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**United Nations
Environment
Programme**

**Conference of the Parties to the
Minamata Convention on Mercury
Third meeting**

Geneva, 25–29 November 2019
Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

**Venue and date of the fourth meeting of the
Conference of the Parties**

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Note by the secretariat

1. At its second meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury adopted decision MC-2/5 on the venue and date of the third meeting and subsequent meetings of the Conference of the Parties. In paragraph 2 of the decision, the Conference of the Parties invited parties to submit offers to host its fourth ordinary meeting in time for the third ordinary meeting, and to proceed in a similar manner for subsequent ordinary meetings.
2. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties also requested the Executive Secretary to submit, in advance of each ordinary meeting, an assessment of the offers received pursuant to paragraph 2 of the decision, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties. Part of such assessment, the one referring to the additional costs that the host Government would bear, is set out in the annex to the present note. In preparing such part of the assessment of the two offers received, the secretariat considered the additional costs of travel by secretariat, United Nations security and conference servicing staff. The document shows as well the travel costs of an estimated 105 sponsored party-delegates. According to the Financial Rules for the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, its subsidiary bodies and the secretariat, the special trust fund for the Convention supports, among others, the participation of representatives of developing-country parties and parties with economies in transition in the meetings of the COP. The assessment also includes the estimated additional costs that would be incurred should the parties decide to include a high-level segment in the programme, as reflected in the meeting documents on the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2020-2021.
3. There are other aspects –besides the costs– that Parties need to consider when assessing the offers. Prospective hosts refer to these aspects and provide details and clarifications as necessary in

* UNEP/MC/COP.3/1.

** This present document has not been formally edited.

the presentation of their offers, both, in written form (e.g. as captured in documents UNEP/MC/COP.3/INF/20/Rev.1 and UNEP/MC/COP.3/INF/20/INF/22) and through presentations, which may include videos, at the COP. It is difficult for the Secretariat to assess such aspects as they may imply appreciations which the Secretariat is not in a position to make.

4. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 40/243, Governments hosting meetings of the Conference of the Parties away from the seat of the secretariat are to bear the actual additional costs involved.

5. The host Government would also be responsible for providing, at its own expense, the required premises, furnishings, equipment and local staff in a manner that the secretariat considers adequate for the effective functioning of the meeting. It should also ensure the availability of adequate accommodation at reasonable commercial rates, local transportation for meeting participants, emergency medical services and transport to hospitals, and police protection. It should commit itself to adhering to the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and to granting necessary entry visas to participants in a timely manner. More information on the subject is available in the Administrative Instruction ST/AI/342 on guidelines for the preparation of host Government agreements falling under resolution 40/2431, which the host Government will need to sign with the United Nations Environment Programme.

6. The Secretariat thanks the governments of Colombia and Indonesia for their generosity in making their offers to host the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, taking into account the additional costs that are to be borne by them.

7. The present note supplements documents UNEP/MC/COP.3/22 and UNEP/MC/COP.3/22/Add.1 on the venue and date of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

8. According to rule 3 of the rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties, the meetings of the Conference are to take place at the seat of the secretariat – in Geneva, Switzerland – unless the Conference of the Parties decides otherwise, or other appropriate arrangements are made by the secretariat in consultation with the parties.

9. Since 2017, meetings of the Conference of the Parties have been held during a one-week period every year in late September (2017) or November (2018 and 2019). According to rule 4 of the rules of procedure, the ordinary meetings following the third meeting are to be held every two years.

10. Parties wishing to offer to host a meeting of the Conference of the Parties are invited to submit such offers in time for the meeting of the Conference of the Parties preceding the meeting that they wish to host. The Conference of the Parties considers such offers when deciding on the date and venue of its next meeting. Should the Conference of the Parties decide to accept such an offer, the decision would be subject to the conclusion of a host Government agreement between the hosting Government and the United Nations Environment Programme.

11. As referred to above, a comparative analysis of estimated costs for the different possible venues of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2021 is presented in tables 1 to 3.

12. Table 1 shows the estimated conference costs for the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties as have been reflected in the proposed operational budget scenarios for the 2020-2021 biennium (documents UNEP/MC/COP.3/20, (UNEP/MC/COP.3/INF/9, UNEP/MC/COP.3/INF/10, UNEP/MC/COP.3/INF/11 and UNEP/MC/COP.3/INF/11/Add.1). These costs remain the same irrespective of the venue and are to be covered by the general trust fund, which is the core budget of the Convention and which receives contributions on the basis of the indicative scale adopted by the Conference of the Parties and based on the scale of assessments of the United Nations.

