for the successful implementation of the Convention, such as mercury in products, industrial emissions, storage and trade.

29. The eighth replenishment strategy built on the growing and converging understanding that supply chains and megatrends were the primary drivers of chemical pollution. The strategy was being drafted in such a way that there was the flexibility to include new topics that the Conference of the Parties might choose to prioritize during the eighth replenishment period.

30. Ms. Aoki gave a brief overview of the process to be followed in relation to replenishments, recalling that the trust fund was replenished every four years by countries that wished to contribute. The process was initiated by the GEF Council and involved a series of four to five meetings, over the course of about a year, that brought together contributing participants, regional representatives, Convention secretariats, GEF agencies and others. During those meetings, participants reviewed the performance of GEF, assessed future funding needs and agreed on a financing framework, along with policy reforms and programming directions. When the group had completed its work, a summary of the negotiations was presented to the GEF Council for a decision and to the GEF Assembly for approval. The present replenishment process had been initiated by the GEF Council at its fifty-ninth meeting, in December 2020, and two meetings had been held to date. The process was due to be concluded at the seventh meeting of the GEF Assembly, scheduled for May 2022. The first programming of projects to be carried out in the eighth replenishment period would be approved by the GEF Council at its sixty-third meeting in December 2022.

31. To assist in the development of the draft programming directions for the eighth replenishment, GEF had convened a meeting of its Technical Advisory Group, from 8 to 11 February 2021, to collect input from scientists and environmental experts. Representatives of the secretariats of the five conventions for which GEF served as the financial mechanism had also taken part. The meeting had provided the basis, along with existing guidance from conferences of parties, for the development of the first draft of the programming directions, which had since been refined and would be further refined on the basis of the outcomes of the second meeting, which had taken place in September 2021. A decision would be taken on the programming directions at the third meeting, which was scheduled for February 2022. All the documentation considered at the eighth replenishment meetings to date, along with a co-chair's summary of the discussion, were available on the GEF website.

32. Ms. Aoki thanked the Executive Secretary and the other members of the secretariat for their active involvement in the process to date. The secretariat had participated in the discussions of the Technical Advisory Group, provided comments on the strategic positioning framework and the draft programming directions and had taken part in the first two meetings on the eighth replenishment as observers. She assured parties and the secretariat that GEF considered the Minamata Convention to be critically important and that it took its responsibility as the Convention's financial mechanism very seriously.

33. Mr. Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, Chief Executive Officer, GEF, said that it was an honour to be able to address the Conference of the Parties, noting that, despite the challenges related to the pandemic, much hard work had been undertaken in relation to the implementation of the Convention and that the Minamata family had remained creative and innovative in that regard.

34. Noting that he was joining the meeting online from the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was taking place in person in Glasgow, United Kingdom, he emphasized that his physical presence at that meeting should not be interpreted as an indication that GEF had a greater interest in climate change than other environmental issues. He recalled that the pandemic had prevented GEF from working closely with many parties to the conventions for which it acted as the financial mechanism and that the eighth GEF replenishment was being planned in the absence of guidance from certain of the governing bodies of those conventions. The physical presence of GEF in Glasgow provided a unique opportunity to work with donors and to share with them its highly integrated proposals for the eighth replenishment. There would not be any progress towards meeting the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C compared with pre-industrial levels if mercury and chemical-related issues were not addressed, just as there would be no progress towards the biodiversity-related goal of protecting 30 per cent of the Earth's lands and oceans by 2030 if the problems associated with certain chemicals and hazardous substances were not addressed. The issue of land degradation was equally interdependent.

35. Discussions with donors were going well and they had responded very positively to the programming proposals for the eighth GEF replenishment. He noted that the input of the secretariat of the Minamata Convention had been helpful in the formulation of the proposals, enabling GEF to prepare a very ambitious set of goals and targets. He recalled that GEF had been supporting the implementation of the Minamata Convention since its inception to address not only the highest-priority sectors, including artisanal and small-scale gold mining, but also mercury products, industrial emissions, and mercury storage and trade. He confirmed that the eighth replenishment would build on past experience and guidance from the Conference of the Parties; that GEF would work with parties to assist in achieving the Convention-related goals prioritized during the replenishment period; and that the eighth replenishment strategy had built-in flexibility to allow the Conference of the Parties to address new priorities. He looked forward to participating in the resumed fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in Bali, in 2022.

36. In the discussion, there was consensus on the vital importance of the eighth replenishment of the GEF trust fund for the implementation of the Minamata Convention and for assisting parties, particularly developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in fulfilling their obligations under the Convention. There was recognition of the role that action on mercury could play in achieving a number of global environmental objectives, including through synergies with other environmental instruments. There was also strong support for increasing the proportion of funding allocated to the chemicals and waste focal area in the eighth replenishment. It was considered important that the discussions on the eighth replenishment at the present online segment of the fourth meeting be an integral part of any further deliberations on the matter during the in-person segment of the fourth meeting.

37. One representative, recognizing the importance of giving direction to GEF during the deliberations on the eighth replenishment, said that it was crucial that the chemicals and waste focal area receive sufficient funding to ensure that essential work could be carried out on chemicals, waste and pollution globally, including through specific integrated programmes. GEF could play a vital role in funding and supporting parties to fulfil legally binding commitments under the Convention with specific deadlines, thereby improving the health of millions of people and addressing the drivers of environmental degradation. In carrying out that role, GEF should ensure synergies between the interconnected challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

38. Another representative said that continued dedicated GEF funding was needed given that the Minamata Convention was still new and required adequate, predictable support to facilitate its timely implementation. She indicated that her party viewed GEF as the key part of the treaty's financial mechanism in supporting eligible developing country parties and parties with economies in transition to implement their legally binding obligations. She added that while her party supported strengthening the chemicals and waste focal area in the eighth replenishment through integrated programming, there was a need for the continued provision of strong support for targeted efforts to maximize the delivery of priorities on multilateral environmental agreements as identified through guidance from the Conference of the Parties. She urged GEF to continue achieving important global environmental benefits by assisting parties to reduce mercury emissions and releases through its dedicated support for the Minamata Convention in the eighth replenishment.

39. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed concern at the limited availability of resources to meet legally binding commitments under the Convention. Those collective commitments, namely to eliminate the use of mercury, reduce emissions and releases of mercury from industrial processes and ensure the environmentally sound management and disposal of the element, would be achieved through the implementation of programmes and projects to develop

regional and local capacities, national legislative frameworks and technology transfer, and the development of the infrastructure needed for the complex but essential process of industrial transformation. Those actions required adequate and reliable financial assistance. Accordingly, and bearing in mind the impact of the pandemic on developing economies and the increase in the use of medical devices with added mercury, her region stressed the insufficiency of resources for the implementation of the aforementioned processes and wished to request the secretariat and the parties, especially donors, to convey to GEF the need to give due priority to the fulfilment of obligations under the international chemical conventions, in particular the Minamata Convention, and to take into consideration the challenges currently faced by developing countries. It was important to request that, in the eighth replenishment of the GEF trust fund, the percentage of funds allocated to the chemicals conventions should be greater than 15 per cent of the total, in order to enable the parties to implement the Convention effectively. Specifically, GEF should be reminded of the need to continue supporting the parties with respect to implementation activities through the Convention's financial mechanism and integrated programmes to be approved by the next GEF Assembly. Moreover, the GEF Council and participants in the eighth replenishment meetings should be informed that several legally binding commitments had upcoming deadlines and that adequate funding was needed to achieve successful results. The secretariat should report back on the outcome of those activities to the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention at its fifth meeting.

40. Another representative said that she understood that GEF had supported every technically cleared project submitted to it. In addition, the fact that very little remained of the funding allocated to the Minamata Convention in the seventh replenishment period indicated that demand for financing under the Minamata Convention was high, and that GEF was appropriately responsive to that demand. She also expressed serious concern that the proposed allocation of 15 per cent of the full resource envelope to the chemicals and waste focal area under the eighth replenishment would be insufficient and stressed that it should be increased. She noted that she looked forward to continued discussion on the topic at the in-person resumed segment of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

41. Another representative underscored that preventing the use and release of the most toxic substances was a basic requirement for maintaining public health, a sustainable environment, safe food production and healthy ecosystems. The Minamata Convention was essential to those endeavours, and GEF was a vital source of funding for its continued implementation. Against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic and other global crises, which had left many countries increasingly vulnerable to the impact of polluting activities, it was crucial that the chemicals and waste sector receive sufficient funding, both for activities under the GEF focal area and as an integral element of relevant integrated programmes. Achieving the legally binding commitments under the Minamata Convention, with specific deadlines that needed to be met, required that a greater proportion of GEF funding be allocated to the chemicals and waste focal area than the current 15 per cent.

42. Another representative stressed the importance of capacity-building and technology transfer in assisting developing countries to carry out activities under the Minamata Convention, including with respect to meeting Convention deadlines on products and processes. In that regard, he recalled that parties should ensure that, pursuant to article 13 of the Convention, they reviewed the financial mechanism, including GEF, on a regular basis, including the level of funding, its effectiveness and its ability to address the changing needs of developing country parties and parties with economies in transition.

43. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, considered it important that the needs of the Minamata Convention were duly addressed during the eighth replenishment of the GEF trust fund, particularly with regard to supporting parties with developing and transitional economies in fulfilling their obligations under the Convention. He expressed support for the proposal that the report of the first segment of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, including statements from parties, be forwarded to GEF, and that GEF be requested to consider that information. It was important to send a clear message to the discussion on the eighth replenishment on the funding needs under the Minamata Convention. Furthermore, the needs of the Convention were dynamic; possible new commitments might arise in the future, as exemplified by the proposals to include additional sectors and products under the Convention that would be considered by the Conference of the Parties at the second segment of its fourth meeting. Given the important linkages between the chemicals and waste cluster and the climate and biodiversity clusters, enhanced financial support from GEF was imperative for the continued implementation of the Convention and would contribute strongly to a safer environment and better human health.

44. One representative said that the discussions on the eighth replenishment of the GEF trust fund presented a timely opportunity to draw attention to the unjustified, discriminatory approach of GEF towards his party and other developing countries. Given that GEF had been designated, by article 13

of the Minamata Convention, as the main financial mechanism to assist parties in meeting their obligations under the instrument, it was a matter of regret and concern that GEF continued to undermine the objective and purpose of the Convention by depriving certain developing country parties of equal access to international financial resources, as enshrined in the instrument. He therefore requested the Conference of the Parties to urge GEF to set aside the politicized attitude that was resulting in the systemic denial of access of certain parties to the financial resources, capacity-building and technical assistance necessary to fulfil their obligations under the Convention, with negative consequences for the effectiveness of the instrument.

45. Another representative expressed appreciation for GEF assistance to developing countries in carrying out enabling activities for the implementation of the Minamata Convention. However, as attention shifted towards real activities that physically reduced or eliminated mercury emissions and uses, and in view of the fact that the sound management of chemicals protected biodiversity, there was a strong case for increased allocation of funds to the chemicals and waste focal area during the eighth replenishment, with priority attention given to the implementation of the Minamata Convention.

46. Another representative, recognizing the importance of GEF to the successful implementation of the Minamata Convention and the sound management of chemicals and waste, joined the call for an increase in the allocation of funding to the chemicals and waste focal area during the eighth replenishment. He drew attention to an upcoming event, organized by the Geneva Environment Network, showcasing the achievements under the chemicals and waste focal area and explaining the needs and opportunities related to the eighth replenishment. He urged those representatives calling for increased financing to attend the meeting and help signal to the participants in the replenishment process the strong support for additional financing for the chemicals and waste sector.

47. Another representative said that it was important that GEF dedicate sufficient funds to the implementation of the Minamata Convention, given the upcoming deadlines for parties to meet their obligations under the Convention, including those related to manufacturing processes in which mercury or mercury compounds were used and the management of mercury-added products. She recalled that the UNEP medium-term strategy for the period 2022–2025, approved by the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme at its fifth session, had identified pollution from chemicals and waste as one of the three greatest current environmental crises, alongside biodiversity loss and climate change. It was therefore crucial that GEF donors support an increase in the financing of the chemicals and waste focal area during the eighth replenishment, especially for the Minamata Convention, and that a strong message to that effect be communicated by the Conference of the Parties at the present online segment of the fourth meeting to the upcoming eighth replenishment meeting and that the outcome of that meeting be conveyed to the Conference of the Parties at the resumed fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

48. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the African region was one of the most severely affected by mercury pollution, particularly from emissions and releases from the open burning of waste and dump sites, and from such activities as artisanal and small-scale gold mining. In addition, the severe economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic had intensified the challenges of hazardous waste generation and management. African States therefore required additional financial and technical assistance to fulfil their obligations under the Minamata Convention. Accordingly, as part of the eighth replenishment of the GEF trust fund, additional funding should be made available to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to facilitate the effective implementation of activities under the Convention, including capacity-building of customs officials and other actors responsible for controlling the import and distribution of mercury and mercury-containing products; the establishment and operation of infrastructure to manage seized products and waste; strengthening of the legal framework for the environmentally sound management of mercury and mercury-containing products to ensure compliance; the sustainable management of mercury emissions and releases from open burning and dump sites and artisanal and small-scale gold mining; and the identification, characterization and restoration of mercury-contaminated sites.

