



**Conference of the Parties to the
Minamata Convention on Mercury
Sixth meeting**
Geneva, 3–7 November 2025
Item 4 (e) (ii) of the provisional agenda*

**Matters for consideration or action by the Conference of the
Parties: financial resources and mechanism: Specific International
Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance**

Reports of the ninth and tenth meetings of Governing Board of the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity- Building and Technical Assistance**

Note by the secretariat

1. Decision MC-1/6 of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury provides for the establishment of a governing board of the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance, to oversee and implement the guidance of the Conference of the Parties, including decision-making on projects and project management, with the functioning of the governing board covered by the terms of reference of the Specific International Programme, set out in annex II to the decision.
2. Annex I to the present note sets out the report of the ninth meeting of the Governing Board, which was held online on 15 and 16 April 2024. Annex II to the present note sets out the report of the tenth meeting of the Governing Board, which was held in Geneva from 22-24 January 2025.

* UNEP/MC/COP.6/1/Rev.1.

** This document has not been formally edited.

Annex I

Report of the Ninth Meeting of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme to support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance

I. Opening of the meeting (agenda item 1)

1. The Ninth Meeting of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme to support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance (SIP) was opened at 14:00 Geneva time on Monday, 15 April 2024 by the current Co-Chair of the Governing Board, Andrew Clark (United States of America).
2. Mr. Clark warmly welcomed all Board members, introduced himself as outgoing Co-Chair and informed that during the meeting the Board would be invited to elect two new Co-Chairs.
3. The Secretariat verified attendance and confirmed quorum to open the meeting and elect Co-Chairs. The Secretariat also announced that the meeting would be recorded for meeting report purposes only.
4. The Co-Chair noted the participation of Katherine Theotocatos of the Secretariat of the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) as an observer in the meeting, as agreed by the Governing Board for this meeting.
5. The Co-Chair then invited the Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention, Monika Stankiewicz, to deliver a welcoming message.
6. The Executive Secretary welcomed the participants and recalled that the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-5) in November 2023 engaged in important discussions on the SIP and adopted a significant decision on the review of the financial mechanism of the Minamata Convention. She highlighted that the second review of the financial mechanism had provided encouraging results and conclusions about the SIP, and that the SIP mid-term evaluation had also found that the Programme truly strengthens the capacity of Parties to meet their obligations under the Minamata Convention. She noted that the projects of the First and Second Rounds that had closed demonstrated that the SIP has borne valuable and tangible fruit and is instrumental for building Parties' capacities. She thanked the donors to the Specific Trust Fund – 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 – and underlined that, despite the challenges regarding mobilization of resources, the progress made in the replenishment of the Specific Trust Fund was encouraging and justified the Board's consideration to launch the new round of applications to the SIP.
7. The Co-Chair opened the floor for a brief tour de table, with Board members followed by Secretariat staff.

II. Organizational matters (agenda item 2)

A. Adoption of the agenda

8. The Co-Chair Andrew Clark directed the Board's attention to the meeting documents relevant to the agenda item and available in the online workspace: SIP/GB.9/1 Provisional Agenda, SIP/GB.9/1/Add.1 Annotated Agenda, SIP/GB.9/INF/1 List of documents for the Ninth Meeting, SIP/GB.9/INF/2 Draft list of participants, and the Rules of Procedure of the SIP Governing Board. The list of participants is attached as appendix I to the report.
9. Subsequently, the Co-Chair invited the Board members to check the contact and other details in the draft list of participants and let the Secretariat know in case of any updates or corrections to be made.
10. Upon request of the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat presented in more detail the overall documents prepared for the meeting, the provisional agenda and the proposed organization of work for the meeting.
11. The Co-Chair invited Board members to propose any additional agenda items under Agenda Item 7: Other matters. No additional agenda items were proposed.

12. The Co-Chair proposed the adoption of the agenda, and the Board agreed to the agenda as attached in appendix II to the report.

B. Election of Co-Chairs

13. The current Co-Chair Andrew Clark announced that the Board would turn to the election of the two Co-Chairs for the fourth term of the Board, drew the Board's attention to the Rules of Procedure of the Governing Board and requested the Secretariat to present the provisions for the election of the new Co-Chairs.

14. The representative of the Secretariat presented paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Rule 9. She recalled that, according to paragraph 1, the Board shall have two Co-Chairs, elected from among the members of the Board, reflecting the composition of the Board and the purpose of the Programme. She noted that, according to paragraph 3 of Rule 9, the Board shall elect two Co-Chairs at the first meeting of each new term of the Board, and that the Co-Chairs' term ends when the next Co-Chairs take up the next term.

15. Furthermore, the Secretariat informed the Board that Obed Meringo Baloyi from South Africa and Andrew Clark from the United States had indicated their willingness to take on the Co-Chair role, and noted that Governing Board Co-Chairs represent the intent of the Programme, one of them being from a Party eligible to be supported by the SIP (developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition) and the other one from a Party contributing to the Specific Trust Fund. The Secretariat further informed the Board that both Obed Meringo Baloyi and Andrew Clark had confirmed to the Secretariat their availability to take on the task.

16. The current Co-Chair Andrew Clark asked if there was any objection to the election of Obed Meringo Baloyi and Andrew Clark as Co-Chairs for the term of the Fourth Governing Board, or if any Board member had comments. There were no objections expressed. One Board member expressed her support to the election of Obed Meringo Baloyi and Andrew Clark as Co-Chairs for the term of the Board, and congratulated them on their election. The Co-Chair Andrew Clark thanked the Board and invited the newly-elected Co-Chair Obed Meringo Baloyi to make initial remarks.

17. Obed Meringo Baloyi thanked the Board for the support and trust, remarked that he looked forward to working together with all Board members on the SIP, and noted that this meeting would consider a number of important issues, notably the annual report of the Secretariat on the operations of the SIP, the status of the Specific Trust Fund, the decision on the review of the financial mechanism adopted by COP-5 as well as the UNEA-6 resolution on the sound management of chemicals and waste, and the Board's consideration to launch the Fourth Round of applications to the SIP.

C. Request for disclosure of any possible personal and/or financial conflict of interest

18. The Co-Chair Obed Meringo Baloyi recalled that, in accordance with paragraph 2 of Rule 23 of the Rules of Procedure for the Governing Board, members have an obligation to promptly disclose to the Board, at the commencement of the meeting, any potential personal or financial interest in any aspect of a project presented for discussion and approval by the Board. The Co-Chair requested the Secretariat to present Rule 23.

19. After the presentation by the representative of the Secretariat, the Co-Chair further noted that at this meeting no projects were being presented for discussion or approval, yet as this matter had been decided to be a standing agenda item of all Board meetings for overall transparency and accountability purposes, it was raised formally to be noted. The Co-Chair opened the floor for questions or comments.

20. No questions or comments were raised.

III. Operations of the Specific International Programme (agenda item 3)

A. Operations of the Programme, including status of implementation of First, Second and Third Round projects

21. The Co-Chair Andrew Clark invited the Board to consider the meeting document SIP/GB.9/2, on operations of the Specific International Programme, including the status of the Specific Trust Fund, 2024 annual report.

22. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat updated the Board on the implementation status of the first five projects receiving support from the Specific International Programme. She informed that the five projects approved in the First Round of applications to the SIP,

namely Argentina, Armenia, Benin, Iran and Lesotho, had all been completed. They were approved in late 2018 and began implementation in 2019. One project closed on schedule and completed its terminal review by May 2021. Mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, other projects experienced delays and disruptions. As a result, in 2021 two projects requested six month no-cost extensions within the 36-month time frame, and were successfully completed in 2021. The other two projects in 2022 requested exceptional six month no-cost extensions beyond the 36-month time frame for SIP projects, which were provided with formal agreement of the Co-Chairs of the Governing Board. Both projects were completed in November 2022. The representative of the Secretariat noted that three terminal evaluations and one terminal review of the First-Round projects had already been completed and made available on the website. She also highlighted that one of the projects that ended in November 2022 (Benin) only submitted final reporting in March 2024, showing an unspent project balance of USD 174,113, and that, at its Eighth Meeting, the Board had agreed to retain the unspent balance to the Specific Trust Fund to be available for the Fourth Round of applications to the SIP. For a full overview of the status of the five projects, as of 15 April 2024, see appendix III to the report.

23. The Co-Chair noted the progress made on the implementation of the First Round and asked the Board members if they had any questions or comments related to the status of implementation of First Round projects.

24. One Board member, reflecting on the challenges highlighted by the Secretariat with regard to the receipt of Benin's reporting, asked whether the Secretariat had taken steps to assess whether the Parties were able to fulfil their reporting obligations. He further asked the Secretariat to provide more details on whether the only disbursement of project funds had enabled the Benin project partners to complete all the agreed project activities.

25. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the Secretariat explained that the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) for the Benin project was signed in May 2019 for an initial duration of 36 months and a total project budget of USD 249,113. The Secretariat disbursed the first instalment of funding (USD 65,000) upon signature. Since subsequent reports did not show expenditures justifying further transfers of project funding, the Secretariat did not proceed to make additional disbursements. Before the expiration of the three-year agreement, Benin requested to extend the project by an additional period of six months, until November 2022, which was approved by the Co-Chairs of the Governing Board, as this arrangement would extend the maximum time frame for SIP projects, as per SIP application guidelines. An amendment to the PCA was signed in May 2022 to extend the project at no cost until 19 November 2022. The final expenditure report, which was only submitted in March 2024, showed that two out of four project outputs had been fully completed, and that total project expenditures amounted to USD 65,000, matching exactly the amount of the first instalment of funding disbursed by the Secretariat at the beginning of the project. Therefore, the project presented an unspent balance of USD 174,113, already excluding USD 10,000 set aside for the terminal evaluation. The representative of the Secretariat added that the terminal evaluation of the project would be conducted by an external evaluator and would provide a better understanding of the challenges faced by the project partners and the results achieved by this project with the funding provided.

26. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the Secretariat presented the ten projects approved in the Second Round, namely the projects in Antigua and Barbuda, Ecuador, Ghana, Indonesia, Iran, Moldova, Nigeria, Peru, Sri Lanka, and Zambia. She noted that seven projects were completed, and the other three projects would be completed by October 2024. Based on project reporting, the Secretariat considered the delays and disruptions mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to national administrative procedures to be manageable. The representative of the Secretariat highlighted that one project (Moldova) closed in September 2023 with an unspent project balance of USD 1,399, as shown in the final expenditure report and the final audit, to be refunded to the Secretariat. She explained that a total of USD 7,164, which includes the balance to be refunded and the amount of the undisbursed final instalment of USD 5,765, was expected to remain after completion of the refund process and project closure, which the Secretariat would include in funds available for the Fourth Round of applications. The representative of the Secretariat further noted that another project (Indonesia) with a total project budget of USD 143,340 closed in March 2023 with total expenditures verified in final project reporting amounting to USD 92,909. Since only one of four instalments of funds for this project had been disbursed (USD 80,000), in line with reported spending, the Secretariat disbursed a second instalment of project funding of USD 12,909, in line with reported expenditures. She further recalled that, at its Eighth Meeting, the Board had agreed to reallocate to the Fourth Round of applications any undisbursed project balance, and to receive an update on the project from the Secretariat at its Ninth Meeting. The Secretariat therefore updated the Board that the project was closed and the unspent verified balance of USD 50,431 would be retained by the Specific Trust Fund and made available for the Fourth Round of applications.

27. The Secretariat explained that two Second Round projects closed on schedule; five projects requested no-cost extensions of the project duration and closed in the second half of 2023 or in early 2024, well within the 36-month timeframe for SIP projects; and two projects requested, in early 2024, no-cost extensions which would stretch the project duration beyond the 36-month timeframe. One project (Iran) requested an eight-month extraordinary extension until October 2024 due to severe COVID-19 pandemic-related delays and subsequent lengthy official procedures to make changes in the technical partner team; and the other project (Zambia) requested an extraordinary six-month extension until August 2024 due to significant delays in consultant procurement in addition to initial COVID-19 pandemic-related delays. The representative of the Secretariat highlighted that the Co-Chairs of the Board had agreed to granting these extensions. Lastly, the Secretariat informed the Board that two projects had requested no-cost amendments to the project legal agreements to make minor changes to the project budget table, all of which were considered reasonable and were approved by the Secretariat. For a full overview of the status of these ten projects, as of 15 April 2024, see appendix III.

28. The Co-Chair applauded the progress made on the implementation of the Second Round and opened the floor for questions or comments related to the status of implementation of Second Round projects.

29. One Board member, with respect to final reports of completed projects that had not yet been submitted, asked if a timeline had been established for their submission. In addition, referring to the Zambia project and expressing concern as to whether the project's intended outcome was compromised, he asked for clarification as to why only one instalment of funding had been disbursed, and what the likelihood was that further instalments would be disbursed before the end of the project in August 2024. He further inquired about the extent of completion of activities under the Indonesia project.

30. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat clarified that timelines for final reporting and auditing are contained in the project legal agreements, which generally provide a window of two to three months after the completion of technical activities for the submission of final reports. The Secretariat added that most final reports are submitted within the stipulated timeframe, and after possible revision, are approved and published on the Convention website. With respect to the Zambia project, she acknowledged the difficulties encountered by the partner in the procurement of project consultants, which delayed the implementation of activities and caused a low spending that did not justify further disbursements of project funding. She noted that, given the financial management responsibilities of the Secretariat, it would be important to close this project in time to ensure a timely closure of the Second Round. Regarding the Indonesia project, the Secretariat clarified that most of the agreed activities were completed by the end of the project to an extent that left both the Secretariat and the project partner satisfied.

31. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat then updated the Board on the implementation status of the nine Third Round projects. She noted that, of the nine projects approved, namely Burundi, Cuba, Gabon, India, Iran, Jordan, North Macedonia, Rwanda and Senegal, eight legal agreements were in place by 15 April 2024. She outlined that one twenty-four-month project which agreement was signed in July 2022 (Gabon) had only just started implementation due to unforeseen issues in transferring the first instalment of project funding, which was only available in the project banking account in August 2023, and to subsequent delays related to freezing of public administration accounts. She further noted that a request for a twelve-month no cost extension of the project duration was submitted to the Secretariat in February 2024, and an amendment to the legal agreement to extend the project within the thirty-six-month maximum timeframe for SIP projects was signed in April 2024, extending the project until July 2025. The representative of the Secretariat also informed the Board that the agreement for another project (India) was signed in August 2023, but that implementation had not yet started due to unforeseen issues in transferring the first instalment of project funding, which the Secretariat was working closely with the partner to rectify.

32. Regarding the remaining unsigned agreement (Iran), the representative of the Secretariat recalled that, at the Board's Seventh Meeting, the Secretariat sought the Board's guidance on an urgent yet suitable deadline for the conclusion of these agreements, and the Board requested the Secretariat to work with the project partners to complete remaining details as soon as possible and ideally by the end of 2022; and at the Eighth Meeting, the Secretariat consulted the Board members on revising the deadline for finalization of the agreement, and the Board instructed the Secretariat to consult with the project partner with a view towards signing the agreement, failing which the Board at its Ninth Meeting would consider reallocating the funds to the Fourth Round. She further informed the Board that the Secretariat had continued working with the project partner to provide support in overcoming the impediments delaying signature, which are related to the identification of suitable banking arrangements, and that considering that a bank account to receive the project funding had recently been open, the Secretariat expected the agreement to be signed within the following weeks.

33. Noting the progress in the implementation of the round, the Co-Chair opened the floor for questions and comments related to the status of implementation of Third Round projects, and invited Board members to share their views about the issue of the unsigned agreement.
34. One Board member suggested that it might be useful to explore the possibility of preparing a technical report on the extent to which the three rounds of applications to the SIP had thus far contributed to the implementation of the Minamata Convention, including the number of project activities that had supported the implementation of specific articles of the Convention.
35. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat underlined the importance of such a report and recalled the mid-term evaluation, which found that the SIP is fulfilling the overall requirement to support Parties in meeting their implementation needs. She added that this finding was further reinforced by the second review of the financial mechanism and the three terminal evaluations conducted to date. Lastly, she further added that the Secretariat would strive to put the Results Framework of the SIP to use to present more clearly the overall results achieved by projects.
36. With respect to the unsigned agreement, the Co-Chair asked whether the Board members agreed to allow additional time for the finalization of the legal agreement for the Iran Third Round project until the Tenth Meeting of the Governing Board, at which time if the agreement was not signed the funding would be made available for the Fourth Round of applications.
37. No questions or objections were raised, and the Board agreed to the Co-Chair's proposal.
38. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the Secretariat continued its presentation of the annual report on the operations of the Programme, illustrating the various communication and outreach activities conducted to raise the profile of the SIP: firstly, the representative recalled that the PowerBI dashboard on SIP projects, developed by the Secretariat taking into account the proposals made by the Governing Board at its Eighth Meeting, was launched in October 2023. She further added that the Secretariat had revamped its project database, including both SIP and GEF projects. Secondly, she outlined that the Secretariat had continued improving and updating the SIP webpage on the Minamata Convention website. Thirdly, she recalled that the fifth edition of the SIP Matters newsletter was released in October 2023, and that two "SIP stories" were released in 2023, one about how approved SIP projects had incorporated gender considerations, and the other about the Secretariat's participation in the regional workshop in Burkina Faso, organized as part of the SIP joint project by Senegal, Burkina Faso and Togo. Fourthly, she highlighted that the Secretariat had worked closely with the project partners to produce fact sheets for each of the First, Second and Third Round projects, providing an overview of their projects, including their objectives, results, budgets, duration, and project management. Fifthly, she informed the Board that two "SIP Coffee" online sessions were conducted in December 2022 and August 2023. Lastly, she updated the Board that the Secretariat launched the Minamata Online 2024 season on 7 March 2024 with a session entitled "Mainstreaming gender in capacity-building projects: practical approaches", which presented information on how to incorporate gender in projects of the SIP, the Global Environment Facility, and the Special Programme.
39. The Co-Chair opened the floor for questions and comments about the communication and outreach activities carried out by the Secretariat.
40. One Board member asked whether the Secretariat had considered sharing aspects of successful project applications, as well as instructions for preparing successful project applications through the SIP Matters newsletter and the project fact sheets.
41. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat explained that although these communication materials sought to highlight project activities successfully implemented, this did not necessarily translate into providing more instructions for crafting successful applications. She added that the Secretariat aims to continue augmenting the information available on the website and creating linkages with the Secretariat of the Global Mercury Partnership for Parties to access additional technical expertise.
42. Subsequently, the Co-Chair turned to the last part of the annual report to the Governing Board on the operations of the Programme as contained in SIP/GB.9/2, namely the Work programme for 2024-2025.
43. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat informed the Board of the overall work programme of the SIP for 2024-2025, which included: first, supporting the projects starting and under implementation on a daily basis, including through one-on-one sessions in English, French and Spanish when needed, and through participation in project activities, both in person and online when possible. Second, fully closing the five projects from the First Round and the eight projects from the Second Round that had been completed, as well as the last two Second Round projects to be completed

by October 2024. Third, supporting the terminal reviews and evaluations of completed projects. Fourth, supporting the Governing Board in addressing findings and recommendations of the mid-term evaluation and the second review of the financial mechanism, and undertaking actions in accordance with COP-5 Decision MC-5/11. Fifth, continuing to fundraise for the Fourth Round of applications. Sixth, undertaking the preparatory work needed to successfully launch the Fourth Round of applications.

44. The Co-Chair invited the Board members to reflect and comment on the Secretariat's work programme for 2024 and 2025.

45. No questions or comments were raised.

B. Status of the Specific Trust Fund

46. The Co-Chair Obed Meringo Baloyi turned to the matter of the status and administration of the Specific Trust Fund.

47. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat recalled that the Programme is open to receive contributions for a period of ten years from the establishment of the Specific Trust Fund, and that the Conference of the Parties (COP) may decide to extend this period, not exceeding an additional seven years, taking into account the regular review process of the financial mechanism. She further outlined that the SIP's support to Parties had been made possible due to the generous contributions from ten donor Parties since 2018, listing them in order of amount made to the Specific Trust Fund: Norway, Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, the United States of America, Austria, France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Denmark; and she remarked that the SIP is also open to receive support from the private sector, foundations, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, academia and other types of civil society actors.

