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Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury
Sixth meeting
Geneva, 3–7 November 2025

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

Introduction

1. The sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury was held at the Geneva International Conference Centre from 3 to 7 November 2025.

I. Opening of the meeting (item 1 of the agenda)

2. A master of ceremonies welcomed participants to the meeting at 10.10 a.m. on Monday, 3 November 2025. The participants enjoyed a performance of traditional Swiss music.

3. Opening statements were delivered by Katrin Schneeberger, State Secretary, Director of the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications, Switzerland; Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); Monika Stankiewicz, Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention on Mercury; and Osvaldo Patricio Álvarez-Pérez, President of the Conference of the Parties for its sixth meeting.

4. In her opening statement, Ms. Schneeberger said that mercury was a highly toxic heavy metal with severe adverse effects on human health and the environment. Children were especially vulnerable to it, even at the lowest levels of exposure. The adoption of the Minamata Convention had been a historic milestone for global environmental governance. The Convention's life-cycle approach ensured that mercury was addressed at every stage, from extraction and trade to use and disposal. Switzerland was proud to have played a significant role in establishing the Convention and had consistently supported implementation efforts. The current meeting provided an opportunity to ensure the Convention's financial stability and to advance deliberations on phasing out dental amalgam and on trade in mercury compounds. Strengthening synergies within the chemicals and waste cluster should remain a guiding priority. Together, the multilateral environmental agreements in the cluster were greater than the sum of their parts and could form the backbone of an effective global regime to address pollution. The establishment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution in June 2025 was an important step forward. The panel would enable informed and timely decisions by States and would contribute to effective international responses to pollution. The concentration of relevant institutions in Geneva fostered daily opportunities to strengthen the coherence of such responses. The Convention was a clear example of what could be achieved when nations worked together, guided by science and a shared sense of responsibility. In closing, she wished participants a productive and inspiring meeting that would result in progress towards a world free from the harmful effects of mercury.

5. In her remarks Ms. Mrema said that while mercury had historically served many useful purposes it had also poisoned rivers, silenced birds and entered the blood of generations. A response to the tragedy of Minamata disease, the Convention currently united 153 parties for the purpose of protecting human health and the environment from mercury's toxic reach. The results of its implementation spoke for themselves: mercury use in dentistry was being reduced or eliminated worldwide; the Libreville Commitment on the Elimination of Mercury-Containing Skin-Lightening Cosmetics in Africa was putting an end to mercury-added skin-lightening products in Africa; and chlor-alkali facilities were embracing cleaner technologies. The Convention also tackled the difficult issue of artisanal and small-scale gold mining, in relation to which the engagement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities served as a reminder that environmental progress and human justice were always interlinked. UNEP was proud to work with parties to detoxify supply chains, foster innovation and create opportunities for growth. Science remained its compass. Through global data, inventories and knowledge hubs, UNEP helped countries to understand the full picture of mercury use and emissions, laying the foundations for informed and effective action. It was vital to build connections across conventions. The portfolio of new projects of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), for which there was funding of over $105 million, demonstrated what a truly integrated approach could achieve. The Global Mercury Partnership, initiated in 2005, had helped to make mercury management a shared global mission. All of this showed that environmental progress was a collective act of humanity choosing to do better together. It was time to prove that mercury, once the measure of carelessness, could become a symbol of care.

6. In her opening statement, Ms. Stankiewicz said that since the previous meeting of the Conference of the Parties the number of parties to the Convention had grown, while progress had been made in phasing out mercury-added products, replacing mercury in industrial processes with safer alternatives and raising public awareness. The current meeting came at a decisive moment, with serious challenges ahead. Illegal trade in mercury persisted, emissions from artisanal and small-scale gold mining were increasing and mercury continued to be used in cosmetics. The Convention placed particular emphasis on those most vulnerable to and affected by mercury exposure: Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and children. Strong implementation of the Convention required strong support. It was therefore pleasing that significant resources had been allocated to that end in the eighth replenishment of the GEF trust fund. It was essential for support to be expanded in the ninth replenishment, as most parties to the Convention had to fulfil the majority of their obligations thereunder by 2030. The Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance had proven its value, and thanks were owed to the donors supporting it, Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Thanks were also due to the contributors to the special trust fund supporting programmatic work under the Convention: Canada, the European Union, Finland, Germany, Japan, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, as well as to Switzerland for hosting the current meeting and facilitating broad participation. Partnerships remained the backbone of progress under the Convention, whose governance structure was designed to avoid duplication. Measures to address mercury were part of the broader chemicals and waste agenda and were deeply intertwined with efforts in the areas of human health, biodiversity, climate change, mineral resources, trade, law enforcement, consumer protection and human rights. She remained optimistic that the Convention would continue to have a positive impact on people's lives and would serve as a model of an actionable multilateral environmental agreement.

7. In his opening statement, the President said that there were three basic strategies underpinning the Convention's implementation, namely, to stop mercury pollution at source, remove mercury-containing products from circulation, and minimize unplanned emissions into the air, soil and water. These strategies were accompanied by specific, measurable targets, and it was crucial to build on the progress already made in respect of those targets. By 2037, mercury use would be highly restricted in most parties to the Convention, limited mainly to artisanal and small-scale gold mining, dental amalgam and a few select industrial processes. Nevertheless, significant challenges remained, including the rapid growth of such mining, informal sources of mercury and persistent trade in mercury-containing products, which threatened to undermine efforts to implement the Convention. There was also a need to combat unintentional releases of mercury. In the build-up to the ninth replenishment of the GEF trust fund, the current meeting represented a golden opportunity to make the Convention more successful through agreement on specific, measurable actions. He urged participants to approach their work with optimism and determination. Through respectful and focused discussions, they could reach decisions that would protect human health and the environment.

8. A brief video commemorating the eighth anniversary of the entry into force of the Minamata Convention was presented, and a commemorative photograph was taken.

9. The President then declared the meeting officially open.

10. General statements were made by representatives speaking on behalf of the African States; the Asia-Pacific States; the Eastern European States; the Latin American and Caribbean States; and the European Union and its member States.

II. Organizational matters (item 2 of the agenda)

A. Adoption of the agenda (item 2 (a) of the agenda)

11. The Conference of the Parties adopted the following agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/MC/COP.6/1/Rev.1):

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
    (a) Adoption of the agenda;
    (b) Organization of work;
    (c) Election of officers;
    (d) Report on the credentials of representatives.
3. Rules of procedure and financial rules for the Conference of the Parties.
4. Matters for consideration or action by the Conference of the Parties:
    (a) Mercury supply sources and trade;
    (b) Mercury-added products and manufacturing processes in which mercury or mercury compounds are used:
        (i) Amendments to annex A;
        (ii) Cosmetics listed in part I of annex A;
        (iii) Consideration of the feasibility of mercury-free alternatives for manufacturing vinyl chloride monomer;
        (iv) Extensions for exemptions;
    (c) Artisanal and small-scale gold mining;
    (d) Mercury waste;
    (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) Cross-cutting matters:
        (i) Implementation of decision MC-5/1;
        (ii) Implementation of decision MC-5/15;
    (k) Knowledge management;
    (l) Mercury and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
5. International cooperation and coordination.
6. Programme of work and budget.

7. Dates and venue of the seventh 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 (item 2 (b) of the agenda)

12. The Conference of the Parties decided to organize its work in accordance with the proposals set out in the annotations to the provisional agenda (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/3) and the tentative schedule for the meeting (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/4) and that it would meet in plenary session from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m. each day. It also decided that small groups would be established as necessary and that, if possible, only one such group would meet simultaneously with any plenary session and no more than two such groups would meet simultaneously at other times.

13. It also decided that the small groups to be established would include a contact group on the programme of work and budget. That group would be asked, among other things, to confirm that all decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties had been taken into account in the programme of work and budget for 2026–2027 or would have no financial implications.

14. Also during the organization of work, the representative of the secretariat introduced an initiative to grant special recognition to certain parties and individuals, with the aim of showing gratitude to those parties and individuals and fostering a positive work environment and spirit at the meeting.

15. Thus, at the end of the 2nd plenary session, on 3 November, the representative of the secretariat extended special recognition to the Governments mentioned by the Executive Secretary in her opening remarks that had provided financial support for the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance. She also acknowledged the Government of Italy for funding a junior professional officer post in the secretariat, which had been instrumental in activating the Specific International Programme.

16. At the end of the 3rd plenary session, on 4 November, the representative of the secretariat extended special recognition to the Governments of Austria, Burundi, Comoros, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Mongolia, Sweden, Uganda and Togo for submitting their second full national reports as of 31 October 2025 ahead of the 31 December 2025 deadline.

17. At the end of the 5th plenary session, on 5 November, the representative of the secretariat extended special recognition to those providing leadership for the bodies of the Convention, namely the Co-Chairs of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme Governing Board, Obed Meringo Baloyi (South Africa) and Andrew Clark (United States of America); the Co-Chairs of the Effectiveness Evaluation Group, Linroy Christian (Antigua and Barbuda) and Katerina Šebková (Czechia); the Co-Chairs of the Open-ended Scientific Group, Alexandra Steffen (Canada) and Dominique Bally Kpokro (Côte d'Ivoire);[1] and the former and current Vice-Chairs of the Implementation and Compliance Committee, Musa Kuzumila Ngunila (United Republic of Tanzania) and Eva Salplachtova (Czechia), respectively. She also thanked Itsuki Kuroda (Japan) for her contribution to the Effectiveness Evaluation Group, Terry Keating (United States of America) for his contribution to the Open-ended Scientific Group, and Yunfang Hu (China), the former Chair of the Implementation and Compliance Committee. She acknowledged the considerable personal commitment of both time and energy involved in playing these roles, which were vital for the smooth operation of the Convention, and she thanked the Governments of those recognized for dedicating resources to them.

18. At the start of the 9th plenary session, on 7 November, the Executive Secretary extended special recognition to the co-chairs of the contact groups and the facilitators of the other small groups established at the current meeting for their dedication, professionalism and leadership in facilitating the negotiations. She also expressed appreciation to the President for his skilful leadership of the meeting.

[1] Dominique Bally Kpokro, a representative of an observer organization at the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, was nominated by Côte d'Ivoire as a member and co-chair of the Open-ended Scientific Group.

C. Attendance

19. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following 125 parties: Albania, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas (The), Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, European Union, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Türkiye, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Viet Nam and Zambia.

20. In addition, the meeting was attended by representatives of the following 10 Parties that did not submit valid credentials: Cameroon, Comoros, Congo, Djibouti, Lebanon, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates and Zimbabwe.

21. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the following observer States: Guatemala and Israel.

22. The following United Nations entities and specialized agencies were represented as observers: Global Environment Facility; International Labour Organization; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions; Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes; secretariat of the Global Framework on Chemicals – for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; United Nations Institute for Training and Research; World Bank; World Health Organization (WHO).

23. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented as observers: Commission of the Economic Community of West African States; International Lead and Zinc Study Group; International Union for Conservation of Nature; secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

24. A number of governmental bodies and agencies, regional and subregional centres, non-governmental organizations, private sector entities, academic institutions, Indigenous Peoples' and local community organizations were represented as observers. The names of those organizations are included in the list of participants (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/46).

D. Election of officers (item 2 (c) of the agenda)

25. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat recalled that pursuant to the rules of procedure the Conference of the Parties would need to elect from among the representatives of the parties present at the current meeting the president and nine vice-presidents, with one of the latter serving also as Rapporteur. Those officers would constitute the Bureau from the closure of the current meeting until the closure of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties. In accordance with the rules and past practice the offices of president and rapporteur were subject to rotation among the United Nations regional groups, and no officer was to serve on the Bureau for more than two consecutive terms.

26. The Conference of the Parties at the current meeting was also to elect new members of the Implementation and Compliance Committee and to confirm the members of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance.

27. Parties were invited to submit nominations for membership of the aforementioned bodies through the Bureau members from their regional groups before the end of the session on Tuesday, 5 November.

28. Subsequently, the Conference of the Parties elected the following officers to serve on the Bureau from the closure of the current meeting until the closure of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties:

President:	Marie-Claire Lhenry (France)
Vice-Presidents:	Linroy Christian (Antigua and Barbuda)
	Rachel Burgess (Australia)
	Fahmida Khanom (Bangladesh)
	Sandra Gonou (Benin)
	Romana Grizelj (Croatia)
	Irma Gurguliani (Georgia)
	Khodayar Rouzbahani (Islamic Republic of Iran)
	Arturo Gavilán García (Mexico)
	Anne Nakafeero (Uganda)

29. The Conference of the Parties decided that the Rapporteur for its seventh meeting would be designated by the Bureau during the period between the current meeting and the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

30. The Conference of the Parties also elected the following new members of the Implementation and Compliance Committee to serve two terms in accordance with paragraph 3 of rule 3 of the committee's rules of procedure:

Anahit Aleksandryan (Armenia)
Mathieu Van der Meerschen (Belgium)
João Paulo de Sousa Vieira (Brazil)
Elaine Marina Mereng Bodo (Cameroon)
Kidus Workineh Tebikew (Ethiopia)
Rafael Zubrzycki (Germany)
Pragusdiniyanto Prakasa Soemantri (Indonesia)
Tania Ramírez Muñoz (Mexico)
Sonja Roglić (Serbia)

31. The following members of the committee would serve one more term in accordance with paragraph 3 of rule 3 of the committee's rules of procedure:

Yao Wei (China)
María del Mar Solano Trejos (Costa Rica)
Eva Salplachtova (Czechia)
Amit Raj (India)
Oluwatoyin Olabanji (Nigeria)
Gene Smilansky (United States of America)

32. The Conference of the Parties also confirmed, based on the nominations received from the regional groups, the following 10 members of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme to serve from the closure of the current meeting until the closure of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties:

From the African States:	Hanitriniaina Liliane Randrianomenjanahary (Madagascar)
	Obed Meringo Baloyi (South Africa)
From the Asia-Pacific States:	Luay Sadeq Almukhtar (Iraq)
	Nazia Zaib (Pakistan)
From the Eastern European States:	Donata Pipiraite-Valiskiene (Lithuania)
	Jelena Kovačević (Montenegro)
From the Latin American and Caribbean States:	Cecilia Aburto Schweitzer (Chile)
	Michelle Astwood (Guyana)

From the Western European and other States:	Lien Bomans (Belgium)
	Eveline Verhaar (Kingdom of the Netherlands)

E. Report on the credentials of representatives (item 2 (d) of the agenda)

33. Presenting the report of the Bureau on credentials, Rachel Burgess, Vice-President and Chair of the Credentials Committee, said that the Bureau had examined the credentials submitted by parties in accordance with rules 19 and 20 of the rules of procedure. The Bureau had found that, as at 6 November 2025, the representatives of 121 of the 135 parties registered to participate in the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury had submitted 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. Of those, 19 copies of credentials had been accepted on the understanding that originals would be submitted as soon as possible. The remaining 14 parties (Cameroon, Comoros, Congo, Djibouti, Eswatini, Guinea, Lebanon, Malawi, Portugal, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates and Zimbabwe) had not submitted credentials for their representatives. They would therefore participate as observers in the meeting and would be recorded as such in the report of the meeting and in the list of participants.

34. The Conference of the Parties adopted the report of the Bureau on credentials. On the final day of the meeting, the President reported that, subsequent to the report of the Bureau on credentials, valid credentials had been submitted for the representatives of Eswatini, Guinea, Portugal and Rwanda. Those countries were therefore deemed to have participated in the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties as parties to the Minamata Convention and would be recorded as such in the report of the meeting and the list of participants.