¹ Available at <https://hr.un.org/content/guidelines-preparation-host-government-agreement-falling-under-general-assembly-resolution>.

Table 1: Estimated conference costs

	SWITZERLAND (Geneva)	COLOMBIA (Cartagena)	INDONESIA (Bali)
Estimated conference costs (budgeted within the general trust fund) - in USD			
Zero nominal growth scenario and Executive Secretary scenario	1,055,000	1,055,000	1,055,000
Additional cost for high level segment (Executive Secretary scenario)	55,000	55,000	55,000
Total estimated conference costs	1,110,000	1,110,000	1,110,000

13. Table 2 shows the estimated additional costs, to be borne by the host country, if the Conference of the Parties is held outside of Geneva, Switzerland. These costs are to be entirely paid for by the country hosting the conference and are made up of the additional costs of travelling Minamata secretariat staff, conference services staff as well UN Security staff to the venues proposed for the fourth Conference of the Parties.

14. The estimated costs are calculated using the November 2019 daily subsistence allowance (DSA) rates, as per circular ICSC/CIRC/DSA/534 issued by the International Civil Service Commission. The DSA rate for Cartagena, Colombia, is USD 144. For Bali, Indonesia, the Denpasar rate of USD 131 is the rate which, in consultation with the UN Travel Unit, is to be used as Denpasar is the geographically closest location to Nusa Dua with a standard DSA rate, considering that the proposed venue is not associated to any of the hotels for which special DSA rates have been determined and there is no standard DSA for Nusa Dua. It is to be noted that the Conference of the Parties may otherwise recommend any of the special DSA rates associated to the hotels in Nusa Dua, Bali. Flight costs are based on estimates from the official UN travel tool.

Table 2: Estimated main additional costs if meeting is held outside of Geneva

	SWITZERLAND (Geneva)	COLOMBIA (Cartagena)	INDONESIA (Bali)
Main additional costs, to be borne by host country (estimated) - in USD			
Minamata Secretariat staff travel	0	97,128	104,490
Conference Services staff travel	0	73,381	146,408
Additional Conference Services costs if high level segment takes place	0	7,356	14,641
Security staff travel and other security costs	0	19,712	20,688
Total estimated additional costs to be borne by the host country	0	197,577	286,226

15. Table 3 shows the estimated travel costs of eligible sponsored delegates to the fourth Conference of the Parties. As mentioned above, these estimated costs are covered by the special trust fund, which collects 40% of the CHF 1,000,000 host country annual contribution from Switzerland as well as voluntary contributions fundraised and collected from donors.

16. The estimated costs are calculated using the November 2019 daily subsistence allowance (DSA) rates, as per circular ICSC/CIRC/DSA/534, issued by the International Civil Service

Commission. The DSA rate for Cartagena, Colombia, is USD 144. For Bali, Indonesia, the Denpasar rate of USD 131 is the rate which, in consultation with the UN Travel Unit, is to be used as Denpasar is the geographically closest location to Nusa Dua with a standard DSA rate, considering that the proposed venue is not associated to any of the hotels for which special DSA rates have been determined and there is no standard DSA for Nusa Dua. It is to be noted that the Conference of the Parties may otherwise recommend any of the special DSA rates associated to the hotels in Nusa Dua, Bali. Flight costs are based on estimates received from the UN Travel Unit.

17. The estimates are based on the assumption that the estimated number of eligible sponsored delegates would be 105 and that the estimated number of sponsored ministers -in case the Conference of the Parties decides for a high-level segment to take place- would be 40.

Table 3: Estimated travel costs of sponsored delegates

	SWITZERLAND (Geneva)	COLOMBIA (Cartagena)	INDONESIA (Bali)
Estimated travel costs of sponsored delegates (to be covered by the special trust fund) - in USD			
Costs of sponsored delegates	425,000	461,082	349,618
Additional travel costs for high level segment	161,905	175,650	133,188
Total estimated travel costs of sponsored delegates	586,905	636,732	482,806

18. The Secretariat would like to draw the attention of Parties to the fact that the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will only take place in about two years and therefore, the Secretariat cannot anticipate the actual costs as costs are subject to change at any time. For example, the DSA rate for Cartagena has remained the same since August 2019 whereas the special DSA rates for Nusa Dua in effect since October 2018 have changed considerably as of 1 November 2019, the date of the latest survey undertaken by the International Civil Service Commission, on basis of which the DSA rates are determined. Furthermore, both Conference Services and UN Security shall make a definitive determination closer to the meeting regarding which UN staff would be deployed from which duty station, and UN Security will only be able to determine the actual needs in accordance with UN Security requirements following a verification mission.