48. The representative of the Secretariat explained that the financial resources of the SIP as held in the Specific Trust Fund are used for the approved projects of eligible Parties, the meetings of the Governing Board, and the operations of the Programme, and that the Specific Trust Fund contributions are subject to 13% programmatic support costs (PSC). She noted that the General Trust Fund does not make staff posts directly available for the operations of the SIP, and that various Secretariat staff members service the SIP in addition to their other roles and responsibilities in the Secretariat. She further noted that the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) post, provided by the Government of Italy, will end in October 2024, and although the Secretariat had advertised the availability of a Junior Professional Officer post, no indication of a country offer to fill the post had been received as of 15 April 2024.

49. As part of its annual report on income and expenditure, the representative of the Secretariat outlined that the total amount of contributions to the First and Second Rounds of the SIP, as of 15 April 2024, was USD 3,701,909. She explained that the total projected expenditure for the First and Second Rounds, including operating expenditures for meetings and other costs of the Programme, was USD 3,404,022, and that the projected balance after the conclusion of the First and Second Rounds (inclusive of 13% programmatic support costs – PSC), the projects' respective terminal reviews or evaluations, the mid-term evaluation of the SIP, the co-funding of the Junior Professional Officer post, and contractual support for peak workloads, was estimated at USD 297,887. The Secretariat highlighted that the projected balance for the First Round alone was estimated to amount to USD 244,558, which the Secretariat proposed to move to the Fourth Round in order to fully financially close the First Round.

50. Regarding the Third Round, she highlighted that the total amount of contributions available to the Governing Board at the time of decision-making for the Third Round and the operations of the Programme (excluding PSC) was USD 2,248,085.02. She recalled that, at its Sixth Meeting, the Board approved nine projects for the Third Round against this budget envelope amounting to USD 2,193,842 (excluding PSC) and that, subsequent to the meeting, an additional USD 225,826.85 was received (from the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States of America) bringing the total for the Third Round to USD 2,473,911.86 (inclusive of PSC). She updated the Board that, currently, USD 2,388,641 are programmed for projects, which leaves a small balance of USD 85,271 for meetings and other operating costs.

51. Lastly, regarding the Fourth Round, the representative of the Secretariat showed that the total amount of contributions and pledges available for the Fourth Round and the operations of the Programme, as of 29 February 2024, was USD 1,652,517.75, which would be subject to small adjustments and be augmented by any unspent balances from the First and Second Rounds that the Board would agree to reprogramme to the Fourth Round of applications, as well as by a new contribution pledged by Germany. The Secretariat also highlighted that fundraising efforts for the Fourth Round would continue throughout 2024.

52. The Co-Chair Obed Meringo Baloyi asked the Board if they had any questions or comments related to the status and administration of the Specific Trust Fund. He emphasized that the Junior Professional Officer post dedicated to the SIP would end in October 2024, and that the Secretariat was not aware of any country offer to fill this post. He noted that the JPO programme is a great opportunity for Governments to show their support for programmes of their choice, and to provide professional growth experiences for their nationals. He then invited the Board to consider the Secretariat's suggestion to move the projected remaining balance from the First and Second Rounds to the Fourth Round.

53. One Board member requested the Secretariat to provide a summary of the balances of the First and Second Round projects to be reprogrammed to the Fourth Round of applications. Another Board member inquired whether funding requests for projects of the Fourth Round had already been received by the Secretariat, and the amount requested for the implementation of these projects. He also suggested that the additional contribution pledged by Germany in April 2024 be accounted for and shown as part of the total amount of contributions and pledges available for the Fourth Round and the operations of the Programme. Another Board member welcomed the progress made in fundraising since the Board's Eighth Meeting and expressed interest in reading the Benin terminal evaluation once completed and made available, emphasizing his support for making the unspent balance of the Benin project available for the Fourth Round.

54. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat clarified that the project balances of the First and Second Round projects would include the unspent balances of the Benin, Indonesia and Moldova projects, as well as some unspent funds for the operations of the Programme. Concerning the total amount of funding requested for the implementation of Fourth Round projects, she explained that the Secretariat did not yet have an indication of such an amount. She added that the experience of the Third Round of applications would be the most instructive, with an available budget of about USD 2 million and a higher number of well-articulated project applications than the Board could agree to fund. The representative of the Secretariat then noted that the same situation could be expected to occur again in the new round, and that an envelope lower than USD 2 million would likely not be sufficient to meet the needs of the projects deserving approval in the Fourth Round.

55. The Co-Chair thanked the donors that had contributed and pledged to the Fourth Round: 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; noted that the second day of the Governing Board meeting would be devoted to the Board's considerations to launch the Fourth Round of applications, and that to this end, the Board would again consider the updated total amount of contributions and pledges available for the Fourth Round and the operations of the Programme.

IV. Items for the attention of the Governing Board: Review of the Financial Mechanism and UNEP/EA.6/L.12 resolution on the sound management of chemicals and waste (agenda item 4)

56. The Co-Chair Andrew Clark invited the Board to turn to the meeting documents SIP/GB.9/3 Items for the attention of the Governing Board: Decision MC-5/11, Review of the Financial Mechanism of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, and UNEP/EA.6/L.12, resolution on the sound management of chemicals and waste and SIP/GB.9/INF/3 Report of the second review of the financial mechanism.

57. The Co-Chair recalled that COP-5 completed the second review of the financial mechanism, in accordance with paragraph 11 of Article 13 and on the basis of the report on the second review provided to the COP by an external and independent evaluator, and adopted Decision 5/11; he further recalled that, as one of the two parts of the financial mechanism of the Convention, the SIP was examined by the evaluator in the development of the report, and that the second review took into account the report of the Executive Director of UNEP on strengthening the SIP; and he highlighted that the Board made a statement in plenary at COP-5 during the agenda item on the review of the financial mechanism.

58. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat presented the first item for the attention of the Governing Board, namely Decision MC-5/11 on Review of the Financial Mechanism of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. She emphasized that a key conclusion of the report of the second review was that, in the period under consideration, the financial mechanism had proven effective in the provision of adequate, predictable, and timely financial resources for supporting developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition in implementing their obligations under the Convention.

59. In presenting Decision 5/11, the representative of the Secretariat firstly noted that the decision requested the Secretariat to keep the Governing Board informed of relevant Convention obligations and

deadlines, and that in this regard the Secretariat had made available a table on obligation deadlines on the Convention website, and a National Reporting Dashboard providing summary data and information gathered through national reporting. She noted that the Governing Board may at this meeting or in the future wish to discuss these information sources and their utility in providing the Board with information pursuant to Decision 5/11. Secondly, she noted that the Decision also requested the Board to take into consideration the findings and recommendations of the second review, including with respect to indicators for use in monitoring and reporting, in its ongoing deliberations, and that in this regard the SIP mid-term evaluation recommended a comprehensive SIP Results Framework and Theory of Change which were adopted for use by the Governing Board at its Eighth Meeting. She noted that the Board may wish to discuss the extent to which these fulfil the relevant recommendation when fully implemented in the Fourth Round and beyond. Thirdly, she recalled that the COP resolved to increase efforts to augment the funding available in the Specific Trust Fund to support Parties in undertaking critical implementation efforts in the second half of the initial period of the SIP; and requested the Secretariat to prepare an analysis of expected funding needs and related staffing needs through the second half of the initial terms of the SIP, noting that the Secretariat planned to prepare such an analysis in 2024. She brought to the Board's attention the current staffing situation – with the Junior Professional Officer post ending in October 2024, and the recruitment for the vacant P4 position of Programme Management Officer for Capacity-building and Technical Assistance underway – and informed the Board that the Secretariat is prepared to arrange for consultant support for periods of peak workload, as previously agreed by the Board. She also recalled Decision 5/20, on programme of work and budget for the biennium 2024-2025, inviting Parties and other stakeholders in a position to do so to provide an in-kind contribution, in the form of a secondment or a Junior Professional Officer, to support the operation of the SIP. Lastly, she informed the Board that Decision 5/11 requested the Secretariat to develop terms of reference for the third review of the financial mechanism, for consideration by the COP at its Sixth Meeting, and noted that the Board may wish to discuss any views that would be relevant in the drafting of the terms of reference for the third review, which will be presented in draft to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-6).

60. The Co-Chair noted that regular reviews of the financial mechanism are required according to the Convention text and are an important tool for the COP to take appropriate action to improve the effectiveness of the financial mechanism. He subsequently opened the floor for any Board members' questions or comments related to COP-5 Decision 11 or the actions in response to the decision, as presented by the Secretariat, including any suggestions for drafting the terms of reference for the Third Review of the financial mechanism.

61. No questions or comments were raised.

62. The Co-Chair turned to the last part of agenda item 4, on UNEP/EA.6/L.12, resolution on the sound management of chemicals and waste. He noted that the Sixth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6), which took place in Nairobi from 26 February to 1 March 2024, adopted a resolution on the sound management of chemicals and waste, which among other things requested UNEP Executive Director to facilitate coordination between the new Global Framework on Chemicals Fund, the Specific International Programme and the Special Programme. Recalling that a representative of the Special Programme Secretariat was present at the meeting to help the Board understand this topic well and answer any questions the members might have, he invited the Secretariat to present the second item for the attention of the Governing Board, namely UNEP/EA.6/L.12, resolution on the sound management of chemicals and waste.

63. The representative of the Secretariat noted that in the resolution, the Assembly requested UNEP Executive Director to facilitate coordination between the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund, the Specific International Programme and the Special Programme, within their respective mandates, in order to enhance complementarity and avoid duplication. Highlighting that the Secretariat already coordinates closely with the Special Programme Secretariat in the administration of their respective programmes, she informed the Board that the Secretariat was engaged in recently started discussions among UNEP staff with respect to the implementation of the request and expects to further coordinate with the new Global Framework on Chemicals Fund going forward. As part of the coordination effort, she noted that an information session for the members of the Special Programme Executive Board and the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund Executive Board took place on 9 April 2024, and that the Secretariat delivered a presentation at that session. She further outlined the distinctive features of the three funds already operational to support implementation of the Minamata Convention, namely the SIP, the GEF and the Special Programme.