III. Rules of procedure and financial rules for the Conference of the Parties (item 3 of the agenda)

A. Rules of procedure (item 3 (a) of the agenda)

35. Outlining the information in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/3, the representative of the secretariat recalled that by its decision MC-1/1 the Conference of the Parties had adopted its rules of procedure with two exceptions. These were the second sentence of paragraph 1 of rule 45, relating to the adoption of decisions on matters of substance by voting should all efforts to reach consensus fail, and paragraph 3 of rule 45, on the mechanism used to decide whether a matter before the Conference of the Parties should be considered a matter of substance or a matter of procedure. Those provisions remained in square brackets to reflect a lack of agreement and to indicate that they had not been adopted. The Conference of the Parties had discussed the bracketed text of rule 45 at its second, third, fourth and fifth meetings but had not adopted a formal decision on the matter.

36. At the suggestion of the President the Conference of the Parties decided to defer further consideration of the bracketed text in rule 45 to its seventh meeting.

B. Financial rules (item 3 (b) of the agenda)

37. Drawing attention to the information set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/4, the representative of the secretariat recalled that by its decision MC-1/10 the Conference of the Parties had adopted financial rules for itself and any subsidiary bodies that it might establish, together with financial provisions governing the functioning of the secretariat. Some text therein had remained enclosed in square brackets to reflect a lack of agreement and to indicate that it had not been adopted. Brackets remained around a reference to developing countries in paragraph 3 (e) of rule 5 of the financial rules, relating to appropriate measures when a payment schedule had been either not decided on or not respected, and text in paragraphs 2 and 5 of the annex to the financial rules relating to the treatment of least developed countries and small island developing States with regard to funding to facilitate the participation of parties in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties. The Conference of the Parties had discussed the bracketed text at its second, third, fourth and fifth meetings but had not adopted a formal decision on the matter.

38. At the suggestion of the President the Conference of the Parties decided to defer further consideration of the bracketed text in rule 5 and in the annex to the financial rules to its seventh meeting.

IV. Matters for consideration or action by the Conference of the Parties (item 4 of the agenda)

A. Mercury supply sources and trade (item 4 (a) of the agenda)

39. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to the note by the secretariat providing information on the implementation of decision MC-5/2, on mercury supply sources and trade (UNEP/MC/COP.6/5); information from the second short national reports and previous reports submitted by parties pursuant to article 21 of the Convention; and information on work carried out by the Implementation and Compliance Committee of the Convention pursuant to article 15 since the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The document contained information on informal primary mercury mining; exports of mercury without consent; illegal, informal and unreported trade across national borders; draft updates to the existing guidance on the identification of individual stocks of mercury or mercury compounds; and draft updates to the appendices to the guidance on completing the forms required under article 3 related to trade in mercury. A draft decision on the matter was set out in the annex to the document.

40. She recalled that paragraph 13 of article 3 provided that the Conference of the Parties should evaluate whether the trade in specific mercury compounds compromised the objective of the Convention and consider whether specific mercury compounds should, by their listing in an additional annex, be made subject to paragraphs 6 and 8 of article 3 of the Convention. In its decision MC-5/3, the Conference of the Parties had requested the secretariat to initiate a study of the supply, production, trade and use of mercury compounds. The study had been conducted thanks to voluntary contributions from Canada and Spain and, following the posting of a draft on the Convention website, had been finalized, taking into account the comments received from 11 parties and 3 organizations, and was set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/5.

41. The President commended the efforts made by parties to control supply sources and trade of mercury, as well as for including valuable information on the implementation of article 3 in their national reports. He encouraged them to continue such efforts. He also noted that a conference room paper containing a draft decision on future actions regarding trade in mercury compounds under article 3 of the Convention had been submitted by Australia, Canada, Japan and Norway.

42. Introducing the conference room paper, one of the co-sponsors said that good progress was being made to control the supply and trade of elemental mercury but more work was needed to address the trade and use of specific mercury compounds. The secretariat study showed that certain mercury compounds continued to be used in processes and products that were not allowed under the Convention, such as skin-lightening cosmetics, and that some mercury compounds that were being traded could easily be converted into elemental mercury for use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining. Although no date had been set in the Convention by which the evaluation required under paragraph 13 of article 3 should be completed, it was proposed in the draft decision that parties and stakeholders should be invited to provide further information. An open-ended online expert group should furthermore be established to identify specific mercury compounds that could be listed in an additional annex to the Convention, as called for in paragraph 13 of article 3. It was intended that the work would only include the study of mercury compounds that might be used in products or processes, or that could be converted to elemental mercury, and not those that fell under the definition of mercury wastes under paragraph 2 of article 11 of the Convention.

43. Many representatives, including a number speaking on behalf of groups of parties, thanked the secretariat for the documents on the sub-item, in particular the study of supply, production, trade and use of mercury compounds. One representative, however, expressed concern regarding the accuracy and comparability of the data presented in the study. One representative said that the study would help significantly in tracking mercury compounds at the international level and contribute to the objectives of the Convention, and a number of others drew attention in particular to concerns raised in the study regarding the use of mercury compounds in skin-lightening products.

44. Many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, said that international cooperation was critical to combating the illegal trade in mercury, in particular with regard to customs protection measures. One representative called for all parties to contribute actively to the implementation of the Bali Declaration on combating illegal trade in mercury. One representative also called for increased measures to ensure the environmentally sound management of mercury waste and another said that the increase in e-commerce posed significant challenges in relation to the illegal trade in mercury. One representative called for strengthened cooperation between

the Convention and relevant international bodies such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Criminal Police Organization and the World Customs Organization.

45. A number of representatives said that the use of mercury in artisanal and small-scale gold mining was the most significant obstacle to the eradication of mercury use, in part due to its role as a key driver of the illicit trade in mercury. A number of representatives said that the two issues should be addressed in a coordinated and mutually reinforcing manner. One representative also drew attention to the recent significant rise in the value of gold, which he said exerted growing economic pressure on countries with gold mining.

46. A number of representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, expressed deep concern that the trade in mercury compounds was being used to circumvent the controls on the trade in mercury under the Convention. Another, however, said that there was no conclusive evidence that legal trade in mercury compounds posed a threat, and while her country stood ready for further engagement regarding illegal trade, it called for a scientific and rational approach to the issue.

47. One representative speaking on behalf of a group of parties said that the current data on trade in mercury were limited in value owing to uncertainty regarding the proper declaration of mercury, mercury-containing substances and mercury waste, which led to the inaccurate use of Harmonized System codes and trade data discrepancies. There was therefore a need for global guidance on the consistent use of Harmonized System codes related to mercury and mercury compounds, which needed to be disseminated among export and import companies.

48. Representatives expressed general support for the draft decision on supply sources and trade in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/5. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, expressed support in particular for initiatives to ensure compliance with article 3 of the Convention, including with regard to the development of case studies, and the updated guidance on the completion of trade forms required under article 3. A number of representatives said that it was important to eliminate primary mercury mining, including by ensuring that mining communities had alternative livelihoods. One representative speaking on behalf of a group of parties said that it was necessary to ensure that all parties had the means to implement the Convention and a number of others, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, expressed overall support for the draft decision but would submit proposed changes to the secretariat in writing, including on the draft updates to the guidance on the identification of individual stocks of mercury or mercury compounds exceeding 50 metric tons and sources of mercury supply generating stocks exceeding 10 metric tons per year. One representative proposed additions to the guidance on forms required under article 3 relating to mercury in transit on land, liability for misinformation, customs endorsements, mercury compounds other than those defined in Article 3 and issuance of permits upon consent to import and export. He also suggested that the Conference of the Parties should request the secretariat to automate the consent process in order to improve the tracking of the global mercury supply; request the Implementation and Compliance Committee to discuss the findings of the study on supply, production, trade and use of mercury compounds; and consider at its seventh meeting the possible inclusion of newly identified mercury compounds in accordance with article 27 of the Convention. He also proposed that parties and observers be requested to submit to the secretariat any relevant information on mercury compounds to inform the deliberations of the Implementation and Compliance Committee, and that parties, regional economic integration organizations and international partners be encouraged to provide technical and financial assistance to support laboratory analysis, customs classification and data-sharing on mercury compounds to facilitate evidence-based decision-making at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

49. There was also general support for the draft decision set out in the conference room paper, on advancing work on potential restrictions on trade in mercury compounds. One representative said that an open-ended online expert working group would be a sensible mechanism for addressing the issue and could inform future decisions of the Conference of the Parties; another said that such a group should be inclusive, to reflect the perspectives and interests of all regions. A number of representatives said that parties should be afforded sufficient time to compile and submit the necessary information on mercury compound supply. Another said that the reference in the draft decision to further investigation of the need for controls on the trade of specific mercury compounds was not appropriate because the Convention did not provide for investigation into trade activities but only an evaluation of whether the trade in specific mercury compounds compromised the objective of the Convention.

50. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of parties, said that the identification of mercury compounds other than those listed in article 3 of the Convention was important and that such compounds should be evaluated under the procedure in article 27 of the Convention for potential inclusion in an annex.

51. Some representatives, including a number speaking on behalf of groups of parties, drew attention to actions that they had taken at the national and regional levels in relation to mercury supply sources and trade, in particular with a view to combating the illegal trade in mercury.

52. Several representatives of observer organizations said that illegal gold mining and informal and illegal primary mercury mining were linked with organized crime. Several called for the wording of the draft decision to be strengthened with regard to the illegal trade in mercury and mercury compounds and the establishment of a comprehensive plan of action on the issue. One representative of an observer organization also called for stronger collaboration between the Convention and international bodies such as the International Criminal Police Organization, the World Customs Organization and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

53. Several representatives of observer organizations said that the Conference of the Parties could significantly enhance the effective implementation of the Convention by accelerating the phase-out of primary mercury mining at the global level by 2032 or even December 2027. A number of representatives of observer organizations also suggested establishing an intersessional or open-ended working group on illegal mercury mining and trade; as well as providing parties with practical information on mercury mine closure.

54. Several representatives of observer organizations urged the Conference of the Parties to amend the Convention to remove the exemption for artisanal and small-scale gold mining, with one calling for a phase-out date of 2033, as recommended by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights. A number of representatives said that mercury pollution had a devastating impact in the Amazon on fish stocks and, consequently, human health, as well as sites sacred to Indigenous Peoples. One representative of an observer organization also said that Indigenous Peoples who lived in areas affected by mining faced violence, including sexual violence, and that mining violated article 29 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, under which States should take effective measures to ensure that no storage or disposal of hazardous materials should take place in the lands or territories of Indigenous Peoples without their free, prior and informed consent.

55. One representative of an observer organization said that the trade in cinnabar, from which elemental mercury could be readily extracted, was undermining the objectives of the Convention, and therefore called upon the Conference of the Parties to list cinnabar, as well as other problematic compounds, in an additional annex to the Convention. Another representative of an observer organization called for support for pilot projects aimed at closing cinnabar mining sites and for stocktaking of national reports to the Convention in order to build a global repository of challenges and solutions. She also called for a review of Harmonized System codes for elemental mercury and mercury-containing waste.

56. One representative of an observer organization welcomed the findings of the study of supply, production, trade and use of mercury compounds, in particular in relation to the production of skin-lightening products, and supported the establishment of the open-ended online expert group.

57. Following the discussion the Conference of the Parties decided that the co-sponsors of the conference room paper would consult with those parties that had proposed amendments to, or requested further discussion on, the draft decision contained therein to see how their views could be accommodated in the draft decision and to provide a clean text to plenary.

58. The Conference of the Parties also invited those Parties that had proposed updates to the guidance on the identification of individual stocks of mercury or mercury compounds exceeding 50 metric tons and sources of mercury supply generating stocks exceeding 10 metric tons per year, and the draft updates to the appendices to the guidance on completing the forms required under article 3 related to trade in mercury, as well as those that had made comments on the draft decision in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/5, to submit those in writing to the secretariat. The secretariat would then prepare a conference room paper containing a revised draft decision and the aforementioned guidance for consideration by plenary.

59. Subsequently, the President reported on the outcome of his invitation to submit comments to the secretariat on the draft decision set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/5. Three delegations had submitted comments that diverged significantly and could not be reconciled by the Secretariat in a revised draft decision. He therefore requested those delegations to consult among themselves with a view to arriving at a consolidated text for submission to the President.

60. The representative of one of the proponents then reported on the consultations held with respect to the draft decision set out in the conference room paper, on advancing work on potential restrictions on trade in mercury compounds, saying that the co-sponsors of the draft decision and the

parties who had expressed views on the matter had reached agreement and had submitted a revised version of the draft decision to the secretariat.

61. Subsequently, the President introduced the revised draft decision, which the Conference of the Parties then adopted.

62. Decision MC-6/2, on advancing work related to potential restrictions on the trade of mercury compounds, is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

63. At a later stage in the meeting, the President introduced a revised version of the draft decision set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/5, on supply sources and trade, along with its two addenda setting out draft updates to the guidance on the identification of individual stocks of mercury or mercury compounds exceeding 50 metric tons and sources of mercury supply generating stocks exceeding 10 metric tons per year and draft updates to the appendices to the guidance on completing the forms required under article 3 related to trade in mercury, which the Conference of the Parties then adopted.

64. Decision MC-6/1, on supply sources and trade, is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

B. Mercury-added products and manufacturing processes in which mercury or mercury compounds are used (item 4 (b) of the agenda)

1. Amendments to annex A (item 4 (b) (i) of the agenda)

65. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat recalled that by decision MC-5/10 the Conference of the Parties had decided to amend part II of annex A to the Convention to require each party that had not phased out dental amalgam to submit every four years a national action plan or a report on phase-out or phase-down. By the same decision the Conference of the Parties had also decided to consider at the current meeting proposals to amend part I of annex A to require the phase-out of dental amalgam by 2030 and part II of annex A to require that parties exclude or phase out the use of dental amalgam in government insurance policies and programmes. Information on the matter was set out in documents UNEP/MC/COP.6/6 and UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/10. He also drew attention to document UNEP/MC/COP.5/INF/31/Add.1, setting out a submission by the World Health Organization (WHO).

66. Representatives heard from the Secretary of Health and Human Services of the United States, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., via a recorded message as he was unable to join the meeting due to the Government shutdown. In his message, he questioned the rationale for excluding vaccines containing thiomersal as preservatives from annex A of the Convention and called on all global health authorities and parties to the Convention to follow the lead of the United States in eliminating mercury in all vaccines.

67. Many representatives, including several speaking on behalf of groups of parties, welcomed the proposal to amend annex A to strengthen restrictions on the manufacture, use, import and export of dental amalgam. Many of them, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, voiced support for the proposal as drafted.

68. A number of representatives, while generally supportive of the amendments, expressed caution with regard to certain aspects of the proposal. Many, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, welcomed the proposed 2030 phase-out date. Several, however, expressed the desire to discuss it further, with a few saying it was too soon and one saying that while a phase-out date was important mercury amalgam remained the only available option for essential dental care in some countries, necessitating a step-wise approach to any transition.

69. One representative, while supporting the amendment of part II of annex A in order to promote further reductions in dental amalgam use, suggested that it be augmented by adding measures such as the reduction of the public procurement of amalgam in favour of other treatment materials or the development of an inventory or a data sheet providing information identifying the production, use and trade of dental amalgam, or by making certain elective measures mandatory. Several other representatives indicated that they preferred to retain the existing phase-down measures in part II of annex A, although one supported adding the new measures proposed for parties to implement. Several said that dental amalgams were essential for their countries' universal health coverage programmes, including one who characterized the existing measures as balanced and pragmatic, ensuring both environmental protection and access to essential dental care. Several called for further discussion of the phase-down measures from the perspective of common but differentiated responsibilities.