49. Another representative, supporting the previous statement, recalled that article 13 of the Minamata Convention, on financial resources and mechanism, identified the GEF trust fund as one of the financial sources for the implementation of the Convention, and that paragraph 7 of the article stated that the GEF trust fund was to provide new, predictable, adequate and timely financial resources to meet costs in support of implementation of the Convention, as agreed by the Conference of the Parties. To ensure that developing countries and countries with economies in transition had the adequate and sustainable resources needed to implement their national implementation plans, it was vital that GEF prioritized implementation activities under the Convention in the eighth replenishment of the trust fund to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds.

50. Another representative expressed gratitude to GEF and the implementing agencies for their funding to assist in the implementation of Minamata initial assessments and national action plans. Regarding the eighth replenishment of the GEF trust fund, it was important to ensure that sufficient financing was available to developing countries to enable them to carry out investment projects in line with the priorities identified.

51. Another representative agreed with other speakers, calling for an increase in financing for the chemicals and waste focal area in the eighth replenishment. The COVID-19 pandemic had led to greater economic, social and health vulnerability, and a robust replenishment of the GEF trust fund would help developing countries to resolve the challenges they faced, including with regard to the risks linked to mercury emissions and releases.

52. Another representative urged GEF to explore the possibility of reducing the amount of co-financing to be submitted by the recipient country when funding proposals were made.

53. One representative acknowledged and expressed appreciation for the funding contributions of GEF, especially for developing countries, and stressed the need to continue to strengthen and increase the funding available for the implementation of the Minamata Convention. The percentage allocated to the chemicals and waste focal area under the eighth replenishment should be increased to guarantee a solid funding base, taking account of the great efforts that parties must make to meet the upcoming deadlines for phasing out mercury-added products and putting in place national action plans. Sufficient funding was necessary to ensure that the best technologies and practices were available to address the challenges of new emission sources and to ensure that parties met their legally binding commitments.

54. Another representative, noting that GEF was a core funding source for parties to meet their commitments under the Convention and undertake actions under the specific integrated programmes, and expressing gratitude to donor countries for their support to the financial mechanism, said that it was essential to support the efforts of developing countries through capacity-building, technology transfer and the development of enabling infrastructure. Access to mercury-free technology would help drive policies for the protection of vulnerable peoples, taking into account a gender perspective. The guidance of the Conference of the Parties to GEF, as adopted by decision MC-1/5, was essential in ensuring that decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties put in place activities ensuring the environmentally sound management of mercury. Furthermore, an increase in the allocation of funding to the chemicals and waste focal area under the eighth replenishment would help drive forward actions and innovative solutions in the framework of new challenges and commitments under the Convention.

55. One representative, recognizing the valuable contribution of GEF in enabling the compliance of parties with their obligations under the Minamata Convention to reduce and eliminate mercury consumption, concurred with the call to GEF to increase, in the eighth replenishment of the GEF trust fund, the percentage dedicated to the chemicals and waste focal area beyond the proposed 15 per cent in order to meet the real needs of parties in the effective implementation of the Convention. He urged parties to convey to GEF the need to give due priority, during discussions on the eighth replenishment, to the challenges facing developing countries in meeting their obligations under the Convention.

56. Another representative, underlining his support for the statement made by the representative of his region, urged that GEF, in discussions on the eighth replenishment, grasp the opportunity to take account of the needs of developing countries for capacity-building and financial support to fulfil their obligations under the Convention.

57. In concluding, the President thanked representatives for their statements and comments, which reflected the great importance placed by parties on the eighth replenishment of the GEF trust fund. It was clear that parties needed to continue their efforts to place the Minamata Convention high on the GEF agenda, and that parties should redouble their advocacy efforts at the national level to apprise GEF focal points of the need to prioritize the Convention in the eighth replenishment.

B. National reporting

58. The representative of the secretariat recalled that parties were to report on a regular basis to the Conference of the Parties, through the Secretariat, on the measures taken to implement the provisions of the Convention, on the effectiveness of such measures, and possible challenges in meeting the objective of the Convention. She also recalled that the reporting format adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its first meeting contained 43 questions, of which 4 were to be answered every two years and all 43 were to be answered every four years. Parties had completed the first short reports, due on 31 December 2019, with a very impressive reporting rate of over 80 per cent. The first full reports were due by 31 December 2021.

59. The representative of the secretariat drew attention to a note by the secretariat setting out draft guidance for completing the national reporting format for the Minamata Convention (UNEP/MC/COP.4/17). The secretariat had prepared the draft guidance pursuant to decision MC-3/13, to clarify the information sought in the reporting format. The preparation of the guidance had benefited from a round of comments by parties and stakeholders. The draft guidance was being brought to the parties' attention at the current online segment of the fourth meeting, as the decision encouraged parties to use the draft guidance on a provisional basis to support the preparation of the full national reports due by 31 December 2021. Further consideration of the draft guidance would take place at the in-person segment of the fourth meeting, to further discuss the draft guidance itself.

60. Outlining important information for the parties with respect to the full reports to be submitted by 31 December 2021, she recalled that they were to cover the period from 16 August 2017 to 31 December 2020. The online reporting system had been opened on 7 September 2021, the same day that national focal points had received their credentials enabling them to access the system and begin their reporting. A total of 43 parties had initiated their reports to date. The secretariat had prepared four information sessions to support parties' reporting; three of the webinars had been delivered in September and a fourth was scheduled for 22 November 2021.

61. During the ensuing discussion, several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, congratulated the parties and the secretariat on the high rate of reporting achieved for the first national reports in December 2019 and expressed the hope that the rate for the full reports would be equally good. Two representatives noted the importance of reporting for effectiveness evaluation and assessment of implementation and two others urged parties to complete their full national reports.