64. The Co-Chair highlighted that these funds operate within their respective mandates, in order to enhance complementarity and avoid overlaps; noted the already good coordination between the SIP and the Special Programme, which is expected to expand to the new Fund going forward; and asked the

Board if they had any questions or comments, also inviting them to express their views on how the Secretariat and the Governing Board might further advance this coordination, in response to the resolution.

65. One Board member inquired about the possibility of financing projects with a combination of funds from more than one financing mechanisms. He also asked for further details on the difference between SIP funding of smaller capacity-building projects and GEF funding of large projects. Underlying that his country benefited from Special Programme funding, he also stressed the importance of establishing synergies between these funds to support developing countries, and suggested that new options such as project co-funding or funding recommendations provided for subsequent country projects be considered. Another Board member remarked that discussions on how to ensure better coordination and complementarity among funds and to explore opportunities and challenges are useful and beneficial for the implementation of chemical and waste conventions.

66. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, a representative of the Secretariat explained that SIP projects have the potential to lay the groundwork for, or be complementary to, or follow-up to larger GEF projects. With regard to the co-financing of projects with multiple sources of funding, she noted the merits of the concept, but illustrated that, in addition to logistical challenges, such an arrangement may not be feasible within the current terms of reference due to the manner in which donor funds are contributed to the Trust Funds, and that a project legal agreement that commingles funds would present challenges for the Secretariats with respect to management of donor funds and donor reporting. She added that the possibility of having a number of complementary projects within the same funding mechanism was discussed at the information session for the members of the Special Programme Executive Board and the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund Executive Board.

67. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Special Programme Secretariat added that although there are discussions ongoing about how to make the different funds complementary to one another, the SIP and the Special Programme have very clear and distinct mandates and the secretariats already cooperate to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication. Setting up a mechanism where a single application could result in funding from one or more of the different funds would be logistically challenging, as a completely different application process would be required and the funds have separate decision-making bodies. She also noted that, at UNEA-6, the terms of reference of the Special Programme were reopened, but solely to include support for the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund in the mandate.

68. The Co-Chair concluded by remarking on the importance of better coordination among the funds and promoting synergies in view of the broader goal of managing chemicals and waste and, noting no more requests for the floor, closed agenda item 4.

V. Items for consideration by the Governing Board: Fourth Round of applications (agenda item 5)

A. Considerations to launch the Fourth Round of applications

69. The Co-Chair Obed Meringo Baloyi invited the Board to turn to the meeting documents SIP/GB.9/4 Considerations to launch the Fourth Round of applications to the Specific International Programme and SIP/GB.9/INF/4 Report of the mid-term evaluation of the Specific International Programme.

70. The Co-Chair recalled that the Board had launched three rounds of applications to the SIP: the First Round in 2018, the Second Round in 2019, and the Third Round in 2020-2021, and that a total of 24 projects had been approved for funding. He noted that at both its Seventh and Eighth Meetings, the Board considered the level of funding not sufficient to allow the Board to launch the Fourth Round of applications. Further, the Co-Chair noted that the SIP is already into its seventh year of implementation, and only three and a half years remain of its initial timeframe of 10 years. Subsequently, he requested the Secretariat to present the considerations to launch the Fourth Round of applications.

71. The representative of the Secretariat recalled that the Governing Board had thus far launched three rounds of applications: in the First Round, the Governing Board approved five projects; in the Second Round, the Board approved ten projects; and in the Third Round, the Board approved nine projects. She recalled that, at its Seventh Meeting in November 2022, the Board noted that the level of funding did not yet allow the launch of the Fourth Round, set a mid-2023 target date for launching the Fourth Round, with the hope that more funding would be available by that time, and agreed to intensify the fundraising efforts. The Board also agreed to issue its own call for contributions, which the Secretariat sent on behalf of the Board to all National Focal Points and Permanent Missions on 22 May

2023. At its Eighth Meeting in August 2023, the Board noted that the funding available was not yet sufficient for the Board to launch the Fourth Round, and agreed to postpone this discussion to the Board's Ninth Meeting. In 2022 and 2023, the Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention and the Secretariat, including with the support of the UNEP Executive Director, reached out to current donors and potential future donors to encourage contributions to the Fourth Round. To raise awareness of the SIP and its funding needs, the Secretariat also drew attention to the work of the Programme in all relevant engagements, webinars and meetings. She added that the Secretariat would continue its fundraising efforts throughout 2024 with a view to raising additional funding for the Fourth Round of applications by the time of the Tenth Meeting of the Board.

72. The Secretariat further presented that, as of 16 April 2024, USD 1,552,517.75 had been raised for the Fourth Round of applications to the SIP. This amount would be augmented by the remaining balance of the First Round of applications, amounting to USD 244,558 (which includes the Benin project balance and unspent funds for the operations of the Programme), a contribution of approximately USD 277,897 pledged by Germany in April 2024, and an estimated USD 57,595 of unspent balance of two projects of the Second Round of applications (Indonesia and Moldova), bringing the estimated total funding available for the Fourth Round of applications to the SIP as of 16 April 2024 to USD 2,132,567.75. She clarified that this amount did not yet account for the 13% programme support costs. The representative of the Secretariat suggested that the Governing Board may wish to decide whether to instruct the Secretariat to launch the Fourth Round of applications, with a view towards approving projects at its Tenth Meeting. She added that this amount may go up as fundraising efforts will continue throughout 2024.

73. The Co-Chair invited the Board members to share their views and comments about whether to instruct the Secretariat to launch the Fourth Round of applications after the Board's Ninth meeting and with a view towards approving projects at its Tenth Meeting, noting that questions of timing and procedures would be considered later.

74. One Board member, noting that at least USD 2 million were considered necessary to launch a new round of applications, expressed support for the launch of the Fourth Round. Another Board member found the improved level of funding encouraging, and recalling that additional contributions might still be added to the funding available, supported the launch of the Fourth Round.

75. The Co-Chair, acknowledging that two members had explicitly expressed their support for the launch of the Fourth Round of applications and that no objections had been expressed by the other Board members, instructed the Secretariat to launch the Fourth Round of applications.

B. Lessons learned following three rounds of applications

76. The Co-Chair Obed Meringo Baloyi invited the Board to turn to agenda item 5 (b), on Lessons learned following three rounds of applications. The Co-Chair noted that this item was based on discussion that took place at the Board's Sixth Meeting, following the Board's decision-making on the Third Round of applications.

77. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the representative of the Secretariat recalled that the Governing Board, at its Sixth Meeting, collected recommendations and observations for future rounds of applications including, among others: a) the value of the introduction of a two-step approach in the review of the applications for the Third Round could be seen in the well-articulated applications, and it also enabled the Secretariat to identify applications better suited for funding by the Global Environment Facility; b) the project appraisals prepared by the Secretariat were useful, as was the robust decision-making matrix to select which among many well-articulated applications to fund in the context of a limited funding envelope; c) although there is no practice of binding regional balance for decision-making in the SIP, some UN regions submitted more applications than others, and some of the neediest Parties had not prepared sufficiently convincing project proposals, language being a significant barrier in this regard. Building on such recommendations and observations, the Secretariat suggested that the two-step approach be continued for the Fourth Round applications; that the Secretariat continues to prepare project appraisals to support the Board's deliberation; that the Secretariat continues to support applicant Parties, to the extent possible in Spanish and French in addition to English, in the preparation of robust project proposals; and that webinars on applications be organised in different languages and time zones, to support a broad base of applicants.

78. The Secretariat further specified that the application guidelines for the Fourth Round would be made available in English, French and Spanish, whereas the application forms would be produced in English only, being the working language of the Governing Board. Furthermore, the Secretariat noted the planned minimal updates to the SIP application materials to be made by the launch date.

79. The Co-Chair opened the floor for any questions or comments. No requests for the floor were made and the Co-Chair moved to the next agenda item.

C. Proposed calendar of activities for the launch and appraisal of the Fourth Round of applications

80. The Co-Chair Obed Meringo Baloyi invited the Board to turn to agenda item 5 (c), on the proposed calendar of activities for the launch and appraisal of the Fourth Round of applications.

81. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat informed the Board that the Special Programme had planned to launch its eighth round of applications on 24 April 2024, with the deadline for application submission set on 23 August 2024. She explained that launching the SIP Fourth Round in parallel would be beneficial in terms of cross-communications and awareness raising, and, considering that SIP and Special Programme focal points often coincide, to guide eligible Parties on choosing the more suitable fund for their application. She added that the Secretariat would be able to have all application materials ready by the launch date on 24 April 2024. Presenting the proposed calendar of activities for the 2024-2025 biennium, the representative of the Secretariat explained that the proposed timelines would allow the Secretariat to carry out most of the intensive work related to the launch of the round in 2024, a non-COP year. This would include the provision of technical assistance to applicant Parties, the technical review and appraisal of submitted applications and the preparation of draft appraisals and meeting documents for the Board's Tenth Meeting. The proposed calendar of activities would also allow the Board to meet to consider and decide on project applications in January 2025, well in advance of the deadline for the preparation of the Governing Board report to COP-6. Moreover, the Secretariat would be in a position to aim for the signature of all or most of the legal agreements of the approved projects by the time of COP-6.

82. The Co-Chair opened the floor for any questions or comments regarding the proposed calendar of activities, underlining that the proposed date for the launch of the round would be 24 April 2024 and the proposed deadline for the submission of applications to the Fourth Round would be 31 July 2024.

83. One Board member supported the proposal to launch the Fourth Round of applications to the SIP concurrently with the eighth round of applications to the Special Programme. Another Board member asked the Secretariat to clarify whether the launch of the Fourth Round would require any involvement from the Board, and expressed support for the proposed 31 July deadline.

84. Following the Secretariat's clarification that no Governing Board involvement would be required on the day of the launch, the Co-Chair acknowledged the support for the proposed calendar of activities and instructed the Secretariat to launch the Fourth Round of applications on 24 April 2024 and to set the deadline for the submission of applications on 31 July 2024.