70. A number of those who supported the amendment proposals, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, called for technical and financial assistance to support the proposed phase-out of dental amalgam. The representative speaking on behalf of a group of parties called for technical assistance for parties that had not yet phased out dental amalgam to enable them to submit their national action plans or reports as part of their national reporting pursuant to Article 21. Several representatives, including the one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, said that assistance was particularly needed to enable developing countries to manage mercury waste.

71. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, as well as several observers, said that non-mercury alternatives to dental amalgam were currently available. The representative speaking on behalf of a group of parties argued that the available alternatives were technically and economically feasible, as indicated in the WHO guideline.

72. The representative of WHO briefly introduced document UNEP/MC/COP.5/INF/31/Add.1, saying that it set out the organization's guideline on environmentally friendly and less invasive oral health care for preventing and managing dental caries. It also provided clear recommendations for the safe and effective use of mercury-free dental products and minimal interventions. He said that the approaches described were clinically effective and offered a safer, more environmentally sustainable alternative to dental amalgam. In the light of the new guideline, he urged parties to advance toward a phase-out of dental amalgam by 2030.

73. One observer particularly stressed the harm caused to humans by dental amalgam, noting that it was still used in many wealthy nations and urging parties to take immediate action to ban it.

74. Several other representatives advised caution, however, saying that the cost of alternatives and their longevity and application merited consideration. One said that there would continue to be medical scenarios requiring the continued use of dental amalgam. One observer advised against setting fixed end dates before assessing country capacity in areas such as waste management, training and supply chains, saying that doing so was likely to produce implementation failures and unintended harms. Another concurred, saying that setting a deadline before safe, effective and affordable alternatives were widely available and feasible risked undermining oral health systems and exacerbating global inequality. She recommended that any phase-out date be no earlier than 2035. Both observers recommended maintaining and accelerating the current phase-down approach to dental amalgam.

75. Many of those who spoke during the discussion took the opportunity to describe the situations in their own countries or regions. A few indicated that their countries had eliminated dental amalgam, while many others, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, said that measures to restrict or phase down the manufacture, use, import or export of dental amalgams were already in place.

76. Many of those who spoke, including those speaking on behalf of groups of parties, indicated their willingness to engage in further discussion on the matter. Many, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, expressed support for the establishment of a contact group for that purpose.

77. The Conference of the Parties decided to establish a contact group on technical matters, to be co-chaired by David Kapindula (Zambia) and Claudia Dumitru (Romania), with the mandate, with respect to the proposed amendments to annex A set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/6, to conclude on the proposed amendments, taking into consideration the discussions in plenary, and to develop a draft decision to be considered in plenary.

78. Subsequently, the President drew attention to a draft decision submitted by the contact group, which the Conference of the Parties then adopted.

79. Decision MC-6/3, on amendments to annex A, is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

80. Following the adoption of the decision, a number of representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of parties, applauded the achievement of the parties in reaching agreement on a phase-out date for mercury-added dental amalgam. One representative said that the decision was a historic milestone that reflected parties' collective determination and willingness to compromise, while another, saying that her country was also committed to eliminating mercury-containing skin lightening products, called on parties to ensure the equitable implementation of the decision so that no country was left behind.

81. Two representatives of observer organizations welcomed the decision, with one calling on parties to strive to phase out mercury in dental amalgam well in advance of the 2034 deadline adopted in the decision.

82. Another representative of an observer organization said that the adoption of a nine-year phase-out period was not the result of compromise but rather complicity and deferral of duty, and all would pay a price for the continued use of mercury.

83. Indicating that the final observer's comment was inconsistent with the decorum expected during the meetings of the Conference of the Parties, the President said that all parties had engaged in negotiations in good faith and had done their utmost to reconcile their national circumstances with everyone's desire to secure the best outcome. The parties' efforts were to be commended and observers should be respectful.

2. Cosmetics listed in part I of annex A (item 4 (b) (ii) of the agenda)

84. The representative of the secretariat highlighted document UNEP/MC/COP.6/6/Add.1, which contained information on challenges in preventing the manufacture, import and export of cosmetics listed in part I of annex A to the Convention and current and proposed measures by parties and others to address those challenges. The document also contained a summary of a report on the same subject (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/8) prepared by the secretariat in cooperation with WHO and the Global Mercury Partnership in response to decision MC-5/5 based on information and documents submitted by 23 parties and 8 organizations. Among the documents submitted was a copy of the Libreville Commitment on the Elimination of Mercury-Containing Skin-Lightening Cosmetics in Africa, adopted at a high-level regional meeting of African ministers, international experts and civil society leaders in Libreville in January 2025, which had been submitted by the Government of Gabon and was included as an annex to document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/8.

85. In addition, the President drew attention to a conference room paper containing a draft decision on mercury-added cosmetics submitted by Gabon on behalf of the Africa group.

86. One representative said that the Libreville Commitment represented decisive progress in combating the use of mercury in cosmetic products and that the Convention had been instrumental in fostering capacity-building at the national level in his country.

87. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, expressed support for the report of the secretariat and for the conference room paper, which they said reflected strong political will to protect human health and the environment from mercury-added products and commitment to strengthening implementation of article 4 of the Convention. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of parties, endorsed the request in the draft decision that the secretariat identify parties lacking national legislation and work to mobilize technical and legal assistance for them, welcoming the proposal to enhance laboratory capacity, strengthen border customs controls and raise public awareness in order to reduce consumer demand. In his view, an integrated approach should be employed to enforce the ban on mercury-added cosmetics, combining public health, education and social communications through collaboration. To that end, adequate financial support and resources were necessary, including from GEF.

88. Several representatives stressed the importance of the phase-out of mercury-added cosmetics. One representative urged parties to strengthen their regulations on e-commerce trading and the export of skin-lightening products, and another said that while the elimination of online sales of such products might be beneficial, application of the necessary control measures would be a challenge. Several representatives said there was a need for collective efforts by the parties, including to enhance legislative and institutional capacity to enforce a ban on mercury-added cosmetics, to make progress towards the shared objective of eliminating mercury use in products, safeguarding health and the environment for future generations, and to deter trade in mercury-added products by adopting the proposed actions on illegal trade in the phase-out process. One representative said that it was important to protect human health and the environment from the harmful effects of mercury but also to ensure that regulatory measures were implementable. A number of representatives said that the continued use of mercury in cosmetics despite the wide availability of alternatives was detrimental to human health and the environment and must be addressed.

89. One representative said that an integrated and collaborative approach was needed to comprehensively address the issue of skin-lightening creams. Some representatives said that there was a need for enhanced international cooperation, capacity-building and financial support aimed at strengthening enforcement. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of parties, expressed concern over the ongoing advertising of the production of mercury compounds for illegal uses,

including for skin-lightening cosmetics, saying that parties should implement stringent measures to cease the production, sale and export of mercury compounds for such uses.

90. One representative suggested adding provisions to the draft decision in the conference room paper to make the action contemplated by paragraphs 2 and 4 of the decision subject to the availability of additional resources and to modify paragraph 6, expressing doubt that it was appropriate to request the secretariat of another international organization to undertake work for the benefit of the Convention. Another representative expressed concern about the call in the draft decision for the secretariat to review national legislation, suggesting that that went beyond its customary role.

91. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, expressed the desire to discuss amendments to the draft decision in the conference room paper further.

92. The representative of WHO said that mercury was a dangerous neurotoxin whose use in skin-lightening products and cosmetics posed significant dangers to the health of women and girls, who often used them daily due to harmful beauty standards and their wide availability through informal markets and online platforms. Saying that many countries lacked regulatory capacity and effective enforcement mechanisms, she called for all parties to take a people-centred approach, with the health sector playing a critical role, in order to protect health and eliminate mercury in cosmetics. For its part WHO was leading a multi-country project to eliminate mercury from skin-lightening products through strengthening regulation, strengthening laboratory capacity and raising awareness in Gabon, Jamaica and Sri Lanka.

93. The representative of UNEP said that addressing harmful chemicals was not just an environmental concern but also a matter of public health, human rights and social justice and must be done through regional and global action that fostered partnerships. UNEP was using storytelling, such as the Humanae photographic exhibition on display in Geneva during the current meeting, to shift mindsets and celebrate the beauty of skin tones. Including through the Global Mercury Partnership, it stood ready to advance regional and global action, such as the Libreville Commitment, by fostering partnerships, raising awareness, sharing evidence, promoting regulatory reform and championing inclusive beauty standards. With GEF, WHO, the Biodiversity Research Institute and the Governments of Gabon, Jamaica and Sri Lanka it was driving policy, advocacy and supply chain transformation.

94. A representative of an observer organization said that the proliferation of products containing mercury multiplied the health and environmental risks they posed. All parties should implement bans on mercury in all such products, and the global trade and supply of mercury should be prohibited. In addition, national legislation should be strengthened, together with controls on the import and distribution of products containing mercury. Another representative of an observer organization said that the ongoing circulation of mercury-added products in markets and online posed a risk to health and to the environment, while undermining the credibility and commitments set out in the Convention. Parties should fully enforce the zero-mercury standard, strengthen market and customs surveillance and sustain public education campaigns. One representative of an observer organization said that the Conference of the Parties should seek to strengthen the Convention by supporting countries that lacked strong regulatory frameworks, supporting customs and surveillance authorities and implementing demand reduction strategies.

95. Following the discussion the Conference of the Parties decided that Gabon, together with other delegations of the Africa region, should discuss the proposed amendments to the draft decision with the parties that had made suggestions to revise the draft decision with the aim of presenting an agreed draft decision for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

96. Subsequently, the President drew attention to a revised draft decision submitted by the small group convened to discuss the matter, which the Conference of the Parties then adopted.

97. Decision MC-6/4, on advancing work related to mercury-added cosmetics, is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

3. Consideration of the feasibility of mercury-free alternatives for manufacturing vinyl chloride monomer (item 4 (b) (iii) of the agenda)

98. The representative of the secretariat recalled that, in accordance with part II of annex B to the Convention, parties were not to allow the use of mercury in the production of vinyl chloride monomer (VCM) for more than five years after the Conference of the Parties had established that mercury-free catalysts for VCM production based on existing processes had become technically and economically feasible. He also recalled that by its decision MC-5/6 the Conference of the Parties had requested the secretariat to prepare for its consideration at the current meeting a report on the technical and economic feasibility of mercury-free catalysts used to produce VCM. That report was before the

Conference of the Parties in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/6/Add.1, along with information on the issue provided by parties and stakeholders in accordance with decision MC-5/6 (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/9).

99. In addition, the President drew attention to a draft decision on the feasibility of mercury-free alternatives for manufacturing vinyl chloride monomer submitted by the European Union and its member States, Norway and the United States of America in a conference room paper.

100. In the ensuing discussion several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, emphasized the importance of phasing out mercury with a view to minimizing harm from hazardous substances and protecting human health and the environment. They said that doing so would represent a significant step towards achieving the objectives of the Convention. A number of representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of parties, said that mercury-free catalysts had become technically and economically feasible at the global level. Many therefore expressed support for phasing out the use of mercury in VCM production and for the draft decision under consideration. One representative drew attention to the part of the report of the secretariat stating that mercury-free alternatives existed for both ethylene- and acetylene-based processes. However, one representative expressed significant doubts over the technical and economic feasibility of mercury-free VCM production facilities, saying that the complete replacement of mercury posed potential unknown environmental risks and required further scrutiny. Another representative suggested that questions remained about the technical and economic feasibility of mercury-free alternatives, saying that the conference room paper providing that such feasibility had been established required further deliberation.

101. Some representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of parties, said that VCM production represented one of the most significant remaining industrial uses of mercury, with one saying that it played a significant role in the continuing use of mercury. A number of representatives expressed firm commitment to advancing towards mercury-free industries and working with all parties to achieve the objectives of the Convention. A number of representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, expressed the desire to discuss the matter further in a contact group.

102. One representative of an observer organization said that phasing out mercury use in production processes would produce major global benefits, notably in China, which had the potential to make use of viable mercury-free alternatives. To further support the transition away from mercury use, Governments could provide incentives and technical assistance to the relevant sectors. Moreover, the Conference of the Parties should affirm the feasibility of mercury-free alternatives for the VCM sector and commence the phase-out period. Another representative of an observer organization said that mercury-free alternatives for acetylene-based production processes already existed and that most countries used ethylene-based processes, adding that it was important to close primary mercury mines in order to halt the addition of new mercury to the environment and limit opportunities for illegal mercury trade for artisanal and small-scale gold mining.

103. Following the discussion the Conference of the Parties decided to give the contact group on technical matters an additional mandate related to VCM production: to conclude on whether mercury-free catalysts based on existing processes had become technically and economically feasible, taking into account the information contained in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/9; and to develop a draft decision to be considered by the Conference of the Parties, taking into account the conference room paper submitted by the European Union and its member States, Norway and the United States.

104. Subsequently the President drew attention to a draft decision submitted by the contact group on technical matters, which the Conference of the Parties then adopted.

105. Decision MC-6/5, on consideration of the feasibility of mercury-free alternatives for manufacturing vinyl chloride monomer, is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

4. Extensions for exemptions (item 4 (b) (iv) of the agenda)

106. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat said that the Conference of the Parties had before it two requests to extend exemptions submitted pursuant to paragraph 6 of article 6 of the Convention and one conference room paper on the same subject: a request from Thailand, received on 25 July 2025 (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/42); a request from Bangladesh, received on 15 September 2025 (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/44); and a conference room paper from India, which had been received on 3 November 2025. Information relevant to the consideration of extension requests had been collated in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/45, and a note by the secretariat on the extension of exemptions was contained in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/6/Add.3.

107. The representative of Bangladesh said that her country was requesting a five-year extension of the exemptions for six of the nine mercury-added products as listed in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/44. It wished to withdraw its request in respect of compact fluorescent lamps, linear fluorescent lamps and cosmetics, as recent data showed that all mercury-added products in those categories had been removed from the market. Outlining the progress achieved domestically to date in implementing the Convention, together with outstanding challenges, she said that her country's request was motivated by a lack of information on certain products and a lack of cost-effective alternatives for others. The country had hoped to gather further information about the presence of mercury added products in the country through a survey to be carried out with funding by the Specific International Programme, but the related project had not been approved.

108. The representative of Thailand said that his country was requesting a five-year extension to exemptions for six mercury-added products so as to ensure that their phase-out was both technically and economically feasible.

109. The representative of India said that his country was requesting a five-year extension to exemptions for five of the six mercury-added products listed in the conference room paper: batteries; switches and relays; high-pressure mercury vapour lamps; topical antiseptics; and certain non-electronic measuring devices. It wished to withdraw its request in respect of linear fluorescent lamps. Regarding batteries, the Conference of the Parties should agree on a threshold for permissible unintentional trace quantities of mercury. High-pressure mercury vapour lamps were used in cold and remote areas of the country and were more cost-effective and reliable than alternative products. Domestic legislation provided for extended producer responsibility, including an obligation to recycle such lamps at the end of their life. Mercury-added switches and relays continued to be used in various essential applications. Mercury-free alternatives to non-electronic measuring devices had been introduced but had yet to penetrate fully in rural areas, where supply chain and affordability issues persisted. Lastly, more time was needed to phase out mercury-added topical antiseptics, which were widely used in remote parts of the country as inexpensive and proven means of treating injuries.