62. Most of those who spoke during the discussion, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the draft guidance as a useful tool for parties in completing their full national reports. Many, including the representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that they looked forward to considering the draft guidance in more detail at the resumed segment of the fourth meeting.

63. Many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, also welcomed the support provided to parties by the secretariat for the completion of the national reports, including through online sessions, and urged the secretariat to continue to provide such support. One representative, congratulating the secretariat on the "Minamata Online" programme, highlighted the value of the programme and requested that the programme webinars be continued in order to encourage and expand the participation of more technical staff from his region, especially in priority sectors such as artisanal and small-scale gold mining and health services. Supported by another representative, he asked that some of the webinars also be provided in the language and during the business hours of his region.

C. Effectiveness evaluation

64. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat recalled that, at its third meeting, the Conference of the Parties had agreed, in decision MC-3/10, on three areas of work to be carried out in advance of the fourth meeting. First, parties had been invited to submit their views on the indicators set out in the annex to the decision and the secretariat had been requested to compile those views. In that regard, she drew attention to documents UNEP/MC/COP.4/18/Add.1 and UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/11, which set out the work carried out intersessionally on indicators. Second, the secretariat had been requested to advance the work on the effectiveness evaluation by securing services for drafting guidance on monitoring to maintain harmonized, comparable information on mercury levels in the environment. Document UNEP/MC/COP.4/18/Add.2 set out the work on drafting the guidance, including the executive summary of the guidance, and document UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/12 contained the draft guidance. Third, the secretariat had been requested to advance the work by securing services for drafting a number of reports, including a synthesis report on national reporting under article 21 and a report on trade supply and demand, which included mercury waste flows and stocks. An overview of the work conducted thus far to give effect to article 22 on effectiveness evaluation and the remaining areas on which agreement had yet to be reached were set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.4/18.

65. The President recalled that, following the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties, some parties had initiated informal consultations on the items that had remained unresolved at that meeting and which had not been subject to further work in decision MC-3/10. The representative of Norway reported on the consultations and introduced a proposal by Norway and Canada on a framework for the first effectiveness evaluation, as set out in a conference room paper for the fourth meeting.

66. Thanking the parties, consultants and secretariat for their work pursuant to decision MC-3/10, the representative of Norway explained that, following the third meeting of the Conference of Parties, Norway and Canada had been concerned that agreement on key items of the proposed framework had not been reached and that further delays in achieving consensus could result in parties being unable to meet the obligation in paragraph 1 of article 22 to begin the first effectiveness evaluation no later than 2023. To that end, the Governments of Norway and Canada had engaged with individual parties and with regional groups with a view to identifying solutions to the remaining issues. The framework proposed in the conference room paper presented at the present online segment of the fourth meeting was based on that which had been discussed by the contact group at the third meeting, but it had evolved owing to the invaluable input received from the contributing parties and regions. The proposed framework aimed to address the concerns expressed about the need for an inclusive and transparent evaluation that gave parties several opportunities to provide data and information and to review and comment on draft plans and products. It endeavoured to draw together the broad range of scientific and technical expertise needed to compile, synthesize, analyse and integrate the available scientific, environmental, technical, financial and economic information on which the effectiveness evaluation would be based. It also aimed to make available comparable monitoring data on the presence and movement of mercury and mercury compounds in the environment and on trends observed in biotic media and vulnerable populations, based on the monitoring guidance, to evaluate progress made under the Convention. This involved the identification of data gaps and continued capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer and research, development and monitoring activities. To further facilitate preparations for discussion on the effectiveness evaluation at the resumed fourth meeting, the representative of Norway enquired whether the secretariat would be in a position to invite written comments on the framework for evaluating the effectiveness of the Convention, and arrange an online session for the exchange of views on the framework in preparation for the resumed fourth meeting in 2022.

67. In the ensuing discussion, many of the representatives who took the floor, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, thanked the secretariat and the experts and parties involved for their work during the intersessional period pursuant to decision MC-3/10, specifically concerning the development of the indicators and the draft guidance for monitoring.

68. Representatives also thanked the proponents of the conference room paper for their efforts. There was general consensus that it was worthwhile pursuing discussions on issues on which consensus had yet to be reached to help avoid delays and ensure that the deadline for the establishment of the first effectiveness evaluation could be met. Most of the representatives who spoke deemed the draft framework in the conference room paper a good basis for intersessional consultations, considering that such discussion could help facilitate the decision-making process at the resumed fourth meeting in 2022. One representative stated, however, that the future discussion should be based on any and all proposals that might be submitted on the topic.

69. Representatives expressed their views and desires in relation to the effectiveness evaluation, including that the framework should be robust, participative and inclusive and science-based; the financial implications of the framework should be considered carefully; the indicators should be straightforward and understandable and should not represent an additional burden for developing countries; and indicators should take into account the specific nature of each region. One representative stated that the first effectiveness evaluation should principally aim to assess whether the Convention was effective in reducing mercury demand, supply and use, along with mercury emissions and releases. The representative also said that it was not possible at present to make a link between global monitoring data and the effectiveness of the Convention.

70. One representative, supported by another, said that all efforts towards developing the process for evaluating the effectiveness of the Convention, such as the indicators and guidance on monitoring, should be based on decisions of the Conference of the Parties and not go beyond the mandate that those provided.

71. The representative of the secretariat informed participants that the secretariat would be in a position to invite written comments on the framework for evaluating the effectiveness of the Convention and would arrange an online session to enable parties to exchange views thereon in preparation for the resumed fourth meeting. The Conference of the Parties thus agreed to the holding of intersessional consultations organized in that manner.