D. Mid-term evaluation of the Specific International Programme of the Minamata Convention on Mercury: Select findings and recommendations related to the launch of the Fourth Round

85. The Co-Chair Andrew Clark invited the Board to turn to agenda item 5 (d), on Mid-term evaluation of the Specific International Programme of the Minamata Convention on Mercury: Select findings and recommendations related to the launch of the Fourth Round. He recalled the decision made by the Governing Board at its Sixth Meeting to undertake a mid-term evaluation of the SIP. He noted that the end of 2022 marked five years in operation of the SIP, which was the mid-point of its initial term, and that the Board determined that a mid-term evaluation would serve to provide evidence of performance and results to meet accountability requirements and the objective of the Convention; and to ensure continuous operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing. He highlighted that the evaluation's findings were quite positive, as the evaluation found that the SIP is serving the needs identified by the Parties to the Convention, and that the support provided by the SIP is clearly contributing to strengthening the capacity of Parties to fulfil their Convention obligations.

86. Further, the Co-Chair recalled that, at its Eighth Meeting, the Board considered the report on the mid-term evaluation and approved the use of the Theory of Change, the Stakeholder Analysis, and the Results Framework of the SIP; that the Board also considered the 11 conclusions and related recommendations that the evaluator had provided for the Secretariat, the Board, and the COP, as well as the corresponding next steps proposed by the Secretariat; and that the Board put some of the recommendations to use immediately, while noting that some others could be addressed at its future meetings. He emphasized that, at its Ninth Meeting, the Board would focus attention on the elements of the mid-term evaluation relevant to the launch of the Fourth Round.

87. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat provided a brief overview of the report of the mid-term evaluation of the SIP, the Theory of Change of the SIP and the SIP Results Framework. She underlined that, while the Results Framework does not have an impact on individual projects, it will be helpful for use in assessing the performance of the SIP and how it is achieving its outputs and outcome. She added that the indicators may be useful to Parties developing future applications, but the established appraisal criteria for individual projects will not be changed based on the Results Framework. She further added that the Board might consider directing the Secretariat to include the Theory of Change of the SIP and the SIP Results Framework in the application materials for the Fourth Round of applications.

88. The representative of the Secretariat recalled that the mid-term evaluation had assessed the SIP in relation to its strategic relevance, financial management, effectiveness, efficiency, monitoring and reporting, sustainability, the factors affecting its performance, the nature of the external context and the quality of its design; and that the evaluator presented a number of findings, some of which could be relevant for the Board in considering the launch of the Fourth Round of applications. Among the findings, she pointed out that the evaluator noted that additional Secretariat staff support would be required to carry out the tasks associated with the Fourth Round and the ongoing support and oversight of the projects under implementation; that the evaluator found that some project partners' reporting has not been adequately results-based; that, although the application guidelines strongly encourage gender considerations and provide guidance for their inclusion, many projects did not undertake specific actions and others did not explicitly record and report sex disaggregated data; that the guidance on addressing human rights is sparse, focus on the issue is lacking; and that, with respect to Environmental and Social Safeguards, more indications could be provided in the application guidelines to assist in explicitly covering this subject.

89. Turning to the mid-term evaluation's recommendations, the representative of the Secretariat presented the 11 recommendations, distinguishing those discussed at the Board's Eighth Meeting or otherwise addressed from the five recommendations that could be relevant for the Board's consideration before the launch of the Fourth Round of applications.

90. The Co-Chair asked the Board members if they had any concerns, questions, comments or suggestions related to the recommendations and the proposed next steps for the Board's consideration.

91. One Board member, regarding the recommendation to provide special assistance to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) interested in developing SIP fundable proposals suggested that, in addition to the support directly provided by the Secretariat, the Secretariat could connect applicants with the technical support available through the Global Mercury Partnership and, possibly, other partnerships. Another Board member asked about the number of SIDS and LDCs that have benefited from SIP support in the previous three rounds and suggested that a low percentage could possibly indicate the need for additional support. He also requested the Secretariat to consider adding information on the number of LDCs and SIDS that accessed SIP support into the SIP dashboard.

92. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat noted the suggestion to raise awareness of the technical support for project applications accessible through the Global Mercury Partnership or other programmes of potential support. Furthermore, the Secretariat clarified that in the first three rounds of applications the SIP had supported six LDCs, of which two in the First Round, one in the Second Round and three in the Third Round, and two SIDS, one in the Second Round (this being a regional project involving other countries in the Caribbean region), and one in the Third Round. The representative of the Secretariat informed the Board that this information will be incorporated in the SIP dashboard and anticipated that the SIP Results Framework would allow to disaggregate the results data accordingly. Furthermore, she recalled that, during the Third Round of applications, webinars were held at time slots that were convenient for the Pacific Islands, and that for the Fourth Round the Secretariat would again endeavour to ensure that support is provided at different time slots. Lastly, she encouraged Board members to inform the Secretariat of any applicants in need of specific information and support.

93. The Co-Chair invited further questions and comments. Given that no further requests for the floor were received, the Co-Chair proposed to proceed directing the Secretariat to support applicant Parties in including more specific gender-related outputs, activities and indicators in the project application; and encouraging applicant Parties to include more specific gender-related outputs, activities and indicators in their project applications, and work with the Secretariat to strengthen their logical frameworks.

94. As no objections were raised by the Board members, the Co-Chair instructed the Secretariat in this regard and closed agenda item 5.

VI. Dates and venue of the next meeting (agenda item 6)

95. The Co-Chair Obed Meringo Baloyi turned to agenda item 6, on dates and venue of the next meeting. Recalling that this is a standing item of any meeting, he reminded that at its meetings the Board is to oversee the operations and administration (including implementation of projects) of the Programme, the launch of rounds of the SIP, and decision-making on applications to the rounds. He noted that, as the Board agreed that the Fourth Round of applications to the SIP would be launched after the meeting, it would be appropriate for the Board, at its Tenth Meeting, to consider and deliberate on the project proposals submitted for this round. Considering that the Board had not met in-person since before the COVID-19 pandemic, he invited members to comment on whether they wanted the Tenth Meeting to be organized in-person or online. To this end, he noted that funding had been set aside to support travel of members from developing countries and members from countries with economies in transition.

96. The Co-Chair noted that the Board may further wish to decide on the date, reflecting on the January 2025 timeframe proposed by the Secretariat in the launch timeline. He reminded the Board members that, 2025 being a COP year and given the Secretariat's staffing constraints, it would be important for the Secretariat to be able to wrap up decision making on the round very early in the year. Acknowledging that other meetings and obligations of Board members should be taken into consideration, he invited the members' views in this regard. He further noted that although the Secretariat would be happy to organize the meeting in Geneva, offers of hosting or suggestions for other venues would be welcome; and that such alternative arrangements would require that travel costs for the Secretariat be factored into the meeting budget. He then opened the floor for questions and comments on the dates and venue of the Tenth Meeting.

97. One Board member inquired whether the Tenth Meeting could be organised in a hybrid format, to take into account the challenges some Board members might encounter with visa processing. Another Board member supported the proposal to hold an in-person meeting to discuss project applications and, recognising the difficulties that other Board members might face, asked the Secretariat if a hybrid meeting would be feasible. Another Board member requested the Secretariat to ensure the Tenth Meeting of the Board would not overlap with other international meetings being organised in January 2025.

98. The representative of the Secretariat clarified that although a hybrid meeting would be technically feasible, the Secretariat could not guarantee that it would be as seamless as a fully in-person meeting, therefore this option could be carefully considered at a later stage. Furthermore, the Secretariat remarked that holding the Tenth Meeting as early as possible in January 2025 would allow the Board to decide on projects before the intensive preparations for COP-6 begin. Nevertheless, the Secretariat agreed to gather further information on possible overlaps with other international meetings before proposing exact dates. The Secretariat also invited Board members to share information on any other commitments planned during the proposed timeframe.

99. The Co-Chair thanked the Secretariat and noted that the Secretariat will be in close contact with the Co-Chairs on the timing and arrangements for the Board's Tenth Meeting, and in turn the Co-Chairs will be in close contact with the Board members well in advance of the meeting, and no later than October 2024.

VII. Other matters (agenda item 7)

100. Co-Chair Obed Meringo Baloyi turned to agenda item 7, on other matters.

101. One Board member asked the Secretariat for clarification on the operating costs of the SIP, in particular whether a budget is set aside for activities in addition to funding for approved projects and whether there is a limit to the budget set aside for operating costs.

102. The representative of the Secretariat clarified that the SIP had been operated in a streamlined and cost-effective manner, with reduced operational costs, but that no cap had been established for operational costs. She explained that the Specific Trust Fund funded the mid-term evaluation of the SIP and co-funded the third year of the Junior Professional Officer, but that Secretariat staff members, who are not funded by the Specific Trust Fund, provide technical support to the SIP in addition to their other Secretariat responsibilities. She further explained that, for the Third Round of applications, the Secretariat hired consultant support to assist in reviewing applications, drafting appraisals for the Board's consideration, and finalising the project documents for approved projects. Although such consultant support was not funded by the Specific Trust Fund, the Governing Board agreed that it would be reasonable to set aside a small portion of SIP funding for hiring consultants during periods of peak workload, if needed. Lastly, the representative of the Secretariat noted that funds had been set aside to cover Secretariat staff travel to the Tenth Meeting of the Board, should this not take place in Geneva.

103. Acknowledging no further requests for the floor, the Co-Chair moved to the following agenda item.

VIII. Adoption of the meeting report (agenda item 8)

104. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair Obed Meringo Baloyi, the representative of the Secretariat informed the Board that the Secretariat would complete the draft meeting report, which would be first reviewed by the Co-Chairs and subsequently shared with all Board members for their final review prior to adoption by electronic means as soon as possible and no later than the end of May. The representative added that the finalized report of the Ninth Meeting will be posted on the website, and thereby made available to COP-6.

105. The Co-Chair opened the floor for comments and requests for clarifications.

106. One Board member asked whether the meeting report would contain information about the discussions of the Board members and the decisions taken during the meeting.

107. The representative of the Secretariat clarified that the report would build on the meeting documents and capture the discussions of the Board members without attributing statements to specific Board members, as well as the decisions taken and a final list of participants.