110. In the ensuing discussion several representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of parties, expressed reservations about the extension requests, with some saying that affordable mercury-free alternatives were available for the products in question. Two representatives, one speaking behalf of a group of parties, said that exemptions and extensions thereto undermined the implementation of the Convention. One representative said that the information provided by Bangladesh and India in support of their request was limited, that the scope of the requests was broad and that India's request had been submitted only during the current meeting. Moreover, parties to the Convention were expected to be able to implement its provisions irrespective of the availability of external resources.

111. Some representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, called for the Implementation and Compliance Committee to be involved in addressing the extension requests. One of them said that the Committee was well placed to support Parties in meeting their obligations under the Convention and that it paid particular attention to national capacities and circumstances. The Committee had recently dealt with a similar case to support compliance. Another, however, said that the consideration of exemption and extension requests was beyond the scope of the Committee's terms of reference.

112. Some representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of parties, called for clear procedures and guidelines for, or a common understanding on, dealing with future exemption and extension requests in accordance with the criteria laid down in paragraph 6 of article 6 of the Convention.

113. Two representatives said that it was necessary to support parties in meeting their obligations under the Convention, including through capacity-building, while another said that in view of the 2025 phase-out deadlines it was important for the Conference of the Parties to reach decisions on the requests before it.

114. One representative described her country's efforts to phase out mercury-added products in clinical settings and called for strengthened international cooperation, especially through technology transfer and capacity-building for developing countries to facilitate the repurposing of industrial sites and ensure an effective transition to mercury-free alternatives.

115. One representative of an observer organization said that the extension requests had to be considered particularly carefully because the decision on the matter would constitute a precedent. Saying that mercury-free alternatives for the products in question were available, he argued that unintentional trace quantities of mercury in batteries were not covered by the Convention and that,

since the requests appeared to be motivated largely by delays in enacting applicable national laws and regulations, they should perhaps be referred to the Implementation and Compliance Committee.

116. Another representative of an observer organization said that parties had ample time to prepare for the phase-out and eventual elimination of mercury-added products in accordance with the Convention. It was therefore disappointing that States had submitted extension requests and that some were still using exemptions to import and export mercury. Parties that had requested exemptions should be required to provide information on the source of any mercury imported or used in exempted sectors, on registered importers and exporters of mercury, on steps taken to guarantee the safe interim storage of elemental mercury and on the processes in place to control emissions and releases from the manufacturing sector.

117. Following the discussion the Conference of the Parties established a group of friends of the President, composed of two representatives per region and facilitated by Eva Šalplachtová (Czechia). The group was mandated to develop a draft review process setting out the time frame and requirements for submitting requests for the extension of exemptions from the phase-out dates listed in annexes A and B pursuant to paragraph 6 of article 6 of the Convention, and to prepare a draft decision on the matter for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

118. With regard to the requests for extension of exemptions by Bangladesh, India and Thailand, the President invited those parties to hold informal consultations with the parties that had expressed reservations about their requests with a view to achieving consensus at the current meeting.

119. Subsequently, the representative of Bangladesh announced that her country was withdrawing its request in respect of mercury in cold cathode fluorescent lamps, external electrode fluorescent lamps for electronic displays and non-electronic measuring devices, as well as its request with regard to manufacturing and export. Its request therefore concerned only the import of four product categories: batteries; switches and relays; high-pressure mercury vapour lamps; and pesticides, biocides and topical antiseptics. She noted that, since the Convention had entered into force for Bangladesh only two years earlier, on 17 July 2023, the country had not had sufficient time to guarantee the phase-out of the products in question.

120. At a subsequent session it was announced that the President would facilitate further informal discussions among the interested parties in an effort to reach agreement. He invited each region, through their respective Bureau members, to nominate three delegates to participate in those consultations.

121. Subsequently, the President drew attention to a draft decision submitted by Bangladesh, India and Thailand, which the Conference of the Parties then adopted.

122. Decision MC-6/7, on extensions of exemptions, is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

123. The President also drew attention to a draft decision prepared by the friends of the President group, which the Conference of the Parties then adopted.

124. Decision MC-6/6, on a timeline for considering requests by Parties for extensions of exemptions, is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

C. Artisanal and small-scale gold mining (item 4 (c) of the agenda)

125. The representative of the secretariat drew attention to document UNEP/MC/COP.6/7, which provided an update on the status of implementation of decision MC-5/7, including a draft decision on the matter. An addendum to the document (UNEP/MC/COP.6/7/Add.1) presented draft sections on the review of the implementation of article 7 to be added to the guidance on developing a national action plan to reduce and, where feasible, eliminate mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining. In addition, document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/11 contained a draft provisional guide on the effective engagement and participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the development, implementation and review of artisanal and small-scale gold mining national action plans, developed by the secretariat with financial support from Australia and Norway in response to paragraph 7 of decision MC-5/7.

126. The President drew attention to a draft decision on artisanal and small-scale gold mining set out in a conference room paper submitted by Brazil. Introducing it, the representative of Brazil outlined various activities that Brazil had carried out in developing its national action plan for the artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector and actions it had taken to combat illegal gold mining, strengthen the traceability of gold and protect indigenous territories from mercury contamination and illegal mining. He also drew attention to the recent sharp increase in the price of gold, saying that it

had intensified economic pressure spurring informal and illegal mining and heightened mercury use and trafficking. Given that context, and in the light of its experience, Brazil proposed a number of amendments to the draft decision in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/7 intended to enhance traceability, the accountability of buyers and intermediaries and support for a just transition for families that depended on artisanal and small-scale gold mining; it also called for GEF financing to support the implementation of national action plans, in accordance with decision MC-5/7.

127. During the ensuing discussion the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes made a statement, saying that as part of a special procedure of the Human Rights Council he had continued to monitor and report on the adverse impacts and sacrifice zones generated by small-scale gold mining. The use of mercury in small-scale gold mining posed a constant threat to the physical integrity of Indigenous Peoples, riverine communities and miners living in poverty. Within the scope of his mandate, he had highlighted the adverse impacts of mercury during official visits, in his interventions in judicial proceedings and in his reports to the General Assembly on the impact of toxic substances on the human rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/77/183) and gender and hazardous substances (A/79/163). He had also sent communications to Member States highlighting a lack of due diligence in the traceability of their imported gold. Stressing that gold associated with the use of mercury and by extension with human rights violations should not enter international markets, he encouraged parties to consider amending Article 2 of the Convention with a view to ending human rights violations associated with the use of mercury in gold mining and ensuring the full effectiveness of the Convention.

128. Many representatives, including several speaking on behalf of groups of parties, thanked Brazil for its submission. While some supported the proposal, most, including those speaking on behalf of groups of parties, suggested that it would benefit from additional refinement. Several, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, indicated a desire to discuss the matter further in a contact group.

129. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, also welcomed the new draft section on national action plan reviews to be added to the guidance document and the provisional guide on the effective engagement and participation of Indigenous Peoples and of local communities in national action plan development, implementation and review.

130. A number of representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, said that it was important to address the use of mercury in artisanal and small-scale gold mining, with several, including the one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, noting that the sector was the largest source of global mercury emissions. Several others said that mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining was a socio-economic issue as well as an environmental problem, with one characterizing it as a human rights crisis. One, noting that artisanal and small-scale gold mining was most prevalent in developing countries, which thus bore a disproportionate burden of addressing the environmental, social and economic consequences of mercury use while also often facing significant constraints in capacity, technology and resources, said that strengthened international cooperation, technical assistance and financial support would be essential for an effective transition to mercury-free gold mining.

131. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, underscored the need to combat illegal trade in mercury, including one who pointed out that online sales platforms were exacerbating the problem. The representative speaking on behalf of a group of parties said that it would be important to strengthen cooperation among the Parties and with intergovernmental organizations and other relevant entities to achieve the objectives of Article 7, suggesting that, in addition to reporting on actions to prevent the diversion of mercury for use in the sector, the review of progress in complying with Article 7 of the Minamata Convention should encourage increased research on the illegal trade in mercury.

132. Some of those who spoke took the opportunity to describe their countries' efforts to reduce or eliminate mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining, including several who reported that they had submitted or were in the process of developing national action plans.

133. Echoing representatives' concerns regarding illegal trade, several observer representatives called on parties to close loopholes in the Convention that enabled such trade by removing artisanal and small-scale gold mining from the list of allowed uses. One urged the Conference of the Parties to establish a phase-out date of not later than 2032 and to consider appropriate amendments to the Convention, covering Articles 2, 7 and 12 and Annex C, at its seventh meeting. Similarly, another observer called on the Conference of the Parties to establish an intersessional open-ended expert group to make recommendations on accelerating the closure of primary mercury mines, eliminating

loopholes in the Convention that benefited traffickers and illegal gold miners, improving reporting on mercury trade and identifying the enforcement measures needed to eliminate the illegal production, trade and use of mercury in artisanal and small-scale gold mining. One observer said that there was a need for oversight and traceability of mining inputs to curb illegal mining, along with stronger mercury monitoring and stricter compliance enforcement.

134. Several observer representatives called on parties to accelerate their submission of national action plans, with one also urging them to engage Indigenous Peoples, children, young people and other rightsholder and stakeholder groups in their national action plan development. Another drew attention to women's significant presence in the sector and requested the Conference of the Parties to consider including, in its decision on the matter, a reference to decision MC-5/15, in which it had welcomed the gender action plan of the Convention. She also called for the incorporation of gender into national action plans and reports on progress made in implementing Article 7.

135. The Conference of the Parties decided to establish a contact group on artisanal and small-scale gold mining with the mandate to further develop the draft decision set out in the conference room paper submitted by Brazil, taking into account the discussion in plenary. The contact group would be co-chaired by Mr. Christian and Ms. Burgess.

136. Subsequently, the President drew attention to a draft decision submitted by the contact group, which the Conference of the Parties then adopted.

137. Decision MC-6/8, entitled "Artisanal and small-scale gold mining: review of the implementation of article 7", is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

D. Mercury waste (item 4 (d) of the agenda)

138. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat highlighted document UNEP/MC/COP.6/8, which contained information submitted as part of the previous three national reports pursuant to Article 21, on facilities for the final disposal of waste consisting of mercury and mercury compounds. He said that the Implementation and Compliance Committee had reviewed the information and encouraged parties to further elaborate, as appropriate, on final disposal methods in their second full national reports, to be submitted by 31 December 2025. He recalled that decision MC-5/10 had established the threshold for waste contaminated with mercury and mercury compounds and decided to review the mercury waste threshold at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Moreover, the decision had invited parties to submit information regarding waste management regulations and programmes, which under paragraph 3 of article 11 were to be considered in establishing requirements for the environmentally sound management of mercury waste. In that regard he drew attention to document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/12, which contained a compilation of submissions by eight parties. He also noted that the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal at its seventeenth session had decided to update the guidelines on the environmentally sound management of mercury wastes in order to reflect the establishment of a mercury waste threshold by decision MC-5/10.

139. The Conference of the Parties at the current meeting was to consider the development of requirements for the environmentally sound management of mercury waste pursuant to paragraph 3 (a) of Article 11 of the Convention; a process for preparing for the review of mercury waste thresholds pursuant to paragraphs 5 and 8 of decision MC-5/10; and actions in response to the decision of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention to update the technical guidelines under that convention.

140. The President drew attention to a draft decision on mercury waste, submitted by Japan, Australia and Norway in a conference room paper.

141. One of the co-sponsors of the conference room paper said that maintaining momentum through the development of specific requirements for the proper management of mercury waste was key, as mandated in subparagraph 3 (a) of article 11. The draft decision proposed that the Conference of the Parties invite parties to submit proposals for those requirements, taking into account their waste management regulations and programmes, which could be considered at a later date by the Conference of the Parties for inclusion in an additional annex to the Convention. The draft decision also set out a process for following up on previous decisions of the Conference of the Parties by inviting submissions on the information on complementary items.

142. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that mercury waste was managed in an environmentally sound manner in line with Article 11 of the Convention, including through implementation of the threshold for waste contaminated with mercury adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting. A number of representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of parties, expressed support for the proposals set out in the conference room paper, including on the development of specific requirements for the proper management of mercury waste. One, however, said that the development of additional requirements was not required under the Convention and no Party had expressed a need for it, adding that if the parties nonetheless agreed to such additional requirements they would need to be presented in the form of an additional annex.

143. Some representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, said that any review of mercury waste thresholds must be conducted on the basis of updated scientific evidence, taking into account the need for capacity-building, technology transfer, regional cooperation mechanisms and predictable financial support for developing countries, including small island developing States. In addition, waste threshold limits should not be detrimental to developing countries, and the vulnerabilities of ecosystems in relation to mercury production should be taken into account. One representative said that more time was needed before undertaking the identification of challenges related to waste thresholds because parties still had limited experience in that area.

144. Many representatives said that capacity-building to enable the detection and management of mercury waste was necessary, notably for developing countries and countries with economies in transition. One representative said that developing countries faced a particular challenge in managing mercury waste in an environmentally sound manner. One representative said that international cooperation, including on technical transfer and capacity-building, was necessary to ensure that waste containing mercury was handled appropriately. In that vein, one representative said that the secretariat should also facilitate information exchange between parties. National reports should contain detailed information on the implementation of Article 11, to enhance understanding of progress made and strengthen implementation of the Convention as a whole. In that connection, one representative encouraged all parties to continue to provide robust information through reporting in order to facilitate evidence-based decision-making and knowledge-sharing on mercury waste management.

145. Some representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, welcomed the call for intersessional work, notably the collection of data related to regulations on thresholds, saying that reports should be prepared for the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties. In that connection, one representative said that it was important to determine whether mercury waste fell under subparagraph 2 (c) of article 11 of the Convention and to reiterate the agreements reached at the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties with a view to ensuring adequate preparation for the seventh meeting.

146. Several representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of parties, called for cooperation with the Basel Convention with a view to updating, strengthening and harmonizing technical guidelines on environmentally sound waste management. In that connection, one representative said that requirements for the sound management of mercury waste should complement but not duplicate those under the Basel Convention. One representative said that there were benefits of collaboration not only with the Basel Convention secretariat but also with the secretariats of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

147. Many representatives called for further discussions on the draft decision in a contact group or informal group.

148. One representative asked the secretariat to provide details on the information provided by parties regarding approaches they were using as alternatives to the mercury waste threshold in paragraph 1 of decision MC-5/10, as provided for in paragraph 2 of that decision, and about their public registers of waste management measures called for in paragraph 4 of the decision. Another representative said it was necessary to ensure the availability of such public registers, which should be reflected in the text of any draft decision.

149. The representative of WHO noted with appreciation the growing momentum among parties on the safe management and disposal of mercury waste, in line with the Convention. The opportunity to highlight relevant global guidance to support the phase-out of mercury-based medical devices and global efforts to strengthen global health care waste systems was welcome, as were the key lessons from the Global Environment Facility on phasing out mercury-based medical measuring devices. WHO worked to strengthen health care waste management in multiple countries by establishing evidence-based standards and regulations, regular monitoring and capacity-building for health-care

workers. Global data released in 2025 by WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund indicated that most countries had updated their waste standards. Such data were encouraging and signalled support for the commitments made by countries in relevant General Assembly and WHO resolutions. WHO remained committed to supporting countries in their collective efforts to achieve the environmentally sound disposal of mercury waste. The Convention provided a platform for action, and WHO commended all those involved in working to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury.