IV. Programme of work and budget

72. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to notes by the secretariat entitled “Programme of work and budget: proposed operational budgets for the two funding scenarios for the biennium 2022–2023” (UNEP/MC/COP.4/24), “Programme of work and budget: budget activity fact sheets” (UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/22), and “Information on financial matters” (UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/21). She recalled that a major reason for convening the present online segment of the Conference of the Parties was that the current budget for the biennium 2020–2021, approved by the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting, would expire on 31 December 2021. Accordingly, the Executive Secretary, as requested by the Conference of the Parties in its decision MC-3/12, had prepared a budget for the biennium 2022–2023, as outlined in document UNEP/MC/COP.4/24. That document presented two budget scenarios, one maintaining the operational budget at the 2020–2021 level in nominal terms and one reflecting the changes to that scenario that were required to meet the projected needs and the related costs, without exceeding a 5 per cent increase over the 2020–2021 level in nominal terms. The budget also included the additional budget for organizing the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in two segments and information on the projected cash balance. The budget activity fact sheets set out further details of the proposed activities of the proposed programme of work and budget (UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/22). During the present online segment, the Conference of the Parties would be invited to consider and approve the complete programme of work and budget for 2022. The approval of the budget would ensure that the parties could in principle be notified of the amount of their 2022 contribution before the contribution deadline stipulated in the financial rules for the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury and any of its subsidiary bodies, as well as financial provisions governing the functioning of the secretariat. It would also ensure the continued implementation of the Convention and operation of the secretariat in 2022.

73. In the ensuing discussion, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the main priority of the present online segment of the fourth meeting was to endorse the programme of work and budget for 2022, which would ensure the efficient functioning of the secretariat and the operation of essential activities for implementing the Convention. At the second segment of the meeting, the Conference of the Parties should review the budget adopted at the first segment of the meeting as part of its deliberations on the budget for the biennium 2022–2023. Continued work on effectiveness evaluation was also important to ensure progress in the implementation of article 22, and resources could be allocated to related activities before enabling decisions were taken at the second segment of the meeting, as long as such action did not constitute a precedent for future deliberations on effectiveness evaluation or other activities. Another representative concurred that the adoption of a budget and programme of work for 2022 was critical to ensuring the continued implementation of the Convention and the uninterrupted operation of the secretariat and other organs of the Convention. Particular attention should be given in the budget to support for developing countries to enable them to fulfil their obligations under the Convention as it entered its implementation phase, especially those that were time-bound, for example phasing out products containing mercury and the submission of national reports. Another representative said that the proposed approach for the adoption of a budget for 2022 was workable, and that funds should be allocated to support ongoing intersessional work on effectiveness evaluation. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, highlighted the budgetary priorities of African countries.

74. Following the discussion, the Conference of the Parties agreed to establish a contact group on the programme of work and budget, co-chaired by Mr. Sam Adu-Kumi (Ghana) and Mr. Reggie Hernaus (the Netherlands), requesting the contact group to agree on a draft decision, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at the present online segment of its fourth meeting, by deliberating on the proposed budgetary elements of the programme of work for 2022, taking into consideration the proposed draft decision set out in annex I to document UNEP/MC/COP.4/24. The contact group could also deliberate on and propose elements of the budget for 2023 that could be put forward to the Conference of the Parties at the present online segment of its fourth meeting as part of that decision. The President noted that the contact group would be established for parties that would be required to contribute to the budget for the biennium 2022–2023, and suggested that the contact group be open to countries that had concluded the ratification process but for whom the Convention would only enter force after the present online segment of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to participate as observers.

75. Subsequently, the Conference of the Parties adopted decision MC-4/2 on the programme of work and budget for 2022, as submitted by the contact group on the programme of work and budget, as set forth in the annex to the present report.

V. Dates of the resumed fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties; venue and dates of the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties

76. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat recalled that, in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions on travel and gatherings, the Bureau had decided to hold the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in two segments: an online segment scheduled to be held from 1 to 5 November 2021 and an in-person segment scheduled to be held in the first quarter of 2022, in Bali, Indonesia. She drew attention to the note by the secretariat on the dates of the resumed fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (UNEP/MC/COP.4/25), which included a draft decision on the matter. In addition, the representative of the secretariat informed participants that a note prepared by the secretariat for the Bureau on possible adjustments to the in-person segment of the meeting in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and related measures, including limited on-site participation of delegates and the possibility of augmented participation of delegates through the use of online platforms, was available to registered delegates on the intranet site for the meeting.

77. The representative of Indonesia presented his Government's plan for hosting the in-person segment of the meeting. His Government recognized that conventional conferences were no longer possible but was nevertheless aiming for the effective and inclusive participation of all parties and asked for their flexibility and cooperation to that end. There was a pressing need to decide on the dates of the in-person segment, which the Government of Indonesia was proposing to host in Bali from 21 to 25 March 2022. He outlined the current positive health situation in Indonesia, which the Government intended to maintain through strict implementation of health protocols. The Government was hopeful that the situation in March 2022 would allow for a full in-person meeting, but was presently offering to host four delegates from each party.

78. Many representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, thanked the Government of Indonesia for hosting the online segment of the fourth meeting and for its proposal for the in-person segment.

79. None of those who spoke objected to the dates proposed for the meeting and all indicated their preference for a full in-person meeting. Some representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, were firmly opposed to hybrid meeting arrangements, in part due to internet connection difficulties and the substantive nature of the issues to be negotiated. Others, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, were prepared to consider the hybrid option for health and safety reasons but underscored the need to ensure effective participation by all parties. Several representatives suggested that negotiations should only be conducted in person, but that streaming could be provided to enable those who could not attend to follow the proceedings.

80. Several representatives raised concerns regarding the proposal to limit the number of delegates, saying that it would hamper parties' participation, make the work more difficult and limit the meeting's effectiveness, transparency and legitimacy. Two representatives also drew attention to the substantive agenda for the resumed meeting, which required the support of technical and legal experts. One representative suggested that, in the event that the number of delegates had to be limited, the agenda could be limited to essential items, such as the effectiveness evaluation and the budget for 2023, to allow progress to be made nevertheless.

81. One representative called for provision to be made in the 2022 budget to support parties to attend the resumed meeting.

82. Responding, the representative of Indonesia said that he had taken note of the concerns and expectations voiced. His Government was in favour of a full in-person meeting but also mindful of the dynamics of the pandemic and sought a balance between inclusive participation and safety measures. Given the current situation, it was preparing for an in-person meeting with online access but would be happy to welcome more delegates if possible and would keep parties apprised of the COVID-19 situation in Indonesia.

83. Subsequently, the Conference of the Parties adopted decision MC-4/1, on the dates of the resumed fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, as set out in the annex to the present report.