108. Acknowledging no further requests for the floor, the Co-Chair turned to the following agenda item.

XI. Closure of the meeting (agenda item 9)

109. To conclude, the Co-Chair Andrew Clark first invited the Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention to provide closing remarks, then acknowledged that the launch of the Fourth Round was an important and long-awaited achievement of the Board's Ninth Meeting. He reminded that the next Board meeting would be tasked with appraising and deciding on the projects to be funded by the Fourth Round of applications, and that resource mobilization remains a key imperative for the success of the Programme. Recognizing that the mid-term evaluation of the SIP and the second review of the SIP are important milestones for the SIP and the overall financial mechanism, he emphasized that the SIP had been fully evaluated and found to be meeting its mission to provide effective implementation support, and that these good results were achieved through the hard work of the Board, the Parties managing projects and the Secretariat.

110. Lastly, the Co-Chair thanked the Board members for their work and the Secretariat for the preparation of and support to the meeting, and in particular, the outgoing Junior Professional Officer for her outstanding support of the SIP over the past nearly three years.

111. The Co-Chair declared the meeting closed at 16:09 on Tuesday, 16 April 2024.

Appendix I

List of participants

GOVERNING BOARD (2024-2025)

<p>AFRICA MADAGASCAR Liliane Randrianomenjanahary Chef de Service Médico-Social, Membre du Groupe de Travail de l'Evaluation Mondiale du Mercure Ministère de l'Environnement et des Forêts Rue Farafaty, Ampandrianomby, B.P. 571 101 Antananarivo Madagascar Email: randrialiliane@gmail.com</p> <p>ASIA AND THE PACIFIC IRAQ Luay Sadeq Almkhtar Department Manager Department of Chemical Control and Evaluation of Contaminated Sites Ministry of Environment Alwaziriya - Almaghreb Square, Baghdad Iraq Email: luay_al_mokhtar@yahoo.com; moen.iraq@gmail.com</p> <p>EASTERN EUROPE CROATIA Mario Vujic Senior Expert Adviser-Specialist Division for Prevention and Reduction measures of Air, Soil and from Light pollution Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development Radnička cesta 80 10 000 Zagreb Croatia Email: mario.vujic@mingor.hr</p> <p>LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN BRAZIL Ana Cristina Linhares Environmental Analyst Coordination for the Control of Waste and Emissions Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources Setor de Clubes Esportivos Norte, Trecho 2, Edifício Sede do Ibama - CEP 70818-900 - Brasília/DF Email: ana.linhares@ibama.gov.br</p> <p>WESTERN EUROPE AND OTHERS GERMANY Rafael Zubrzycki Desk Officer International Chemical Safety, Sustainable Chemistry Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety Köthener Str. 2 - 3 10963 Berlin Germany Email: rafael.zubrzycki@bmuv.bund.de</p>	<p>AFRICA SOUTH AFRICA Obed Meringo Baloyi Chief Director Chemicals Management Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Private Bag X447, 0001, Pretoria South Africa Email: obaloyi@dffe.gov.za</p> <p>ASIA AND THE PACIFIC SRI LANKA R. H. M. P. Abeykoon Additional Secretary Environment Policy & Planning Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment "Sobadam Piyasa", 416/C/1, Robert Gunawardana Mawatha, Battaramulla Sri Lanka Email: addlsecepp@env.gov.lk; pathma66a@gmail.com</p> <p>EASTERN EUROPE NORTH MACEDONIA Suzana Andonova Project Advisor POPs Unit Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning Plostad Presveta Bogorodica 3 1000 Skopje Republic of North Macedonia Email: s.andonova@pops.org.mk; suzana_andonova@yahoo.com</p> <p>LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN GUYANA Michelle Astwood Environmental Specialist Ministry of Natural Resources 96 Duke Street Kingston, Georgetown Guyana Email: mastwood@nre.gov.gy</p> <p>WESTERN EUROPE AND OTHERS UNITED STATES OF AMERICA Andrew Clark Division Chief for Chemicals, Air Quality, and Waste Office of Environmental Quality U.S. Department of State 2201 C St NW 20520 Washington, DC Email: clarkad@state.gov</p>
---	---

SECRETARIAT

<p>Monika Stankiewicz Executive Secretary Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Email: monika.stankiewicz@un.org</p> <p>Marianne Bailey Senior Coordination Officer Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Email: marianne.bailey@un.org</p> <p>Sandra Ruecker Administrative Officer Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Email: sandra.ruecker@un.org</p> <p>Lara Ognibene Legal/Programme Officer Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Email: lara.ognibene@un.org</p>	<p>Maria Irene Rizzo Associate Expert for Capacity-building and Technical Assistance Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Email: irene.rizzo@un.org</p> <p>Alexandru Sofroni Programme Management Assistant Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Email: alexandru.sofroni@un.org</p> <p>Pablo Garmón Public Information Assistant Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Email: pablo.garmonfidalgo@un.org</p> <p>Shariful Islam Programme Management Assistant Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Email: shariful.islam1@un.org</p>
--	--

OBSERVERS

<p>Katherine Theotocatos Programme Management Officer Secretariat of the Special Programme International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Email: katherine.theotocatos@un.org</p>	
--	--

Appendix II

Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Organizational matters
 - (a) Adoption of the agenda
 - (b) Election of co-chairs
 - (c) Request for disclosure of any possible personal and/or financial conflict of interest
3. Operations of the Specific International Programme
 - (a) Operations of the Programme, including status of implementation of First, Second and Third Round projects
 - (b) Status of the Specific Trust Fund
4. Items for the attention of the Governing Board: Review of the Financial Mechanism and UNEP/EA.6/L.12 resolution on the sound management of chemicals and waste
5. Items for consideration by the Governing Board: Fourth Round of applications
 - (a) Considerations to launch the Fourth Round of applications
 - (b) Lessons learned following three rounds of applications
 - (c) Proposed calendar of activities for the launch and appraisal of the Fourth Round of applications
 - (d) Mid-term evaluation of the Specific International Programme of the Minamata Convention on Mercury: Select findings and recommendations related to the launch of the Fourth Round
6. Dates and venue of the next meeting
7. Other matters
8. Adoption of the meeting report
9. Closure of the meeting

Appendix III

Overview of the Implementation of projects from the First, Second and Third Round

Tables 1, 2 and 3 present the status of projects of the First, Second and Third Round, as per 15 April 2024.

Table 1: First Round of Applications (2018)

Party name	Agreement details	Status
Argentina – COMPLETED		
1 August 2019 – 31 December 2021 (29 months, extended)	Project Cooperation Agreement with National Institute of Industrial Technology in cooperation with Basel Convention Regional Centre for South America	The project is completed. The Partner requested a five-month no-cost extension to December 2021 (for a new total duration of 29 months) to allow for additional time to finalize the project activities. Five rounds of reporting received, plus the final report. Minor amendment to the budget to shift funds to year two and away from travel requested due to COVID-19-related impacts. All four instalments of funds disbursed. Terminal evaluation completed.
250,000 USD		
Armenia – COMPLETED		
1 June 2019 – 30 November 2021 (30 months, extended)	Small-Scale Funding Agreement with the Hydrometeorology and Monitoring Center State Non-Commercial Organization of the Ministry of Environment	The project is completed. The project has experienced some limited delays in implementation due to COVID-19. The Partner requested a six-month no-cost extension to November 2021 (for a new total duration of 30 months) to allow for additional time to finalize the project activities. Five rounds of reporting received, plus the final report. All four instalments disbursed. Terminal evaluation completed.
162,000 USD		
Benin – COMPLETED		
20 May 2019 – 19 November 2022 (42 months, extended) *	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Living Environment and Sustainable Development	The project is completed. Final reports and project outputs were submitted, and reviewed and approved by the Secretariat in March 2024. The project experienced significant delays both in its initial stages, then later due to COVID-19-related impacts, administrative delays and national reforms in the procurement procedures. Therefore a no-cost six-month extension was requested in 2022, stretching the project duration to 42 months. Three rounds of reporting received, in addition to final reporting. Because the final expenditure report showed a total expenditure that matched the amount of the first instalment of funding, no further instalments of funds will be disbursed. The Secretariat will retain USD 10,000 to conduct the terminal evaluation of the project. A balance of USD 174,113 remains at the conclusion of the project.
249,113 USD		
Iran (Islamic Republic of) – COMPLETED		
5 May 2020 – 4 August 2021 (15 months)	Small Scale Funding Agreement with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Research Institute of Petroleum Industry	The project is completed. All reporting including final reports were received. All instalments were disbursed. Terminal review was undertaken, completed and submitted by the project partner and accepted by the Secretariat.
100,000 USD		

Party name	Agreement details	Status
Lesotho – COMPLETED		
10 May 2019 – 9 November 2022 (42 months, extended) *	Project Cooperation Agreement with Department of Environment of the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture	The project is completed. Project activities commenced in January 2020. The project experienced some delays including due to COVID-19, therefore a no-cost six-month extension was requested, stretching the project duration to 42 months. All agreed activities were completed by the end of the project. Five rounds of reporting received, in addition to final reports. All five instalments of funds disbursed. Terminal evaluation completed.
200,550 USD		

**Projects with duration exceeding the 36-month maximum time set for SIP projects, were extended exceptionally with formal agreement of the Co-Chairs of the Governing Board*

Table 2: Second Round of Applications (2019)

Party name	Agreement details	Status
<u>Antigua and Barbuda</u> – COMPLETED		
13 October 2020 – 12 October 2023 (36 months, extended)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Department of Analytical Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs	The project is completed, and the Secretariat is awaiting submission of final reporting. The implementation of some in-person activities was disrupted due to COVID-19. A no-cost nine-month extension of the project duration (until October 2023) was provided to allow more time for finalization of the activities, through an amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement signed in 2023. Four of six rounds of reporting received. Two of three instalments of funds disbursed to date. The final instalment of funding will be disbursed after approval of final reports
210,000 USD		
Note: This is a regional project, also including Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.		
<u>Ecuador</u>		
6 July 2021 – 5 July 2024 (36 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition jointly with Investment Fund for Sustainable Environment	The project is underway. Notwithstanding the legal agreement was only signed in July 2021 and the project implementation only began in January 2022 due to delays in the national contracting process, the project is largely on track and will be completed in July 2024. An amendment to the legal agreement was signed in September 2023 to undertake a number of shifts in budget categories and budget years. All five rounds of reporting received. Three of four instalments of funds disbursed to date.
250,000 USD		
<u>Ghana</u> – COMPLETED		
4 December 2020 – 3 December 2023 (36 months, extended)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Health	The project is completed, and the Secretariat is awaiting submission of final reporting. Due to some initial delays, including a lengthy transfer of funds process and a change in the project focal point, an amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement to extend at no cost the project duration by six months was signed in May 2023, and the project completed the final activities by December 2023. Four of five rounds of reporting received. Three of four instalments of funds disbursed to date. The final instalment of funding will be disbursed after approval of final reports.
250,000 USD		
<u>Indonesia</u> – COMPLETED		
21 September 2020 – 20 March 2023 (30 months)	Small-Scale Funding Agreement with Ministry of Health jointly with Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for Southeast Asia	The project is completed. All three rounds of reporting received. Final report and terminal review submitted in August 2023 and approved by the Secretariat. The first instalment of funds (USD 80,000) was disbursed upon signature of the legal agreement. Because final reporting showed a total project expenditure of USD 92,909, the Secretariat disbursed a second instalment of funds (USD 12,909) after acceptance of final reporting.
143,340 USD		