150. A representative of an observer organization expressed disappointment that in decision MC-5/10 the Conference of the Parties had allowed parties to set their own mercury concentration thresholds, rather than require the use of the threshold set out in paragraph 1 of the decision, for the purpose of determining whether a given waste was a mercury waste. The draft decision before the Conference of the Parties represented an opportunity to rectify that problematic provision. Another representative of an observer organization welcomed the recognition of the need for the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples, as well as of the serious impacts of mercury on current and future generations and on the environment. She called on parties not only to implement their commitments under the Convention, but also to uphold the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Meanwhile, another representative of an observer organization called for funding and investment in waste management to be prioritized.

151. Responding to the question related to the presentation of information on alternative approaches to the use of the threshold in paragraph 1 of decision MC-5/10 and public registers, a representative of the secretariat said that parties had been invited to submit such information pursuant to decision MC-5/10 but none had yet done so, although other submissions related to decision MC-5/10 included some information on definition of hazardous and other wastes. The inquiring representative said that her Government had provided such information, and she encouraged other parties to do the same.[2]

152. Following the discussion the Conference of the Parties decided that Japan, together with the parties that had made suggestions to revise the draft decision and other interested parties, should revise the draft decision with the aim of presenting an agreed draft decision for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

153. Subsequently, the President drew attention to a draft decision submitted by Japan and other interested parties, which the Conference of the Parties then adopted as orally amended.

154. Decision MC-6/9, on advancing work related to mercury waste, is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

E. Financial resources and mechanism (item 4 (e) of the agenda)

155. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat recalled that for each meeting of the Conference of the Parties the secretariat prepared a report on each of the two components of the financial mechanism of the Convention: the Global Environment Facility and the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance.

1. Global Environment Facility (item 4 (e) (i) of the agenda)

156. The representative of the secretariat drew attention to an update by the secretariat on matters related to GEF (UNEP/MC/COP.6/10) and the executive summary of the GEF Council's report to the Conference of the Parties for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2025 (UNEP/MC/COP.6/10/Add.1, annex). The full report of the GEF Council was set out in the annex to document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/13, and a report on the ninth replenishment of the GEF trust fund in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/14. A draft decision on the financial mechanism and related matters, including GEF, was set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/9.

157. The representative of GEF presented the GEF Council's report to the Conference of the Parties. Of the $269 million allocated to provide support for the Minamata Convention during the eighth replenishment period of the GEF trust fund, $155.5 million had already been allocated to a range of projects, programmes and enabling activities that were expected together to result in a reduction in mercury of 911 metric tons, leveraging $13 in co-financing for every $1 from GEF. In addition to outlining the co-benefits to communities and ecosystems of the support provided under GEF, she underscored the commitment of GEF to embedding gender equality in project design and

[2] During the adoption of the present report, on the final day of the meeting, it was acknowledged that the representative of the secretariat had informed the inquiring representative that its Government's submission on decision MC-5/10 did include information on "issues and challenges of the adopted threshold".

delivery and to meaningful engagement with Indigenous Peoples and young people. She also described how GEF continued to respond to the guidance received from the Conference of the Parties and to cooperate with the secretariat, including with regard to the process for the ninth replenishment of the GEF trust fund, which was due to be completed in early 2026.

2. Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance (item 4 (e) (ii) of the agenda)

158. The representative of the secretariat drew attention to a report by the secretariat on the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance, including activity under the programme since the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the implementation of projects funded under the programme and the status of the specific programme trust fund (UNEP/MC/COP.6/11); the reports of the ninth and tenth meetings of the programme's governing board (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/15); a draft analysis, prepared by the secretariat pursuant to decision MC-5/11, of expected funding and staffing needs for the second half of the programme's current term and for a possible extension of the programme as contemplated by the Conference of the Parties in its decision MC-1/6 (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/40); and the draft decision in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/9. Noting that the programme had resulted in 34 approved projects across its four application rounds, the representative of the secretariat reiterated the thanks expressed by the Executive Secretary during the opening of the meeting to all the donors to the Specific International Programme trust fund for their generous financial support.

159. One of the co-chairs of the Specific International Programme's governing board expressed thanks to his fellow board members for their careful consideration of the many high-quality projects for which board funding had been sought, in particular during the fourth round of funding applications; to the secretariat for so effectively facilitating the board's work; and to the Specific International Programme trust fund donors and those countries implementing programme-funded projects for advancing the implementation of the Convention. Saying that the programme was doing excellent work in support of the Convention, he urged parties and others to visit the programme webpage on the website of the Convention, where they could find detailed information about the projects being funded that illuminated the programme's outsized impact.

3. Review of the financial mechanism (item 4 (e) (iii) of the agenda)

160. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat recalled that article 13 of the Convention required the Conference of the Parties to regularly review the Convention's financial mechanism with regard to its level of funding, guidance, effectiveness and ability to address the changing needs of developing country parties and parties with economies in transition. The Conference of the Parties had conducted such reviews at its third and fifth meetings and had before it at the current meeting draft terms of reference for a third review, along with a draft decision on the matter (UNEP/MC/COP.6/12).

161. She also drew attention to documents providing additional relevant information related, namely, notes from the secretariat on activities of the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the Global Framework on Chemicals (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/16); an update on the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/17); and a compilation of obligations and deadlines under the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the extent to which parties were complying with them (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/39). Finally, she noted that the European Union and its member States, Brazil, Norway and Switzerland had submitted a conference room paper containing a revised version of the draft decision on the financial mechanism in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/12.

4. Discussion of agenda items 4 (e) (i), (ii) and (iii)

162. The co-sponsors of the conference room paper said that it suggested amendments to the draft decision on the financial mechanism that were intended to streamline it without prejudging the outcome of the ninth replenishment of the GEF trust fund or the decision on the Specific International Programme that the Conference of the Parties was expected to consider at its seventh meeting. The amendments were also intended to preserve the core elements of decision MC-1/5, on providing guidance to GEF, and build upon decision MC-5/1, on the effects of mercury pollution on Indigenous Peoples and on local communities, by adding the update of the Minamata initial assessments and the monitoring of human exposure to mercury and environmental concentrations of mercury to the list of activities for implementing the provisions of the Convention.

163. In the ensuing discussion, a number of representatives expressed overall support for the amended draft decision contained in the conference room paper. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, expressed support in particular for the addition of the reference to the update on Minamata Convention initial assessments, saying that it would support developing countries and countries with economies in transition in further identifying mercury stocks and sources, as well as emissions and releases, thereby enabling the effective implementation of the Convention. A number of representatives requested that the order of the list of vulnerable groups in the original draft decision be retained, in order to reflect the disproportionate burden of the effects of mercury pollution borne by Indigenous Peoples. One representative said that it was critical for the decision to provide specific guidelines for the financial mechanism, in particular GEF, and that GEF should take into account the deadlines established under the Convention, especially with regard to the elimination of mercury-containing products. Another representative expressed the view that the reference to GEF programming direction and resource allocation should refer only to chemicals and wastes, and not biodiversity or climate change.

164. Many representatives, including a number speaking on behalf of groups of parties, underlined the central and critical role of GEF and the Specific International Programme as the financial mechanism for the Convention and thanked donors for their support of them. Several representatives, including a number speaking on behalf of groups of parties, encouraged those parties in a position to do so to contribute to the Specific International Programme trust fund. Some representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, recalled that developing countries and countries with economies in transition faced complex technical challenges and required adequate and predictable sources of funding as well as technology transfer and capacity-building. One representative speaking on behalf of a group of parties encouraged the secretariat to continue its cooperation on the financial mechanism with the GEF Council, in particular with regard to the ninth replenishment. Another representative noted that in the report of GEF (document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/13) an analysis of national reports had concluded that a significant funding gap was affecting the ability of developing countries to implement the Convention fully. One representative warmly welcomed the support given to his country under the Specific International Programme but said that GEF had taken a discriminatory approach to his country's project proposals, which had not been included on the agenda of the GEF Council for consideration.

165. Several representatives, including a number speaking on behalf of groups of parties, expressed the view that the Conference of the Parties should decide on the extension of the Specific International Programme at its seventh meeting, especially as the results of the third review of the financial mechanism were due to be considered at that meeting and could contribute to a well-founded decision on the matter. One representative, however, said that a decision to extend the programme, as had been suggested in previous decisions of the Conference of the Parties, should be adopted as soon as possible to allow parties to better plan future projects under the programme. A number of representatives, noting the importance of the programme for their own countries and many others, called for the programme's application process to be simplified. In addition, one representative said that the Conference of the Parties should consider the circumstances of small island developing States in relation to the programme at its seventh meeting.

166. One representative suggested the development of a mechanism that would enable parties to share information and best practices, and another said that many developing countries required support for the phase-down and phase-out of dental amalgam in particular, suggesting the establishment of a global programme on dental amalgam. One representative said that it was important to work closely with the Global Framework on Chemicals - for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste to avoid duplication of work and to strengthen the impact of both instruments. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, said that there was a need for more support for developing countries, in particular with regard to data collection and monitoring, in order to improve technical knowledge at the national level. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, encouraged GEF to include information on efforts regarding effective management and the participation of Indigenous Peoples, women, young people and local communities in its reporting. One representative also said that information on mercury reduction and avoidance was important.

167. A number of representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, referred to the support that their countries had received under the financial mechanism for specific projects at the national and regional levels and the success of those projects.

168. Following the discussion the Conference of the Parties decided that a small group of interested parties would meet to discuss the draft decision on the financial mechanism, taking into account the amended draft decision contained in the conference room paper and the proposals made during the

discussion on the sub-item. A representative from one of the co-sponsors of the conference room paper would report to the President on the discussions of the small group.

169. Regarding the draft terms of reference for the third review of the financial mechanism, the President noted that was general support for adopting the draft decision and the terms of reference for the third review of the financial mechanism set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/12, which the Conference of the Parties then adopted.

170. Decision MC-6/11, on the third review of the financial mechanism, is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

171. Subsequently, the representative of Brazil introduced a revised draft decision on the financial mechanism, submitted by the small group convened to discuss the financial mechanism decision, which the Conference of the Parties then adopted.

172. Decision MC-6/10, on the financial mechanism, is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

F. Capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer (item 4 (f) of the agenda)

173. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to document UNEP/MC/COP.6/13, which provided an overview of the key insights from the desk study on alternative technologies and related challenges and needs of parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury, including relevant case studies. It also described work done on training and information material and other capacity-building and technical assistance efforts, as well as the work proposed for the biennium 2026–2027. A draft decision on the matter was set out the annex to the document. The full desk study report was set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/18 and a report on the activities carried out from January 2024 to January 2025 within the Global Mercury Partnership was available in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/33. Thanks were due to the European Union, Switzerland and Japan for their support in relation to activities on capacity-building and technical assistance.

174. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, thanked the secretariat for its ongoing work on capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer, and several, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, also voiced appreciation for the desk study. A few spoke briefly about activities they had participated in or benefited from.

175. A number of representatives said that capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer were essential for the effective implementation of the Convention. Several representatives emphasized that adequate funding was also crucial in enabling developing countries to meet their obligations under the Convention.

176. Many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, identified the specific capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer needs of their countries and regions. A representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries reported that his region was hampered by limited technical capacity, inadequate monitoring infrastructure and weak border enforcement. Priority areas therefore included specialized training for customs and port officials and regional mercury monitoring laboratories equipped with analytical technology. Technology transfer to support mercury-free artisanal and small-scale gold mining was also essential, with regional demonstration sites to showcase alternatives. He recommended that support from partners focus on establishing shared training hubs, laboratory networks and a digital trade tracking system.

177. Several other representatives also said that there was a need for laboratory analytical capacity, mercury-free mining technologies, waste management, customs processes and monitoring systems, and parties also required assistance in developing inventories.

178. One representative stressed the need for consistent, needs-based, gender-responsive capacity-building, particularly for women, young people, Indigenous Peoples, host communities and relevant government institutions, focused on the manufacture, repair and maintenance of alternative technologies, as well as technical assistance to support compliance with environmental and social governance principles. She also called for a convention-wide survey to identify specific technological needs, barriers and opportunities across parties.

179. A number of representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, expressed general support for the draft decision in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/13, although several proposed minor additions or changes to the wording.

180. The Conference of the Parties then adopted the draft decision as orally amended.

181. Decision MC-6/12, on implementation of article 14 of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, on capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer, is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP./6/25/Add.1).

G. Implementation and Compliance Committee (item 4 (g) of the agenda)

182. Introducing the item, the President recalled that the Implementation and Compliance Committee examined both individual and systemic issues related to implementation and compliance and could make recommendations, as appropriate, to the Conference of the Parties. The parties had before them notes by the secretariat on the report on the work of the committee, including recommendations (UNEP/MC/COP.6/14); and on the reports of the sixth and seventh meetings of the committee (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/19).

183. Ms. Šalplachtová, acting chair of the committee, introduced Kuzumila Ngunila, who had served as rapporteur for the two meetings of the committee held since the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Mr. Ngunila reported on the work of the committee during that period.

184. Mr. Ngunila said that the Committee had met twice, once online and once in person. He thanked Anik Beaudoin (Canada), who had presided over both meetings. The Committee had considered a written submission from Mexico with respect to its compliance with paragraph 2 of article 5 and part I of annex B to the Convention. In its submission, Mexico had reported that, despite ongoing efforts, it was unable to meet its phase-out obligations to eliminate mercury use in the chlor-alkali sector. At the Committee's sixth meeting Mexico had presented its submission, the Committee had adopted decision ICC-6/1, inviting Mexico to develop a strategy for achieving compliance with its obligations. Mexico had submitted its strategy on 2 January 2025 and had presented it during the Committee's seventh meeting, at which the Committee had adopted decision ICC-7/1, recommending that Mexico implement the strategy to achieve compliance by 2028 and keeping the matter under review.

185. At its sixth and seventh meetings the Committee had also considered issues of implementation and compliance on the basis of the second short national reports submitted by parties pursuant to article 21 of the Convention for the reporting period from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2022. Having discussed a report on national reporting prepared by the secretariat (UNEP/MC/ICC.7/4), the Committee had agreed on a set of conclusions and a recommendation, which were contained in annex II to document UNEP/MC/ICC.7/7. The recommendation, which concerned primary mercury mining, was also set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/5.

186. The representative of Mexico thanked the Committee for the support and guidance provided to her country, which was sparing no effort in seeking to phase out mercury use in the chlor-alkali sector.

187. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of parties, expressed appreciation to the Committee for its report and the conclusions and recommendation listed in the annex thereto. One representative, who spoke on behalf of a group of parties, highlighted the central role played by the Committee in the implementation of the Convention, while another thanked the secretariat for its continued support to parties in meeting their reporting obligations. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of parties, said that effective national reporting was crucial in enabling targeted technical assistance and facilitating gap analyses.

188. One representative highlighted persistent national challenges such as trade data gaps, online mercury sales, illegal cinnabar mining, limited monitoring and a need for better management of confiscated mercury. He called for greater regional and international cooperation and sharing of experiences. Another said that the Committee's work helped to build trust among parties by promoting transparency and dialogue in pursuit of realistic solutions, while a third emphasized the importance of data in evaluating effectiveness and called for enhanced financial and technical support to strengthen national monitoring systems, the provision of training by the regional centres of the Basel and Stockholm conventions and transparent, accessible data-sharing platforms.

189. The Conference of the Parties took note of the report on the work of the committee set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/14, including the conclusions and recommendation of the committee in the annex thereto.