VI. Other matters

84. No other matters were raised.

VII. Adoption of the report of the meeting

85. The Conference of the Parties adopted the present report on the work of the online segment of its fourth meeting on the basis of the draft report that had been circulated, as orally amended, on the understanding that the Rapporteur would be entrusted with its finalization, in consultation with the secretariat. At the resumed in-person segment, the Conference of the Parties would be invited to consider and adopt a supplemental report reflecting the proceedings of the second segment. Together, the two reports would form the complete proceedings of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

VIII. Closure of the meeting

86. Before the closure of the online segment, at the request of the President the representative of Indonesia reported on the consultations on the proposed draft Bali declaration. The representative of Indonesia thanked parties for their constructive engagement in the consultations that had taken place on Tuesday, 2 November. He provided an overview of the timeline for the preparation of the proposed draft declaration for consideration at the resumed in-person segment of the fourth meeting, in March 2022, namely for the second round of comments on the draft to be submitted by 31 January 2022 and the third round by 16 March 2022, with the aim of submitting the agreed text of the proposed draft Bali declaration to the Conference of the Parties for consideration at its resumed fourth meeting.

87. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the online segment of the fourth meeting was declared closed and the meeting adjourned at 3.05 p.m. on Friday, 5 November 2021 until the in-person resumed fourth meeting, to be held in Bali, Indonesia, from 21 to 25 March 2022.

Annex

Decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention at the online segment of its fourth meeting

- MC-4/1: Dates of the resumed fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury
- MC-4/2: Programme of work and budget for 2022

Decision MC-4/1: Dates of the resumed fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling that, at its third meeting, the Conference of the Parties decided to hold its fourth meeting in Bali, Indonesia, from 1 to 5 November 2021,

Conscious that the restrictions related to the coronavirus disease pandemic have not allowed the organization of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties as had originally been planned,

Noting that, instead, the Bureau of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties agreed that the meeting would be held in two segments: an online segment scheduled for 1 to 5 November 2021 and an in-person segment to be held in the first quarter of 2022,

Decides to adjourn the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention and to resume the meeting in an in-person format in Bali, Indonesia, from 21 to 25 March 2022.

Decision MC-4/2: Programme of work and budget for 2022

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling its decision MC-3/12 on the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2020–2021,

Welcoming the annual contribution by Switzerland, the host country of the secretariat, of 1 million Swiss francs, apportioned 60 per cent to the general trust fund and 40 per cent to the special trust fund to be prioritized for the purpose of supporting the participation of representatives from developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties,

Taking note of the contributions paid to the general trust fund by parties,

Noting that the Convention's full working capital reserve in the general trust fund was established in 2018,

Recognizing with appreciation the contributions and pledges made by Austria, the European Union, Finland, France, Japan, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland to the special trust fund in the biennium 2020–2021,

Recalling its request to the Executive Secretary to prepare a budget for the biennium 2022–2023 for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting, explaining the key principles, assumptions and programmatic strategy on which the budget was based and presenting expenditures for that biennium in a programmatic format and broken down by budget activity, with each activity supported by a budget activity fact sheet,

Recalling also its request to the Executive Secretary, in preparing the budgets and programme of work for the biennium 2022–2023, to present two scenarios:

- (a) One maintaining the operational budget at the 2020–2021 level in nominal terms;
- (b) One reflecting required changes to the above-mentioned scenario to meet the projected needs and costs or savings related thereto, which should not exceed a 5 per cent increase over the 2020–2021 level in nominal terms,

I

General Trust Fund of the Minamata Convention on Mercury

1. *Takes note* of the proposed programme of work and budget for the biennium 2022–2023;² the information on financial matters, including the report on expenditures,³ and the budget activity fact sheets;⁴ and the information provided by the secretariat on progress in the implementation of the programme of work for the biennium 2020–2021⁵ and on international cooperation and coordination;⁶

2. *Approves*, on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent, the budget for the general trust fund for 2022 of 3,397,684 United States dollars as part of the budget for the biennium 2022–2023;

3. *Decides* to review and agree on the budget for the general trust fund for 2023 during the in-person segment of its fourth meeting, which will complete the consideration of the full budget of the Convention for the biennium 2022–2023;

4. *Authorizes* the Executive Secretary to draw down from the estimated available surplus of the general trust fund the amount of up to 500,962 United States dollars to cover a portion of the additional costs of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to meet the commitment for the P-3 programme management position to be carried forward from the biennium 2020–2021, and to finalize the trade report budgeted for in the biennium 2020–2021;

² UNEP/MC/COP.4/24.

³ UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/21.

⁴ UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/22.

⁵ UNEP/MC/COP.4/19.

⁶ UNEP/MC/COP.4/23.

5. *Adopts* the indicative scale of assessment for the apportionment of expenses for 2022 as set out in table 2 of the present decision and authorizes the Executive Secretary, consistent with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, to adjust the scale to include all parties for which the Convention is in force by 1 January 2022;

6. *Recalls* that contributions to the general trust fund are due by 1 January of the year for which those contributions have been budgeted and at the latest by 31 December of that year, and requests parties to pay their contributions as soon as possible to enable the secretariat to carry out its work;

II

Special Trust Fund of the Minamata Convention on Mercury

7. *Takes note* of the report provided by the Executive Secretary on the activities and expenditures for 2018–2019 and 2020–2021 through the special trust fund as contained in the information on financial matters,⁷ as well as the information provided by the secretariat on progress in the implementation of the programme of work for the biennium 2020–2021⁸ and on international cooperation and coordination;⁹

8. *Also takes note* of the proposed programme of work and budget for the biennium 2022–2023,¹⁰ as well as the additional information on financial matters¹¹ and the budget activity fact sheets;¹²

9. *Further takes note* of the estimates for the special trust fund for 2022 of 1,921,000 United States dollars;

10. *Notes* that implementation of the planned activities is subject to the availability of resources contributed to the special trust fund;

11. *Requests* 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;

12. *Invites* parties and non-parties to the Convention and others in a position to do so to contribute to the special trust fund to support the participation of representatives from developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies.

⁷ UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/21.

⁸ UNEP/MC/COP.4/19.

⁹ UNEP/MC/COP.4/23.

¹⁰ UNEP/MC/COP.4/24.

¹¹ UNEP/MC/COP.3/INF/21.

¹² UNEP/MC/COP.3/INF/22.