Party name	Agreement details	Status
Iran (Islamic Republic of)		
3 February 2021 – 2 October 2024 (44 months, extended)*	Small-Scale Funding Agreement with Department of Environment	The project is underway. An eight-month no cost extension of the duration of the project was requested in January 2024, due to severe COVID-19 pandemic-related delays and subsequent lengthy official procedures to make changes in the technical partner team. With the agreement of the co-chairs of the SIP Governing Board, an amendment to the project legal agreement was signed in February 2024, extending the project until October 2024. Two of four rounds of reporting received, in April 2022 and December 2023. Two of three instalments of funds disbursed to date.
149,800 USD		
Moldova – COMPLETED		
3 September 2020 – 2 September 2023 (36 months, extended)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment	The project is completed. A first amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement was concluded in September 2022 to undertake minor changes to the project logical framework and budget table, including by planning additional activities to be implemented within the project period with savings resulting from COVID-19 impacts. A second amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement was concluded in May 2023 to extend the project duration by three months to complete final items, at no cost, until September 2023, and to undertake minor shifts in budget categories. All five rounds of reporting received, in addition to the final report. Audit report of the first year of implementation of the project, as well as final financial audit, received and accepted by the Secretariat. Final reporting and audit showed a project balance of USD 1,399 to be refunded to the Secretariat. Three of four instalments of funds disbursed to date. Because the final instalment (USD 5,765) will not be disbursed, the Secretariat expects a small amount of funding (USD 7,164) to remain after project closure.
219,765 USD		
Nigeria – COMPLETED		
6 April 2021 – 5 July 2023 (27 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Federal Ministry of Environment	The project is completed. All project activities were completed according to the agreed logical framework, budget and workplan. All reporting including final reports and audit reports were timely received. All four instalments of funds disbursed to date.
250,000 USD		
Peru – COMPLETED		
27 January 2021 – 26 January 2024 (36 months, extended)	Small-Scale Funding Agreement with Ministry of Environment	The project is completed. The project only began implementation in September 2021 due to national procedures to access the project funding. A no-cost amendment to the Small-Scale Funding Agreement was concluded in July 2023 to extend the ending date for implementation of the project activities until January 2024, update the details of the project partners, revise the workplan and undertake minor shifts in budget years. All four rounds of reporting received. Two of three instalments of funds disbursed to date. The Secretariat is awaiting submission of final reporting to determine total spending, and the final instalment of funding is expected to be disbursed after approval of the final reports.
126,000 USD		

Party name	Agreement details	Status
Sri Lanka – COMPLETED		
24 March 2021 – 23 March 2024 (36 months, extended)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Environment	The project is completed. Due to internal reforms and extensive procedures, the beginning of the project was delayed, and implementation of the activities only began in September 2021. To make up for lost time, several activities have been implemented simultaneously. A six-month no-cost extension of the duration of the project was requested in July 2023, to complete the rest of the activities by March 2024. An amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement, extending the duration of the project and making minor shifts in budget categories, was signed in September 2023. All five rounds of reporting received. Two of three instalments of funds disbursed to date. The final instalment of funding will be disbursed after approval of final reports.
178,659 USD		
Zambia		
23 February 2021 – 22 August 2024 (42 months, extended)*	Project Cooperation Agreement with Zambia Environmental Management Agency	The project is underway. The implementation of the project has experienced significant delays, initially due to COVID-19-related restrictions and impacts and then to delays in consultant procurement. In light of this, in February 2024 the Secretariat received a request to extend the project beyond its thirty-six month timeframe. With the agreement of the co-chairs of the SIP Governing Board, an amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement to extend the project duration, at no cost, by an additional six months, was signed in February 2024. Several activities are now being implemented simultaneously to allow for completion of all or many of the activities by the end date. Five of six rounds of reporting received. One of four instalments of funds disbursed to date.
200,000 USD		

****Projects with duration exceeding the 36-month maximum time set for SIP projects, were extended exceptionally with formal agreement of the Co-Chairs of the Governing Board***

Table 3: Third Round of Applications (2021)

Party name	Agreement details	Status
<u>Burundi</u>		
7 June 2022 – 6 June 2025 (36 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Burundian Office for the Environment Protection, Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock of Burundi	The project is underway. The legal agreement was signed in 2022 and implementation of project activities is progressing according to the agreed logical framework. Two of four instalments of funds have been disbursed to date. Three rounds of reporting received by the Secretariat.
250,000 USD		
Cuba		
17 August 2023 – 16 August 2026 (36 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Center for Environmental Studies of Cienfuegos, Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment jointly with Basel Convention Coordinating Centre and Stockholm Convention Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean Region	The project is underway. A tripartite legal agreement was signed in 2022 between the Secretariat, the Center for Environmental Studies of Cienfuegos of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment of Cuba (CEAC) and an implementing partner which was subsequently terminated due to unforeseen factors. A new tripartite legal agreement between the Secretariat, CEAC and the Basel Convention Coordinating Centre and Stockholm Convention Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean Region was signed in August 2023. One of four instalments of funds has been disbursed to date. No reporting has been received yet.
249,210 USD		
<u>Gabon</u>		
4 July 2022 – 3 July 2025 (36 months, extended)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Forests, Oceans, Environment and Climate Change	The project is underway. The legal agreement was signed in 2022, however implementation has only recently started due to unforeseen issues in transferring the first instalment of project funding and to subsequent freezing of public administration accounts. A request to extend the project duration by an additional period of twelve months was submitted to the Secretariat in February 2024, and the amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement to grant a no cost extension until July 2025 was signed in April 2024. One of four instalments of funds has been disbursed to date. One round of reporting received. Note: This is a regional project, also including Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of the Congo, and Sao Tome and Principe.
249,500 USD		
India		
29 August 2023 – 28 February 2026 (30 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change	The implementation of the project has not yet started. The legal agreement was signed in August 2023, however implementation has not yet started due to unforeseen issues in transferring the first instalment of project funding.
240,000 USD		
Iran (Islamic Republic of)		
TBC (30 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade	Legal agreement has not been signed yet.
238,000 USD		

Party name	Agreement details	Status
Jordan		
20 October 2022 – 19 April 2025 (30 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Environment	The project is underway. The legal agreement was signed in 2022 and implementation has begun. The Secretariat has not yet received the first project reporting, which is delayed due to a change in the project focal point and lengthy hiring procedures to support project implementation. One of four instalments of funds disbursed. No reporting has been received yet.
250,000 USD		
<u>North Macedonia</u>		
8 June 2022 – 7 June 2025 (36 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning	The project is underway. The legal agreement was signed in 2022 and implementation is progressing according to the agreed logical framework. An amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement was signed in December 2023 to undertake some shifts in budget categories. Two of four instalments of funds have been disbursed. Two rounds of reporting received to date.
248,500 USD		
<u>Rwanda</u>		
5 September 2022 – 4 September 2025 (36 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Rwanda Environment Management Authority	The project is underway. The legal agreement was signed in 2022 and implementation is largely on track. Two of four instalments of funds have been disbursed. Two rounds of reporting received.
220,000 USD		
<u>Senegal</u>		
14 July 2022 – 13 July 2025 (36 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development jointly with Regional Center of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions for French-speaking Countries of Africa	The project is underway. The legal agreement was signed in 2022 and implementation is progressing according to the signed legal agreement. Two of four instalments of funds have been disbursed. Three rounds of reporting received. Note: This is a regional project with Burkina Faso and Togo.
248,632 USD		

Annex II

Report of the tenth meeting of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance

I. Opening of the meeting (agenda item 1)

1. The tenth meeting of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-building and Technical Assistance (SIP) was opened at 10:00 a.m. (CET) on Wednesday, 22 January 2025 by the Co-Chairs of the Governing Board, Andrew Clark (United States of America) and Obed Meringo Baloyi (South Africa).

2. The list of participants is attached as appendix I to the report. The Secretariat informed that, due to challenges in obtaining his visa, one Board member from the Asia-Pacific region, Luay Almukhtar of Iraq was unable to attend the meeting in person and would participate online.

3. Andrew Clark and Obed Meringo Baloyi introduced themselves as current Co-Chairs and warmly welcomed all Board members. The Co-Chair Andrew Clark noted that this meeting would consider a number of important issues, including among others: the annual report of the Secretariat on the operations of the SIP; the status of the Specific Trust Fund; the 29 eligible applications received for the Fourth Round of SIP funding; the draft terms of reference for the third review of the financial mechanism; the Secretariat's update on the draft analysis of expected funding needs and related staffing needs through the second half of the initial term of the SIP; and the coordination with the Secretariats of the Special Programme and the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund.

4. The Co-Chair noted the participation of three observers in the meeting namely Kay Williams of the Secretariat of the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund, Katherine Theotocatos of the Secretariat of the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), and Brenda Koekkoek, who would join the Secretariat as Senior Coordination Officer as of 1 February 2025.