H. National reporting (item 4 (h) of the agenda)

190. Introducing the-sub-item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to the note by the secretariat on national reporting under article 21 of the Convention (UNEP/MC/COP.6/15), which contained the periodic report of the secretariat, based on information received pursuant to articles 15

and 21 of the Convention, prepared pursuant to paragraph (e) of article 24 of the Convention; an outline of the intersessional work conducted on the online reporting tool and reporting guidance for supporting parties in national reporting; the arrangements necessary for reporting on the results of the secretariat's analysis of the second full national reports before the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties; and a draft decision.

191. He also drew attention to a note by the secretariat containing its report on the second short national reports under article 21 of the Convention (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/20), which reflected the situation as at 31 May 2025, saying that all national reports that had been submitted and were considered by the secretariat to be complete were available on the Convention website. The note by the secretariat containing updated guidance for completing the national reporting format (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/20) reflected the amendments to the reporting format adopted in decision MC-5/13.

192. The President welcomed the high reporting rate of 86 per cent that had been achieved by parties for the second short reports as at 31 May 2025. He also invited the Conference of the Parties to consider the report on the work of the Implementation and Compliance Committee (UNEP/MC/COP.6/14), including the recommendations therein, when considering the draft decision on the current agenda item.

193. In the ensuing discussion many representatives, including a number speaking on behalf of groups of parties, expressed appreciation for the efforts of the secretariat in assisting parties in fulfilling their reporting obligations, including through the innovative use of the online reporting platform. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of parties, also welcomed the proposal of the secretariat to improve the reporting platform by ensuring language accessibility and by collecting examples of best practices in reporting on informal or illegal mercury activities. One representative, however, requested that amendments to the guidance for completing national reports be made available for review and comment by parties before being implemented and said that she would submit to the secretariat in writing proposed changes to the most recent amendments.

194. Several representatives, including a number speaking on behalf of groups of parties, welcomed the high reporting rate among parties, reflecting their strong commitment to the Convention. One representative encouraged all parties to submit their second full reports on time.

195. One representative speaking on behalf of a group of parties said that, in meeting the deadline of 31 December 2025 for the second full national reports, parties faced challenges with regard to technical capacity, data collection tools and financial resources. He called for support in that regard. Another representative requested targeted support from GEF for national reporting under the Convention, saying that it already provided such support in relation to other multilateral environmental agreements.

196. One representative noted with concern that parties were using outdated information for national reporting on mercury stocks. She expressed the view that the limited funding available under the Convention should be directed to those parties where significant stocks and supply issues had been identified through their national reporting or those parties whose national reporting identified them as destinations of concern for mercury from former formal or informal primary mercury mining or trade. She also proposed minor amendments to the draft decision in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/15, which she would submit in writing to the secretariat.

197. One representative speaking on behalf of a group of parties emphasized the importance of the analysis of the second round of national reporting being available for consideration at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties. She also proposed some amendments to the draft decision in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/15.

198. With regard to the reporting requirements for dental amalgam, one representative speaking on behalf of a group of parties said that the relevant amendment had entered into force on 25 April 2024, towards the end of the reporting period for the second full national reports. Parties should be given the option to submit their first national action plans on dental amalgam and cosmetics either together with their second full national reports by 31 December 2025 or with their third short national reports by 31 December 2027. He also requested that the secretariat develop guidance on preparing national action plans for phasing out dental amalgam within the indicated timeline of 31 December 2027, noting that parties should not wait until the next full reporting round due by 31 December 2029 to submit national action plans or reports on the matter, as that would render any amendment to part I of annex A to phase out dental amalgam by 2030 insignificant.

199. One representative said that, in view of the high priority placed by her country on the obligations related to the reduction and elimination of primary mercury mining, it was worrying that national reports had shown a rise in the production of mercury from mining operations. She reaffirmed her country's willingness to provide support to parties in that regard. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of parties, expressed concern that some parties in their national reporting had not included information on illicit trade or the smuggling of mercury and requested that the secretariat include explicit options in the reporting format regarding those issues.

200. One representative speaking on behalf of a group of parties reiterated the call to parties that had received consent to export mercury to parties or non-parties to provide copies of their consent forms to the secretariat in order to ensure that the relevant requirements of article 3 of the Convention had been met.

201. One representative of an observer organization said that national reporting should include measures for the environmentally sound management, storage and final disposal of mercury waste; measures for preventing and addressing illegal trade and smuggling in mercury; clear timelines for the phase-out of mercury in artisanal and small-scale gold mining and support for mercury-free methods, including funding, technology transfer and capacity building; actions to facilitate the meaningful participation of affected communities, women, Indigenous Peoples and civil society; and collaboration with other parties to establish regional task forces for cross-border cooperation, information exchange and enforcement. She also called for parties to give civil society access to national reporting in order to facilitate the verification of progress, the sharing of on-the-ground data and the identification of gaps.

202. One observer said that it was encouraging that the secretariat had been able to report that, of 110 reporting officers, a near-equal gender distribution had been achieved. Achieving such a gender balance, however, was not sufficient to fully capture the scope of goal 8 of the gender action plan under the Convention, which was aimed at ensuring the inclusion of gender issues in national reporting under article 21, and she therefore recommended that parties report on gender-related activities and that the secretariat analyse and evaluate such activities. She also encouraged parties to involve gender experts in the preparation and implementation of national action plans, as referred to under goal 9 of the gender action plan.

203. Following the discussion the Conference of the Parties invited parties that had proposed amendments to the draft decision and the online reporting platform to submit their proposals in writing to the secretariat. The secretariat would then prepare a conference room paper containing a revised draft decision on national reporting for consideration in plenary.

204. Subsequently, the President introduced a revised draft decision, which the Conference of the Parties then adopted.

205. Decision MC-6/13, entitled "National reporting (article 21): second short national reports", is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

I. Effectiveness evaluation (item 4 (i) of the agenda)

206. The President recalled that, in line with Article 22 of the Convention, the Conference of the Parties, within six years of the Convention coming into force, was to begin its first periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of the Convention. In decision MC-5/14 the Conference of the Parties had agreed to consider the outcome of the first effectiveness evaluation at its seventh meeting. Therefore the report on the first effectiveness evaluation would be a key subject at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties and would mark a major milestone for the Convention.

207. The representative of the secretariat drew attention to document UNEP/MC/COP.6/16, which contained a progress report on the development of the first effectiveness evaluation of the Convention and a draft decision. It provided an overview of the work carried out by the Effectiveness Evaluation Group and the Open-ended Scientific Group since the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. A timeline for the completion of the first effectiveness evaluation report was set out in its annex II. Document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/22 contained a preliminary draft outline of the first effectiveness evaluation report, and document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/23 provided an update on the work of the Open-ended Scientific Group.

208. Mr. Christian, Co-Chair of the Effectiveness Evaluation Group, reported on the work of the group. Work on the 36 indicators had been divided between the Effectiveness Evaluation Group and the Open-ended Scientific Group. The Effectiveness Evaluation Group had subdivided its work into subgroups and had been tasked with providing an assessment of the indicators to be subsequently compiled in a report at the end of November 2025 that would form the basis of its deliberations in

2026. Meetings would be held in January and October 2026, and the substantive work of drafting the effectiveness evaluation report would commence. The outline provided in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/22 provided preliminary guidance on the development of the report. There were two important inputs required for deliberations in 2026: the scientific report to be delivered by the Open-ended Scientific Group and the synthesis of the second full national reports to be submitted by parties. He called on all parties to submit their reports in a timely manner in order to facilitate production of the first effectiveness evaluation report.

209. Mr. Bally Kpokro, Co-Chair of the Open-ended Scientific Group, provided an update on the work of the group since the meeting of fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The group had held 10 virtual meetings and one in-person meeting. Substantial progress had been made over the course of a demanding intersessional period, including through data collection on mercury monitoring and emissions and releases from parties and observers. Targeted reviews of scientific literature had also been conducted in order to acquire additional data. With the assistance of the secretariat and the Biodiversity Research Institute, an online data repository had been established. Seven dedicated teams had worked diligently to compile, analyse and synthesise the data, identifying gaps and extracting lessons. In June 2025 a draft report identifying relevant data had been submitted and made available for review by the parties, and it had been subsequently refined based on the feedback provided. The group was in the process of developing a comprehensive scientific report, to be reviewed by the parties in December 2025. The report would address issues related to mercury levels, trends, impacts and understanding of processes, thereby offering a solid foundation for assessing the effectiveness of the Convention. In its capacity as an observer, the Open-ended Scientific Group had actively participated in the sessions of the Effectiveness Evaluation Group, with a view to facilitating strong alignment between scientific insights and policy imperatives. The Group remained steadfast in its commitment to producing a report characterized by transparency, inclusivity and scientific rigour. He expressed sincere appreciation to all parties and observers for their collaborative efforts and sustained engagement.

210. In the ensuing discussion several representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of parties, welcomed the work carried out by both the Effectiveness Evaluation Group and the Open-ended Scientific Group. The two groups were setting a precedent for future assessments by establishing a scientific baseline and highlighting achievements and areas for improvement. One representative welcomed the inclusive approach taken by the groups in engaging parties and stakeholders in the process. Others said that the effectiveness evaluation would provide many valuable recommendations for improvements and lessons learned and was thus fundamental to the success and ongoing relevance of the Convention. Another representative highlighted the value of the work of the groups to refine indicators and develop methodological guidance. One representative offered praise for the members of the two groups, noting that they worked as volunteers.

211. Several representatives emphasized that data, including emissions and releases monitoring data and that provided through parties' national reports, were vital to the success of the effectiveness evaluation. They called on parties to submit their full national reports by the December 2025 deadline in order to fully support the evaluation process. One representative expressed concern that both the Effectiveness Evaluation Group and the Open-ended Scientific Group had faced delays in obtaining information to support their work.

212. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, said that developing country parties, including small island developing States, often lacked the technical infrastructure, human capacity and financial resources needed for sustained and comprehensive mercury monitoring. They thus faced substantial hurdles in gathering and reporting the data required for the review process and for their national reports. Capacity-building and targeted technical and financial assistance for such countries would therefore be critical to ensuring that all regions were able to participate in the evaluation fully, equitably and meaningfully and that the data on which the evaluation would be based were complete and accurate.

213. One representative speaking on behalf of a group of parties expressed support for the draft decision in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/16 but proposed a minor amendment to it.

214. The representative of WHO said that effectiveness evaluation was crucial to ensuring evidence-based assessment of progress on the goals of the Convention. Trends in mercury concentrations in humans, as measured in human biomonitoring studies, were a valuable indicator of such progress. In order to support the use of human biomonitoring for exposure and risk assessment, WHO had developed recommendations covering the whole cycle of human biomonitoring surveys, from planning to results evaluation, while applying the highest ethical standards. WHO reaffirmed its commitment to supporting countries working to strengthen national expertise and build capacity in

human biomonitoring, including through its integration into national health surveillance systems. Nonetheless, several significant gaps in data coverage existed that should be addressed as soon as possible, with a number of countries facing limited technical capacity and insufficient funding. World Health Assembly resolution 76/17 (2023) urged Member States to invest in national human biomonitoring programmes, to generate reliable data on exposure and risk assessment and to evaluate the effectiveness of risk reduction measures, strengthening health information systems and ensuring ethical and gender-sensitive approaches to data collection. WHO remained committed to supporting parties in generating high-quality biomonitoring data and translating science into action.

215. A representative of an observer organization emphasized that Indigenous Peoples were rights holders, with the right to self-determination in relation to the research conducted in their homelands. Indigenous Peoples needed to be involved in all stages of research to ensure that it took into account indigenous knowledge. A comprehensive monitoring framework was needed for the Convention, taking into account information from the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Another representative of an observer organization highlighted the severe threat posed by mercury to the food systems of Indigenous Peoples, notably in the Amazon, and advocated the establishment of an advisory subgroup on mercury releases in highly diverse regions. In that connection, the Effectiveness Evaluation Group and the Open-ended Scientific Group must be provided with official data related to Indigenous Peoples. One representative of an observer organization said that the effectiveness evaluation required scientific data addressing the trade in and supply and trafficking of mercury. Two representatives of observer organizations said that more data was required from developing countries, especially in regions that still had artisanal and small-scale gold mining. Moreover, collaboration and technology transfer between parties was necessary in order to bridge data gaps.

216. Following the discussion, the Conference of the Parties adopted the draft decision set out in the annex to document UNEP/MC/COP.6/16, as orally amended.

217. Decision MC-6/14, on progress in the first effectiveness evaluation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

J. Cross-cutting matters (item 4 (j) of the agenda)

1. Implementation of decision MC-5/1 (item 4 (j) (i) of the agenda)

218. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to the note by the secretariat on strengthening the effective engagement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (UNEP/MC/COP.6/17), which presented information on activities undertaken to implement decision MC-5/1. The Conference of the Parties also had before it a report prepared by the secretariat on the results of a survey on the needs and priorities of Indigenous Peoples and local communities with a view to future work on identifying possible solutions (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/24). He expressed appreciation to the various organizations that had supported the secretariat's work and the Government of Finland for providing funding to enable the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the current meeting.

219. The representative of the Indigenous Peoples' Organization said that the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights was a monumental step forward for the Convention. The hunger for gold sparked by the European discovery of American lands in 1492 had led to violence, displacement and death and continued to threaten lives. The International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Mercury had recently been established to promote intersectional work with the participation of representatives from all seven Indigenous sociocultural regions of the world. She called on parties to provide funding and other support, with a focus on transparency, inclusive monitoring and ethics, and to uphold the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the right of Indigenous Peoples to organize themselves.

220. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, highlighted the particular vulnerability of Indigenous Peoples to mercury pollution. Emphasis was also placed on the important role of Indigenous Peoples in achieving the objectives of the Convention, with one representative noting that Indigenous Peoples possessed deep cultural, scientific and technical knowledge that was essential to informed decision-making.

221. Appreciation was expressed for the activities undertaken by the secretariat to implement decision MC-5/1, the creation of the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Mercury and the contribution of the Government of Finland to support the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the current meeting. One representative said that Finland's contribution was proof of the adequacy of existing funding mechanisms. Several representatives, including one who spoke on behalf of a group

of parties, indicated that they did not support the proposal in the draft decision to set up a new funding mechanism. One of them said that such a mechanism risked duplicating the function of the Specific Trust Fund. Another called for more viable, sustainable and effective approaches to promoting the engagement of Indigenous Peoples.

222. One representative said that she saw value in the proposal in the draft decision to establish an ad hoc advisory group composed of representatives of Indigenous Peoples' organizations. However, another, who spoke on behalf of a group of parties, raised concerns about the proposal's potential budgetary impact.

223. One representative welcomed the reference in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/17 to "local communities", which he said was agreed language in many multilateral environmental agreements. Like Indigenous Peoples, local communities faced disproportionate impacts from mercury pollution. Furthermore, as not all countries formally acknowledged the concept of Indigenous Peoples in their national laws, ensuring the inclusion of local communities was critical to maintaining broad relevance worldwide.

224. One representative said that decision MC-5/1 had been a historic political and legal milestone that had guided subsequent efforts to amplify the voices of Indigenous Peoples, who played a vital role in safeguarding ecosystems, preserving traditional knowledge and defending the well-being of present and future generations. Protecting Indigenous Peoples from mercury exposure was a moral, social and environmental imperative and a key element of the Convention's effective implementation. Noting the importance of the principle of self-nomination by Indigenous representatives, she expressed support for the proposals to establish a voluntary funding mechanism and an ad hoc advisory group.

225. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, expressed a desire to pursue consideration of the draft decision in a small group. One of them called for Indigenous Peoples to be included in any further deliberations to ensure appropriate, lasting and practical outcomes.

226. A number of representatives of observer organizations and a representative of an observer State voiced disapproval of what they saw as the conflation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Some said that Indigenous Peoples were a distinct subject of international law with inherent rights and should be treated as such. One said that this conflation was unacceptable and offensive to Indigenous Peoples and violated their right to self-determination, while another said that care should be taken to ensure that references to "local communities" did not weaken the specific protections afforded to Indigenous Peoples in international treaties and agreements. While support was expressed for the launch of the Indigenous Peoples Platform, two representatives of observer organizations called for a separate platform to be established for local communities and other groups.

227. One representative of an observer State said it was important to ensure that Indigenous Peoples had access to information on emissions and releases of mercury and that challenges to their full participation in multilateral forums included limited financial and logistical support, language barriers and administrative red tape concerning travel and accreditation. In that regard, one representative of an observer organization said that financial support for such participation should avoid tokenizing Indigenous Peoples, while another called for key documents and summaries related to the Convention to be translated into indigenous languages.

228. One representative of an observer organization said that Indigenous children and young people should be explicitly recognized as distinct and vulnerable groups within the Convention framework. Indigenous youth participation from the seven sociocultural regions should be encouraged in all Convention-related activities in accordance with the principle of free, prior and informed consent, including through the provision of dedicated funding. Specific policies and initiatives should be developed to address mercury's impact on the lives of Indigenous young people.

229. Another representative of an observer organization called on parties to expand the scope of the efforts contemplated by document UNEP/MC/COP.6/17, including to protect Indigenous Peoples from forced labour in mercury mining and to provide for compensation for victims of such work.

230. One representative of an observer organization said that the document failed to address the deep-rooted causes of mercury pollution, in particular artisanal and small-scale gold mining. He voiced support for the proposals to establish a voluntary funding mechanism and an ad hoc advisory group but said that Indigenous Peoples also required direct access to financing for their own initiatives and that he had concerns regarding the composition and structure of the advisory group. Another representative of an observer organization said that, in addition to creating a new funding mechanism, parties should provide dedicated, multi-year funding to facilitate the participation of Indigenous

Peoples in Convention-related meetings. Furthermore, the proposed advisory group should be operationalized through the adoption of terms of reference and the allocation of adequate resources.

231. One representative of an observer organization said that the Indigenous Peoples' organizations accredited as observers to the current meeting should be included in all activities pertinent to the Convention and kept abreast of relevant information through proper communication channels that respected Indigenous governance structures. Another representative of an observer organization said that parties should adopt a human rights-based approach to the implementation of the Convention, including by eliminating mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining, ensuring that Indigenous Peoples were meaningfully included in decision-making processes and having a standing agenda item at future meetings to enable consultations with Indigenous Peoples.

232. Following the discussion, the Conference of the Parties agreed to establish a small group, to be facilitated by Paulina Riquelme (Chile) and to include two participants from the Indigenous Peoples' organizations accredited as observers to the current meeting, with the mandate to further develop the draft decision set out in the annex to document UNEP/MC/COP.6/17.

233. Subsequently, the President drew attention to a revised draft decision submitted by the small group, which the Conference of the Parties then adopted.

234. Decision MC-6/15, on strengthening effective engagement with Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities, is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

2. Implementation of decision MC-5/15 (item 4 (j) (ii) of the agenda)

235. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat recalled that the Conference of the Parties, in its decision MC-5/15 on the gender action plan, had invited parties and requested the secretariat to carry out certain activities during the biennium 2024–2025. She drew attention to the note by the secretariat containing a review of those activities (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/25), which had focused on addressing health concerns of women and children. On the basis of the progress made and as requested in decision MC-5/15, the secretariat had identified, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting, activities that could be carried out by the secretariat and the parties during the biennium 2026–2027, subject to the availability of resources. The activities were set out in a note by the secretariat, which also contained a draft decision on the matter (UNEP/MC/COP.6/18).

236. The President then gave the floor to a representative speaking on behalf of the Women's Caucus for the Minamata Convention on Mercury. She said that the full implementation of the gender action plan was urgently needed because the impacts of mercury were clearly interconnected with social and biological gender issues, in particular in relation to artisanal and small-scale gold mining and skin-lightening cosmetics. Although awareness and understanding of the links between mercury and gender issues had increased, gender considerations were yet to be adequately integrated into the Convention's implementation or reflected in design and implementation plans at the national level or in monitoring and reporting. She called for the urgent establishment of a women's delegate fund, which was one of the activities listed under the gender action plan, in order to ensure the equitable representation of women in the work of the Convention and to support the meaningful participation of underrepresented groups, including indigenous women and women from least developed countries and small island developing States.

237. In the ensuing discussion several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, expressed thanks to the secretariat for its efforts in carrying out activities to implement the gender action plan during the biennium 2024–2025. One representative said that his country appreciated in particular the focus on protecting women and children from the occupational safety and health risks posed by mercury exposure in artisanal and small-scale gold mining.

238. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, expressed disappointment that no explicit reference to the gender action plan had been included in the draft decision set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/18, given the importance of the plan, and that the scope of the activities planned for the biennium 2026–2027 had been narrowed to focus exclusively on health concerns of women and children. Another representative, however, expressed full support for the draft decision as currently drafted.

239. One representative, reaffirming that his country remained committed to upholding the rights of women, expressed the view that the gender action plan in its current form would not guarantee equity and could in fact worsen inequality and disadvantage other vulnerable groups in society by considering rights only from a gender perspective. He proposed that the wording of the draft decision be amended to refer to activities to be carried out in the biennium 2026–2027 to address the health concerns of vulnerable populations, particularly children and women.

240. A number of representatives provided information on actions at the national level to implement the gender action plan, and one representative expressed willingness to share experiences and information in that regard with other parties.

241. One representative welcomed in particular the recent establishment of the Women's Caucus of the Convention.

242. In response to questions from several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, as to why there was no explicit reference to the gender action plan in the draft decision and why the activities chosen by the secretariat for the biennium 2026–2027 had been limited to those relating to women and children's health, the Executive Secretary explained that the gender action plan was intended to be a long-term plan and framework from which activities could be chosen. In line with decision MC-5/15 and building on the activities carried out in the biennium 2024–2025, a subset of activities had been identified in the draft decision for implementation by the secretariat in the biennium 2026–2027. That, however, did not preclude parties or other stakeholders from implementing other activities in the plan.

243. One representative expressed support for the position of one observer that the draft decision should request the secretariat to develop, in consultation with young people, an action plan for mainstreaming youth engagement with the Convention, in line with the strengthened and formalized youth participation seen in respect of other multilateral environmental agreements. The observer said that young people and children were those most harmed by exposure to mercury but had the least input into decision-making on the issue. A global youth delegation of more than 30 young people with experience of the impact of mercury was participating in a meeting of the Conference of the Parties for the first time. The delegation had organized the first youth forum on mercury pollution, at which the Mercury Youth Task Force had been launched and based on which a global youth declaration on mercury was currently being drafted. She requested that parties and the secretariat review and incorporate the recommendations of that declaration into their work.

244. A representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recalled that women and children were among those most at risk of the negative effects of mercury on the enjoyment of human rights. She encouraged the Conference of the Parties to consider integrating human rights and gender equality frameworks into national action plans under article 7 of the Convention, as well as to ensure the effective participation of women in decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in respect of plans under the Convention. She also expressed support for requesting the secretariat to develop, in consultation with young people, a proposal for an action plan on children and youth engagement in the work of the Convention. She also encouraged the Conference of the Parties to strengthen health data collection, monitoring and capacity-building efforts with the aim of better identifying and addressing exposure risks for women and children, including by disaggregating information on gender, age and occupation.

245. A representative of an observer organization expressed support for activities already carried out in the biennium 2024–2025 and those proposed for implementation in the biennium 2026–2027 in relation to the gender action plan. She encouraged parties to include data disaggregated by gender and sex in national implementation plans and national action plans and to collect information from parties and other stakeholders on capacity-building needs in relation to mercury exposure among women and children. She also said that the Women's Caucus had an important role to play under the Convention in ensuring that cross-cutting issues were addressed and marginalized populations heard. Lastly, she strongly supported more activities being funded and carried out under the gender action plan.

246. Another representative of an observer organization expressed disappointment that there was no explicit reference to the effects of artisanal and small-scale gold mining in the draft decision, given the huge impact of such mining on the health of women and children.

247. The Conference of the Parties decided that the President and representatives of parties that had expressed views on the wording of the draft decision would discuss the draft decision and present an amended version for consideration in plenary.

248. Subsequently, the President introduced a conference room paper setting out proposed amendments to the activities in annex I to document UNEP/MC/COP.6/18 and a revised version of the draft decision in annex II, which the Conference of the Parties then adopted.

249. Decision MC-6/16, entitled "Addressing health concerns of women and children", is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

250. Following adoption of the decision, a representative speaking on behalf of a group of parties underscored the great importance that her constituency placed on the implementation of the gender action plan adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting. While her constituency supported addressing the health concerns of women and children in relation to mercury, it would have preferred the decision to refer to the gender action plan in its title, as had decision MC-5/15, which had been agreed by all parties and was further implemented through the present decision. Another representative stressed that his Government preferred to apply a broader perspective to issues of vulnerability, going beyond gender to include people with disabilities, the elderly and the very young.

K. Knowledge management (item 4 (k) of the agenda)

251. The President recalled that by its decision MC-5/16 the Conference of the Parties had welcomed a digital strategy for the secretariat to guide its work in leveraging technology and managing knowledge effectively to support the implementation of the Convention. The Conference of the Parties had also agreed that the implementation of the strategy would begin with priority activities during the 2024–2025 biennium.

252. The representative of the secretariat then outlined the relevant document (UNEP/MC/COP.6/19), which reported on progress in implementing the digital strategy during 2024–2025, as mandated by decision MC-5/16. It contained details of key achievements, in addition to plans by the secretariat to maintain and expand its efforts. Those plans included the proposed Minamata Convention Exchange Platform described in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/26, which was directly linked to Article 17 on information exchange and which defined the role of the secretariat in facilitating structured, transparent and accessible knowledge flows among parties and stakeholders. The platform was conceived of as a component of the existing digital ecosystem, ensuring the effective use of resources and long-term sustainability and supporting the website to make it a hub for knowledge related to the Convention. Document UNEP/MC/COP.6/19 contained a draft decision on the matter.

253. In the ensuing discussion one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of parties, expressed appreciation for the efforts of the secretariat on knowledge management, saying that its related initiatives were instrumental to the effective implementation of the Convention. The coordination and cooperation activities between the secretariat and the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership were also welcomed; the draft decision, however, should state that such activities were to be carried out subject to the availability of resources. The development of the Minamata Convention Exchange Platform was welcome, and elements of the digital strategy could be addressed in the contact group on the programme of work and budget if necessary.

254. Another representative proposed amendments to the draft decision in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/19, including to acknowledge the potential for the use of artificial intelligence, which was a critical tool for research efficiency.

255. Following the discussion the Conference of the Parties adopted the draft decision as orally amended.

256. Decision MC-6/17, on knowledge management and implementation of the digital strategy, is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

L. Mercury and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (item 4 (l) of the agenda)

257. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat said that, pursuant to decision MC-5/17, the secretariat had prepared document UNEP/MC/COP.6/20, containing a road map for enhancing co-benefits from the implementation of the Minamata Convention and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including an overview of the activities undertaken. The key pillars of the road map included contributions to the monitoring framework of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework; inclusion of mercury reduction actions and targets in national biodiversity strategies and action plans and national biodiversity targets; creation of an enabling environment for enhanced co-benefits; and indicators for measuring progress in implementing the road map.

258. By decision MC-5/17, parties, Governments and relevant organizations and stakeholders had been encouraged to reflect national mercury reduction and control targets in their revised or updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and the secretariat had been requested to support parties and other stakeholders in sharing their experiences and to compile and synthesize the

information gathered. The secretariat had worked with the Nature Conservancy to develop document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/27, which aimed to facilitate the integration of actions to reduce mercury pollution from artisanal and small-scale gold mining into national biodiversity strategies and action plans. She expressed gratitude to the Kingdom of the Netherlands for funding that work. Lastly, document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/41 included key decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity relevant to the Minamata Convention. A draft decision was contained in annex I to document UNEP/MC/COP.6/20 for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

259. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, commended the efforts of the secretariat in preparing a road map on how the Convention and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework could complement one another, which was essential for the achievement of shared goals, including combating biodiversity loss and pollution. One representative said that the road map provided a valuable framework for strengthening synergies and maximizing benefits. Another highlighted the multiple benefits of strengthening synergies between the Convention and the Framework, including protecting ecosystems, improving human health and contributing to targets under the Global Biodiversity Framework. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of parties, said that integrating actions with regard to mercury pollution into the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was a positive step, and another said that promoting coherence between instruments would help to ensure protection of the environment and ecosystems.

260. Another representative said there was a need for engagement at the national level, including by diverse stakeholders in monitoring and research. One representative said there was an urgent need for information-sharing on how mercury pollution was affecting natural water resources and to establish monitoring in developing countries, particularly those affected by illegal mining. Yet another representative welcomed the proposal to request the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to develop additional indicators to reduce pollution to levels that were not harmful to biodiversity.

261. Several representatives said that while synergies between the Convention and the Framework were desirable it was important to respect the mandates and principles of each. Some representatives highlighted the importance of avoiding the duplication of efforts or additional reporting and implementation burdens, particularly for developing countries that faced human resource, technology and financial constraints. Moreover, coordination should be voluntary in nature, promoted at the national level and subject to available resources, reflecting national priorities and circumstances and ensuring respect for national sovereignty.

262. Two representatives said that the road map must be matched with the required technical assistance and financing, particularly for developing countries. One representative called for assistance from the Global Environment Facility to ensure the availability of financial resources and data collection capacity on mercury pollution to ensure enhancement of the co-benefits of the Minamata Convention and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

263. Three representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, proposed amendments to the draft decision.

264. A representative of an observer organization said that coordination between the Minamata Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity should also be enhanced. Moreover, financial and technical resources should be mobilized in order to support Governments, Indigenous Peoples and relevant stakeholders, to enable them to take action in line with the road map, contributing not only to the Minamata Convention but also to the global vision of living in harmony with nature and leaving no one behind. Another representative of an observer organization said that reliable information on the impact of mercury pollution on biodiversity in vulnerable communities was needed, particularly in the Amazon. An additional representative of an observer organization drew attention to possible actions in the draft road map, including reports on global mercury levels from the secretariat to be presented at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

265. The Conference of the Parties invited those Parties that had proposed updates to the draft decision to submit them in writing to the secretariat. The secretariat would then prepare a revised draft decision for consideration in plenary.

266. Subsequently, the President drew attention to a revised version of the draft decision prepared by the secretariat, which the Conference of the Parties then adopted.

267. Decision MC-6/18, on a road map for enhancing co-benefits from implementation of the Minamata Convention and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

V. International cooperation and coordination (item 5 of the agenda)

268. Introducing the item, the President noted that it encompassed cooperation and coordination between the secretariats of the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, as well as cooperation and coordination with other entities. The representative of the secretariat introduced document UNEP/MC/COP.6/22 and drew attention to a joint report prepared by the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions and the Minamata Convention on cooperation and coordination between the secretariats in areas of mutual interest (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/29).