Table 1
Programme of work and budget for 2022
(in United States dollars)

<i>Activity Number</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>2022</i>	
		<i>General trust fund</i>	<i>Special trust fund</i>
A.	Conferences and meetings		
1	Fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties		
	1.1 Fourth meeting	–	–
	1.2 Regional preparatory meetings	–	–
	1.3 Intersessional time-based expert groups mandated by the Conference of the Parties	–	–
	Component total	–	–
2	Bureau of the Conference of the Parties		
	2.1 Meeting of the Bureau	–	–
	Component total	–	–
3	Implementation and Compliance Committee		
	3.1 Meeting of the Committee	–	–
	Component total	–	–
	Total (A)	–	–
B.	Capacity-building and technical assistance		
4	Capacity-building and technical assistance programme of the Minamata Convention		
	4.1 Tools, methodologies and delivery modalities	–	175 000
	4.2 Specific capacity development activities	–	275 000
	4.3 Capacity-building activities on request	–	70 000
	4.4 Cross-cutting activities	–	265 000
	Component total	–	785 000
	Total (B)	–	785 000
C.	Scientific and technical activities		
5	Scientific support to the States parties to the Minamata Convention		
	5.1 Improvement in methods for mercury inventories	–	50 000
	5.2 Information exchange on modelling and monitoring	–	50 000
	5.3 Assessment of health, environmental and socioeconomic impacts of mercury	–	50 000
	5.4 Information exchange in mercury reduction technologies	–	50 000
	5.5 Cross-cutting scientific and technical activities	–	500 000
	Component total	–	700 000
6	Effectiveness evaluation		
	6.1 Effectiveness evaluation committee	45 000	–
	6.2 Development of trade, supply and demand report	–	50 000
	6.3 Compilation and assessment of party submissions	–	–
	6.4 Other preparatory work and reports to support the effectiveness evaluation	220 000	–
	Component total	265 000	50 000
7	National reporting under the Minamata Convention		
	7.1 Process and analyse national reports	10 000	–
	7.2 Ongoing management of information contained in national reports	20 000	–
	7.3. Enhance parties' capacity on national reporting	25 000	–

<i>Activity Number</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>2022</i>	
		<i>General trust fund</i>	<i>Special trust fund</i>
	Component total	55 000	–
	Total (C)	320 000	750 000
D.	Knowledge and information management, and outreach		
8	Publications		
	8.1 Publications	25 000	–
	Component total	25 000	–
9	Communication, outreach and public awareness		
	9.1 Communication, outreach and public awareness	34 000	–
	Component total	34 000	–
10	Digital strategy		
	10.1 Digital strategy	45 000	95 000
	Component total	45 000	95 000
	Total (D)	104 000	95 000
E.	Overall management		
11	Executive direction and management		
	11.1 Overall management	2 165 500	–
	11.2 Staff travel	61 500	–
	Component total	2 227 000	–
12	International cooperation and coordination		
	12.1. Cooperation on the broader sustainable development and environment agenda	–	–
	12.2. Cooperation within the chemicals and waste cluster	–	–
	12.3. Other cooperation and coordination	–	–
	Component total	–	–
13	Financial resources and mechanism		
	13.1. Financial resources	20 000	–
	13.2 Financial mechanism - Global Environment Facility	27 000	–
	13.3 Financial mechanism - Specific International Programme	–	–
	Component total	47 000	–
	Total (E)	2 274 000	–
F.	Legal and policy activities		
14	Legal and policy activities		
	14.1 Work programme of the Implementation and Compliance Committee	–	–
	14.2 Legal activities	–	–
	14.3 National legislation, trade, and enforcement	–	–
	14.4 Gender	–	70 000
	Component total	–	70 000
	Total (F)	–	70 000
G.	Office maintenance and services		
15	Office maintenance and services		
	15.1 Office maintenance and services	155 000	–
	Component total	155 000	–
16	Information technology services		
	16.1 Information technology services	55 500	–
	Component total	55 500	–
	Total (G)	210 500	–

Activity Number	Activity	2022	
		General trust fund	Special trust fund
Resources required for all activities			
	Total direct costs (excluding programme support costs) (A to G)	2 908 500	1 700 000
	Programme support costs (13 per cent)	378 105	221 000
	Grand total (including programme support costs)	3 286 605	1 921 000
	Extraordinary additional costs for the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (including programme support costs)	111 079	
	Grand total including extraordinary costs for the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties	3 397 684	
	Withdrawal from working capital reserve (\$132,500 plus programme support costs)	(149 725)	
	Savings from 2020–2021 for trade report (\$60,000 plus programme support costs)	(67 800)	
	Grand total to be covered by contributions from parties and 60 per cent of host country contribution	3 180 159	

Notes:

Activities in the interim budget for 2022 will be reviewed at the resumed fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to ensure that they are in line with the decisions taken at the resumed fourth meeting.

The present decision should not be seen as creating a precedent, but as a pragmatic solution to progressing with the work of the secretariat in the current, very specific situation.

Table 2

Overview of the indicative scale of assessment and contributions to the general trust fund for 2022

(in United States dollars)

Party	United Nations scale of assessment for 2019–2021 (%)	Minamata scale with 22% ceiling and 0.010% base (%)	Total contributions to the general trust fund (2022) (United States dollars)
African States (37)			
Benin	0.003	0.0100	257
Botswana	0.014	0.0157	404
Burkina Faso	0.003	0.0100	257
Burundi	0.001	0.0100	257
Cameroon	0.013	0.0146	375
Central African Republic	0.001	0.0100	257
Chad	0.004	0.0100	257
Comoros	0.001	0.0100	257
Congo	0.006	0.0100	257
Côte d'Ivoire	0.013	0.0146	375
Djibouti	0.001	0.0100	257
Equatorial Guinea	0.016	0.0180	462
Eswatini	0.002	0.0100	257
Gabon	0.015	0.0169	433
Gambia	0.001	0.0100	257
Ghana	0.015	0.0169	433
Guinea	0.003	0.0100	257
Guinea-Bissau	0.001	0.0100	257
Lesotho	0.001	0.0100	257
Madagascar	0.004	0.0100	257
Mali	0.004	0.0100	257

<i>Party</i>	<i>United Nations scale of assessment for 2019–2021 (%)</i>	<i>Minamata scale with 22% ceiling and 0.010% base (%)</i>	<i>Total contributions to the general trust fund (2022) (United States dollars)</i>
Mauritania	0.002	0.0100	257
Mauritius	0.011	0.0124	318
Namibia	0.009	0.0100	257
Niger	0.002	0.0100	257
Nigeria	0.25	0.2811	7 217
Rwanda	0.003	0.0100	257
Sao Tome and Principe	0.001	0.0100	257
Senegal	0.007	0.0100	257
Seychelles	0.002	0.0100	257
Sierra Leone	0.001	0.0100	257
South Africa	0.272	0.3058	7 852
Togo	0.002	0.0100	257
Uganda	0.008	0.0100	257
United Republic of Tanzania	0.01	0.0112	289
Zambia	0.009	0.0100	257
Zimbabwe	0.005	0.0100	257
Asia-Pacific States (35)			
Afghanistan	0.007	0.0100	257
Bahrain	0.05	0.0562	1 443
Cambodia	0.006	0.0100	257
China	12.005	13.4983	346 547
Cyprus	0.036	0.0405	1 039
India	0.834	0.9377	24 075
Indonesia	0.543	0.6105	15 675
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	0.398	0.4475	11 489
Iraq	0.129	0.1450	3 724
Japan	8.564	9.6293	247 216
Jordan	0.021	0.0236	606
Kiribati	0.001	0.0100	257
Republic of Korea	2.267	2.5490	65 441
Kuwait	0.252	0.2833	7 274
Lao People's Democratic Republic	0.005	0.0100	257
Lebanon	0.047	0.0528	1 357
Marshall Islands	0.001	0.0100	257
Mongolia	0.005	0.0100	257
Oman	0.115	0.1293	3 320
Pakistan	0.115	0.1293	3 320
Palau	0.001	0.0100	257
Philippines	0.205	0.2305	5 918
Qatar	0.282	0.3171	8 140
Samoa	0.001	0.0100	257
Saudi Arabia	1.172	1.3178	33 832
Singapore	0.485	0.5453	14 000
Sri Lanka	0.044	0.0495	1 270
State of Palestine	0.008	0.0100	257
Syrian Arab Republic	0.011	0.0124	318
Thailand	0.307	0.3452	8 862
Tonga	0.001	0.0100	257

<i>Party</i>	<i>United Nations scale of assessment for 2019–2021 (%)</i>	<i>Minamata scale with 22% ceiling and 0.010% base (%)</i>	<i>Total contributions to the general trust fund (2022) (United States dollars)</i>
Tuvalu	0.001	0.0100	257
United Arab Emirates	0.616	0.6926	17 782
Vanuatu	0.001	0.0100	257
Viet Nam	0.077	0.0866	2,223
Central and Eastern European States (16)			
Albania	0.008	0.0100	257
Armenia	0.007	0.0100	257
Bulgaria	0.046	0.0517	1 328
Croatia	0.077	0.0866	2 223
Czechia	0.311	0.3497	8 978
Estonia	0.039	0.0439	1 126
Hungary	0.206	0.2316	5 947
Latvia	0.047	0.0528	1 357
Lithuania	0.071	0.0798	2 050
Montenegro	0.004	0.0100	257
North Macedonia	0.007	0.0100	257
Poland	0.802	0.9018	23 151
Republic of Moldova	0.003	0.0100	257
Romania	0.198	0.2226	5 716
Slovakia	0.153	0.1720	4 417
Slovenia	0.076	0.0855	2 194
Latin American and Caribbean States (24)			
Antigua and Barbuda	0.002	0.0100	257
Argentina	0.915	1.0288	26 413
Bahamas	0.018	0.0202	520
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	0.016	0.0180	462
Brazil	2.948	3.3147	85 100
Chile	0.407	0.4576	11 749
Colombia	0.288	0.3238	8 314
Costa Rica	0.062	0.0697	1 790
Cuba	0.08	0.0900	2 309
Dominican Republic	0.053	0.0596	1 530
Ecuador	0.08	0.0900	2 309
El Salvador	0.012	0.0135	346
Guyana	0.002	0.0100	257
Honduras	0.009	0.0100	257
Jamaica	0.008	0.0100	257
Mexico	1.292	1.4527	37 296
Nicaragua	0.005	0.0100	257
Panama	0.045	0.0506	1 299
Paraguay	0.016	0.0180	462
Peru	0.152	0.1709	4 388
Saint Kitts and Nevis	0.001	0.0100	257
Saint Lucia	0.001	0.0100	257
Suriname	0.005	0.0100	257
Uruguay	0.087	0.0978	2 511

<i>Party</i>	<i>United Nations scale of assessment for 2019–2021 (%)</i>	<i>Minamata scale with 22% ceiling and 0.010% base (%)</i>	<i>Total contributions to the general trust fund (2022) (United States dollars)</i>
Western European and other States (23)			
Austria	0.677	0.7612	19 543
Belgium	0.821	0.9231	23 700
Canada	2.734	3.0741	78 922
Denmark	0.554	0.6229	15 992
European Union	2.5	2.5000	64 183
Finland	0.421	0.4734	12 153
France	4.427	4.9777	127 794
Germany	6.09	6.8476	175 800
Greece	0.366	0.4115	10 565
Iceland	0.028	0.0315	808
Ireland	0.371	0.4171	10 710
Italy	3.307	3.7184	95 463
Liechtenstein	0.009	0.0100	257
Luxembourg	0.067	0.0753	1 934
Malta	0.017	0.0191	491
Monaco	0.011	0.0124	318
Netherlands	1.356	1.5247	39 144
Norway	0.754	0.8478	21 766
Portugal	0.35	0.3935	10 103
Sweden	0.906	1.0187	26 153
Switzerland	1.151	1.2942	33 226
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	4.567	5.1351	131 835
United States of America	22	22.0000	564 814
Total assessed contributions		100.00	2 567 335
Total approved budget (including host country contribution*)			3 180 159

* Includes estimated host country contribution of Switzerland to the general trust fund in United States dollars.

Table 3
Indicative staffing requirements for the biennium 2022–2023

<i>Staff category and level</i>	<i>2022–2023</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>General trust fund</i>	<i>Special trust fund</i>	<i>UNEP programme support costs</i>	
A. Professional categories				
D-1	1	–	–	1
P-5	1	1	–	2
P-4	3	–	1	4
P-3	2	–	–	2
P-2	–	–	–	–
Subtotal (A)	7	1	1	9
B. General Service category				
GS	4	–	1	5
Subtotal (B)	4	0	1	5
Total (A + B)	11	1	2	14

Note: The staffing table includes the reclassification of two G-4 posts to G-5. In addition, Italy is funding a P-2 Junior Professional Officer post until October 2023.