269. The Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, Rolph Payet, outlined the information in the joint report prepared by the two secretariats. He briefly described their cooperation on relevant programmatic, operational and administrative issues, drawing particular attention to their joint efforts on mercury wastes and trade control. He also highlighted the potential for new cooperation opportunities to emerge from the activities of the newly established Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution and the implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals, as well as from ongoing engagement of the two secretariats in the joint task force with the Chemicals and Health Branch of UNEP. The two secretariats had provided secretariat services to each other during the latest meetings of the conferences of the Parties on a cost recovery basis.

270. Following the presentations, several representatives expressed appreciation for the ongoing coordination between the two secretariats. One acknowledged that cooperation in certain areas was valuable and welcomed opportunities to enhance cooperation that was party-driven, transparent and aligned with national priorities. She cautioned, however, that cooperation should remain consistent with the mandates approved by parties and should not compromise the conventions' autonomy or governance structures. Synergies should remain cost-effective and not result in any duplication or additional burden, particularly for developing countries. Another representative called on donors and the Global Environment Facility to increase the secretariat's budget so that it could strengthen collaboration with the Rio conventions as well as the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, including at the national level.

271. The Conference of the Parties adopted the draft decision in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/22.

272. Decision MC-6/20, on cooperation and coordination between the secretariats of the Minamata Convention on Mercury and of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

273. Introducing document UNEP/MC/COP.6/21, on international cooperation and coordination, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to the draft decision in the document, as well as to the information in the secretariat's report on activities undertaken during the period December 2023–June 2025 to cooperate and coordinate with other entities, particularly in the chemicals and waste cluster (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/28).

274. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, thanked the secretariat for its report on cooperation and coordination with other international entities. Some of them, including the one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, particularly welcomed the recent establishment of the Intergovernmental Science Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution and the proposed partnership with that panel. One nevertheless cautioned that cooperation should remain voluntary and should not result in duplication of effort or the creation of new financial or reporting burdens for parties, particularly developing countries. Ongoing collaboration, she said, should remain efficient, cost-effective, party-driven and aligned with national priorities and should reinforce equity and consensus among parties, without compromising the autonomy or mandate of the Minamata Convention.

275. Those who spoke expressed general support for the draft decision in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/21, although some, including the one speaking on behalf of a group of parties, proposed minor amendments.

276. A number of representatives took the floor to report on their organizations' work on mercury and for the Minamata Convention.

277. A representative of UNEP drew attention to the report of the Executive Director of UNEP to the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/30), which provided an overview of the activities carried out by UNEP in support of the Minamata Convention. She said that UNEP contributed to mercury reduction in the mining, energy, cosmetics, industry and health sectors by scaling innovation across supply chains and detoxifying production systems. Through inclusive, community-driven approaches, technical expertise and global partnership, UNEP supported Governments and stakeholders in reducing environmental and health burdens and generating sustainable, locally anchored change. In the artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector, for instance, UNEP support had contributed to expanding access to financing and international markets, reducing mercury use and improving safety. UNEP-led initiatives had advanced the phase-out of mercury-added products, including cosmetics, medical devices and dental amalgam. UNEP also supported countries with mercury-related data and inventories and in developing action plans. At the global level, it strengthened links across the agendas of the Basel Convention, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and other chemicals frameworks and implemented a $105 million Global Environment Facility mercury portfolio that supported the achievement of shared targets.

278. The Principal Coordinator and Head of the interim secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution, Tessa Goverse, spoke about the newly established panel and the potential for cooperation with the Minamata Convention. She provided a brief overview of the panel, including its objective and functions, and recalled that the first session of the panel's Plenary was scheduled to take place in February 2026. Underscoring the importance of establishing broad and meaningful partnerships for the panel, she said that it was expected to cooperate and coordinate closely with existing international organization and instruments, including the Minamata Convention, whose technical expertise, institutional experience and established networks offered valuable assets for the panel to build on. The panel itself was well-positioned to strengthen the knowledge base that could underpin future agenda-setting, policy formulation and implementation under the Convention. The interim secretariat of the panel stood ready to work with the parties and secretariat of the Minamata Convention to provide further information and explore how cooperation with the panel could support the objectives of the Convention.

279. The representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights said that human rights violations linked to mercury use and trade persisted, including in connection with artisanal and small-scale gold mining, which remained a common practice in several parties to the Convention. Corruption, trafficking and organized crime associated with the illegal mercury trade posed additional risks. Information-sharing, technology transfer and coordinated action were therefore critical to ensure that mercury smugglers were held accountable for serious environmental crimes. She recommended that parties consider formulating regional cooperation programmes to curb illegal trade in mercury; identifying measures to develop health care services for mercury-exposed populations; including an assessment of the human rights impacts of mercury contamination in technical evaluations under the Convention; ensuring the meaningful participation of rights-holders, including Indigenous Peoples, young people, women and children; and ensuring that future partnerships, including with the newly established Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution, included expertise on human rights, particularly in processes related to data collection and policy design.

280. The representative of the International Labour Organization (ILO) underscored the importance of multisectoral collaboration given that workers around the world continued to be exposed to mercury, with many facing extreme risks due to conditions of informality and lack of social protection. ILO brought together its 187 member States, workers and employer organizations to advance issues that had clear critical interlinkages with the Convention, such as decent work, safety and health, just transition and social protection. The organization was currently preparing a standard-setting exercise to update its standards on chemical hazards, including the potential development of a new labour standard complementing the Convention concerning Safety in the Use of Chemicals at Work. The new instrument had the potential to enhance policy coherence with international treaties adopted since 1990, including the Minamata Convention. In 2026, all ILO constituents would receive a global report and a survey that would identify priority issues for inclusion in the new instrument, which could include an explicit reference to the Minamata Convention if parties so desired.

281. The ILO representative also made a statement on behalf of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) Mercury Group, which, in addition to the IOMC participating organizations, involved the secretariats of the Minamata Convention and GEF. The Group's activities in supporting the implementation of the Convention were referred to in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/28 and those of other participating organizations in documents UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/29, UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/31 and UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/33. The challenges of addressing mercury required multisectoral collaboration at the country level, and IOMC played a

crucial role in coordinating the technical support provided by IOMC organizations. The planetGOLD programme, funded by GEF, led by UNEP and implemented as a collaborative effort with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and other partners, and the new GEF Global elimination of mercury in non-ferrous metals initiative with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and UNEP were excellent examples of that work. Noting that the Conference of the Parties would be considering membership of the Minamata Convention in IOMC at the current meeting, she offered to provide any information that might prove useful.

282. The representative of the secretariat of the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste recalled that the Global Framework on Chemicals, a voluntary multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral platform for strengthening the safe and sustainable management of chemicals and waste, had been adopted in 2023. As the framework moved into implementation, three areas of convergence with the Minamata Convention could deliver tangible benefits to countries: in capacity-building and technical assistance, the framework could draw on the Convention's experience with the Specific International Programme to strengthen countries' institutional capacity; in supply chains and product life cycles, there was scope to share data, tools and best practices, especially in healthcare, electronics and artisanal and small-scale gold mining, where mercury management intersected with broader chemical challenges; and in communications and knowledge exchange, the framework's multisectoral engagement offered opportunities to amplify the Convention's messages and promote knowledge exchange.

283. The representative of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) said that it was important to consider the illegal trade in mercury as a criminal threat, not just an environmental or health concern. As the world's only global police organization, INTERPOL could play a key role in translating international commitments into concrete actions through law enforcement on the ground. Its secure communication network could connect frontline officers, customs officials, environmental investigators and prosecutors in real time to act collectively against the illegal trade in mercury. INTERPOL could also disseminate global alerts, enabling countries to identify high-risk shipments, trace supply chains, identify new modus operandi and act quickly when violations of international commitments occurred. It could coordinate operations at the national, regional and global levels to dismantle criminal networks and provide capacity-building support to member countries to strengthen their monitoring, inspection and enforcement systems. Looking ahead, INTERPOL aimed to reinforce its partnerships with multilateral environmental agreements, including the Minamata Convention, by aligning and scaling up its efforts, strengthening operational support and training where law enforcement capacity gaps existed and tackling the financial and organized crime dimensions of mercury trafficking, from false documentation to corruption and money laundering.

284. A co-chair of the Partnership Advisory Group of the Global Mercury Partnership drew attention to the note by the secretariat containing a report on activities undertaken within the partnership (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/33). Currently celebrating its twentieth anniversary, the partnership had evolved into a catalyst for action, mobilizing scientific knowledge, policy expertise and collective action to confront the urgent challenge of mercury pollution. The partnership collected data and shared knowledge across key sectors such as mining, energy, cosmetics and health care and fostered collaboration and dialogue on complex issues, including waste and mercury emissions from oil and gas and non-ferrous metal mining. Most recently, the partnership had helped build political momentum and mobilize resources to tackle mercury in cosmetics, contributing to the Libreville Commitment and a $15 million GEF-funded initiative to eliminate mercury from cosmetics across 13 African countries.

285. The representative of an observer noted that illegal trade and trafficking in elemental mercury and mercury compounds was a growing challenge for the effective implementation of the Convention. He invited parties to consider requesting the secretariat to establish cooperation and coordination with the Financial Action Task Force, INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime by adding appropriate language to the draft decision, with the aim of strengthening the implementation of the Bali declaration on combating illegal trade in mercury. The representative of another observer suggested that at its seventh meeting the Conference of the Parties hold a science dialogue between the multilateral environmental agreements and broader international instruments, including the Global Framework on Chemicals and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution, in order to identify shared priorities. Stating that the Environmental Management Group was a severely underused support system for international environmental instruments, she also suggested that the secretariat coordinate closely with that group, including on the common United Nations approach to justice for children, in order to identify areas for collaboration, especially on implementation, monitoring and financing. Further, she expressed strong support for the secretariat's coordination with the United Nations Children's Fund and for their joint

publications on the risks of mercury to children, and she encouraged the conduct of further activities with UNICEF and the children and youth constituency, focusing on mainstreaming children's environmental health into the work of the Convention.

286. Following a brief discussion on the proposed amendments to the wording of the draft decision in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/21, the Conference of the Parties decided that the President and representatives of parties that had expressed views on the wording would hold informal discussions with a view to presenting a revised draft decision for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

287. Following those informal consultations the President introduced a revised draft decision set out in a conference room paper, which the Conference of the Parties then adopted.

288. Decision MC-6/19, on international cooperation and coordination, is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

VI. Programme of work and budget (item 6 of the agenda)

289. Introducing the item, the Executive Secretary said that despite its small size the secretariat had always fulfilled its functions under the Convention and tasks as mandated by the Conference of the Parties. In 2024 and 2025, it had faced unexpected challenges stemming from rising staff costs related to exchange rate fluctuations and other issues beyond its control. As prudent management of the secretariat's limited resources was a priority, several temporary measures had been implemented to ensure compliance with the agreed budget for the biennium.

290. Another representative of the secretariat recalled that the Executive Secretary had prepared and submitted to the Conference of the Parties at the current meeting a budget for 2026–2027, as requested by the Conference of the Parties in its decision MC-5/20. The document presented two budget scenarios, one that maintained the operational budget at the 2024−2025 level in nominal terms and one that reflected the changes required to meet projected needs and related costs, without exceeding 2024−2025 by more than 5 percent in nominal terms.

291. The budget document before the Conference of the Parties (UNEP/MC/COP.6/23) presented information on the cost of holding the seventh meeting of the Conference, core staff costs and the projected cash balance. Budget activity fact sheets set out further details on the activities that had been included in the proposed programme of work and budget (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/38).

292. The Conference of the Parties was invited to consider and approve the programme of work and budget for the 2026–2027 biennium.

293. In the ensuing discussion, two representatives speaking on behalf of groups of countries thanked the secretariat for having prepared the budget scenarios and the budget activity fact sheets. One of them expressed concern at the difficult financial situation facing the secretariat, which she said was due in part to the failure by a minority of parties to pay their contributions. The other representative stated a preference for the 5 percent budget scenario and suggested that deadlines should be imposed for the payment of regular and outstanding contributions to the convention's general trust fund.

294. The Conference of the Parties decided to establish a contact group on the programme of work and budget, to be co-chaired by Miriam Medel García (Mexico) and Eveline Verhaar (Kingdom of the Netherlands), with the mandate to prepare a draft decision on the programme of work and budget by deliberating on the proposed budgetary elements of the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2026–2027. The contact group was also tasked with confirming that the activities included in the other draft decisions before the Conference of the Parties for adoption at the current meeting had been taken into account in the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2026–2027 or that the decisions had no financial implications.

295. Noting that the contact group on the programme of work and budget was open to parties only, the Conference of the Parties decided that the countries that had ratified the Convention but for whom the Convention would enter into force only after the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties could attend as observers, given that, as future parties, they would be required to contribute to the budget for the biennium 2026–2027.

296. Subsequently, the President drew attention to a draft decision on the programme of work and budget for 2026–2027 set out in a conference room paper submitted by the contact group; an addendum to the conference room paper presented tables referred to in the draft decision, showing the programme of work and budget for 2026–2027 (table 1), an indicative scale of assessment and contributions to the general trust fund for 2026–2027 (table 2) and an indicative secretariat staffing

table for the biennium 2026–2027 (table 3). The Conference of the Parties then adopted the draft decision and tables set out in the conference room paper and its addendum.

297. Decision MC-6/21, on the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2026–2027, is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).

VII. Venue and dates of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (item 7 of the agenda)

298. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat recalled that, pursuant to rule 3 of the rules of procedure, the meetings of the Conference of the Parties were to take place at the seat of the secretariat, in Geneva, unless the Conference of the Parties decided otherwise or other appropriate arrangements were made by the secretariat in consultation with the parties. As no offers to host the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties had been received, the secretariat had tentatively booked the Geneva International Conference Centre for the period from 14 to 18 June 2027, with preparatory meetings to be held on 13 June 2027.

299. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of parties, suggested that the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties include a high-level segment of no more than one day's duration. She proposed to amend the draft decision on the matter set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/24 to that end. Another representative supported the proposal, saying that a high-level segment was usually held every fourth year.

300. One representative, however, said that while a high-level segment could attract high-level attention to the work of the Convention it was not appropriate to have one in the current climate of budgetary constraint.

301. In response, another representative said that there were ways to reduce the cost of the segment, such as by holding it in the margins of another event that high-level government representatives would already be attending.

302. The Conference of the Parties decided that the contact group on the programme of work and budget would consider the matter further.

303. Subsequently, the Conference of the Parties decided that its seventh meeting would take place at the Geneva International Conference Centre from 14 to 18 June 2027, with preparatory meetings to be held on 13 June 2027, and adopted the draft decision on the matter set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/24 without amendment.

304. Decision MC-6/22, entitled "Venue and dates of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury", is set out in the addendum to the present report (UNEP/MC/COP.6/25/Add.1).[3]

VIII. Other matters (item 8 of the agenda)

305. No other matters were considered.

IX. Adoption of the report of the meeting (item 9 of the agenda)

306. The Conference of the Parties adopted the present report 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.

X. Closure of the meeting (item 10 of the agenda)

307. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the meeting was declared closed at 5.40 p.m. on Friday, 7 November 2025.

[3] Following the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, new dates became available at the Geneva International Conference Centre for the period from 6 to 10 September 2027 for the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Bureau subsequently agreed that the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties would be held at the Geneva International Conference Centre from 6 to 10 September 2027, with regional preparatory meetings taking place on 5 September 2027.