5. The Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention, Monika Stankiewicz, welcomed the participants and noted with satisfaction that the Board would at this meeting consider 29 eligible applications from around the world, the highest number of applications ever submitted in a SIP round, and approve a number of projects for SIP funding. She emphasized that the strong interest in this funding round is a testament to SIP's continued relevance for the Parties to the Minamata Convention and to the ongoing need to strengthen capacities for implementing Convention obligations. She further highlighted that the 15 successfully concluded SIP projects, five from the First Round and ten from the Second Round, have delivered tangible, practical results, advancing Parties on their path to fully implementing the Convention. She recalled that COP-6 in November 2025 would consider the draft Terms of Reference for the third review of the financial mechanism, and that this review will play a pivotal role in informing COP-7's decision on whether to extend the SIP duration for an additional seven years. Lastly, she thanked the donors to the Specific Trust Fund – 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 – whose generous contributions would enable the funding of a number of Fourth Round project proposals.

II. Organizational matters (agenda item 2)

A. Adoption of the agenda

6. The Co-Chair invited Board members to propose any additional agenda items under Agenda Item 8: Other matters. No additional agenda items were proposed.

7. The Co-Chair proposed the adoption of the agenda, and the Board agreed to the agenda as attached in appendix II to the report.

B. Request for disclosure of any possible personal and/or financial conflict of interest

8. The Co-Chair Obed Meringo Baloyi recalled paragraph 2 of Rule 23 of the Rules of Procedure for the Governing Board, stating that members have an obligation to promptly disclose to the Board, at the commencement of the meeting, any potential personal or financial interest in any aspect of a project presented for discussion and approval by the Board. The Co-Chair further recalled Rule 23 paragraph 1, stating that in cases where a member of the Board is from a country that has submitted a project to the Board for its consideration, that member shall be excused from participating during the deliberations of and decision-making by the Board in relation to the project in question.

9. After a more detailed presentation of Rule 23 by the representative of the Secretariat, the Co-Chair noted that at this meeting this standing agenda item of all Governing Board meetings would be applicable, as decisions would be taken on the approval and funding of applications to the Fourth Round of the SIP. The Co-Chair opened the floor for declarations of disclosure as pertaining to Rule 23 paragraph 2.

10. Three members of the Board (Brazil, Madagascar, and Sri Lanka) indicated that their countries had submitted project applications. Another Board member (Guyana) asked whether, as a project partner in the Antigua and Barbuda project proposal submitted in the Fourth Round, she should be excused from participating in the decision-making regarding the project.

11. The Co-Chair thanked the three Board Members for their declarations of disclosure. Upon request of the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat clarified that, because the Antigua and Barbuda project proposal had been submitted by Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana's circumstances would not fall under Rule 23. Therefore, the Board agreed to allow the Board member from Guyana to participate in the deliberations of the Antigua and Barbuda project.

12. Based on the past practice of the Governing Board that have enabled three successful and transparent rounds of decision-making of the Governing Board, the Co-Chair further outlined that to be "excused" from participating during the deliberations of and decision-making by the Board shall mean in practice for Brazil, Madagascar and Sri Lanka, that:

- a. The Board Member may be present in the room to hear and observe the deliberations on the project but would not speak to the application and would not participate at all in deliberations affecting the application.
- b. The Board Member may request the other Board Member representing the region (or a Board Member from a different region) to speak, if necessary, to the application during the deliberations.
- c. At the time of decision-making of the Board on that project, the Board Member would not be present in the room.

13. The Co-Chair further outlined that, as Co-Chairs, they will seek to guide the discussion on the list of applications to approve for funding in the Fourth Round in the full spirit of cooperation and transparency, noting that it remains the prerogative of the Co-Chairs at the time of deliberation to decide if at any point a Board Member with a potential conflict of interest may be allowed to be present in the room or not in light of the overall deliberations.

III. Operations of the Specific International Programme (agenda item 3)

A. Operations of the Programme, including status of implementation of First, Second and Third Round projects

14. The Co-Chair Obed Meringo Baloyi invited the Board to consider the meeting document SIP/GB.10/2, Operations of the Specific International Programme, including the status of the Specific Trust Fund, 2025 annual report.

15. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat updated the Board on the implementation status of the first five projects receiving support from the Specific International Programme. She informed that the five projects approved in the First Round of applications to the SIP, namely Argentina, Armenia, Benin, Iran and Lesotho, had all been completed. They were approved in late 2018 and began implementation in 2019. One project closed on schedule and completed its terminal review by May 2021. Mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, other projects experienced delays and disruptions. As a result, in 2021 two projects requested six month no-cost extensions within the 36-month time frame, and were successfully completed in 2021. The other two projects in 2022 requested

exceptional six month no-cost extensions beyond the 36-month time frame for SIP projects, which were provided with formal agreement of the Co-Chairs of the Governing Board. The activities for all 5 projects were completed by November 2022, and all final reports had been received by the Secretariat. The representative of the Secretariat noted that three terminal evaluations and one terminal review of the First-Round projects had already been completed and made available on the website, and that the remaining terminal evaluation was ongoing. She also highlighted that one of the projects that ended in November 2022 (Benin) had an unspent project balance of USD 174,113, which, as agreed by the Board at its Eighth Meeting, had been made available for the Fourth Round of applications to the SIP. For a full overview of the status of the five projects, as of 22 January 2025, see appendix III.

16. The Co-Chair noted the progress made on the implementation of the First Round and asked the Board members if they had any questions or comments related to the status of implementation of First Round projects.

17. No comments or questions were raised.

18. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the Secretariat presented the ten projects approved in the Second Round, namely the projects in Antigua and Barbuda, Ecuador, Ghana, Indonesia, Iran, Republic of Moldova, Nigeria, Peru, Sri Lanka, and Zambia. She noted that all projects began implementation in late 2020 or early 2021, and they were all completed by October 2024. The representative of the Secretariat highlighted that one project (Republic of Moldova) closed in September 2023 with an unspent project balance of USD 1,399, as shown in the final expenditure report and the final audit, which was refunded to the Secretariat. She explained that a total of USD 7,164, which included the refunded balance and the amount of the undisbursed final instalment of USD 5,765, remained after completion of the refund process and project closure, which the Secretariat included in funds available for the Fourth Round of applications. The representative of the Secretariat further noted that another project (Indonesia) with a total project budget of USD 143,340 closed in March 2023 with total expenditures verified in final project reporting amounting to USD 92,909. Since only one of four instalments of funds for this project had been disbursed (USD 80,000), in line with reported spending, the Secretariat disbursed a second instalment of project funding of USD 12,909, in line with reported expenditures. She further informed the Board that, as agreed by the Board at its Eighth Meeting, the Secretariat had reallocated the undisbursed project budget of USD 50,431 to the Fourth Round of applications.

19. The Secretariat explained that two Second Round projects closed on schedule; five projects requested no-cost extensions of the project duration and closed in the second half of 2023 or in early 2024, well within the 36-month timeframe for SIP projects; and two projects requested, in early 2024, no-cost extensions which stretched the project duration beyond the 36-month timeframe. One project (Iran) requested an eight-month extraordinary extension until October 2024 due to severe COVID-19 pandemic-related delays and subsequent lengthy official procedures to make changes in the technical partner team; and the other project (Zambia) requested an extraordinary six-month extension until August 2024 due to significant delays in consultant procurement in addition to initial COVID-19 pandemic-related delays. The representative of the Secretariat highlighted that the Co-Chairs of the Board had agreed to granting these extensions. Lastly, the Secretariat informed the Board that two projects had requested no-cost amendments to the project legal agreements to make minor changes to the project budget table, all of which were considered reasonable and were approved by the Secretariat. For a full overview of the status of these ten projects, as of 22 January 2025, see appendix III.

20. The Co-Chair applauded the progress made on the implementation of the Second Round and opened the floor for questions or comments related to the status of implementation of Second Round projects.

21. No comments or questions were raised with respect to the Second-Round projects.

22. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat then updated the Board on the implementation status of the nine Third Round projects. She noted that, of the nine projects approved, namely Burundi, Cuba, Gabon, India, Iran, Jordan, North Macedonia, Rwanda and Senegal, eight or nine project legal agreements were signed in 2022 or 2023. She outlined that one twenty-four-month project which agreement was signed in July 2022 (Gabon) only started implementation in 2024 due to unforeseen issues in transferring the first instalment of project funding, which was only available in the project banking account in August 2023, and to subsequent delays related to freezing of public administration accounts. She further noted that an amendment to the legal agreement to extend at no cost the project duration for an additional twelve-month period was signed in April 2024, extending the project until July 2025 (within the SIP thirty-six-month timeframe). The representative of the Secretariat also informed the Board that the agreement for another project (India) was signed in August 2023, but that the project had faced unforeseen issues with the transfer of the first instalment of project funding.

This was disbursed in June 2024, but the project partners had not yet confirmed its receipt to the Secretariat.

23. Regarding the remaining project that had not yet started (Iran), the representative of the Secretariat recalled that, at the Board's Eighth Meeting, the Secretariat consulted the Board members on revising the deadline for finalization of the agreement, and the Board instructed the Secretariat to consult with the project partner with a view towards signing the agreement, failing which the Board at its Ninth Meeting would consider reallocating the funds to the Fourth Round; and that, at the Board's Ninth Meeting, the Board agreed to allow additional time for the finalization of the legal agreement until its Tenth Meeting. She further informed the Board that, by the time of the Board's Tenth Meeting, the legal agreement was completed and signed by the project partner, with only the Secretariat's signature missing pending one clarification on the banking details.

24. Noting the progress made in the implementation of the round, the Co-Chair opened the floor for questions and comments related to the status of implementation of Third Round projects.

25. One Board member recalled her country's project, approved in the Third Round of the SIP for a total duration of 36 months, and informed the Board that, despite significant progress made in implementation, an extension of the project duration beyond the thirty-six-month SIP timeframe appeared to be needed to allow for completion of all the activities. She requested the Secretariat to outline the procedure for submitting such a request through official channels. The representative of the Secretariat, recalling that other projects had presented such requests in both the First and Second Rounds of applications, explained that the official request would have to be submitted along with the related justification to the Secretariat, who would subsequently forward it to the Co-Chairs of the Governing Board for consideration and decision-making.

26. Another member applauded the work undertaken by the Secretariat and the Iran project partners towards signature of the legal agreement; he also appreciated the update from the Secretariat and expressed concerns for the lack of information from the India project partners with respect to project implementation. Recognizing that at this meeting the Board was not expected to take any action on this matter, he requested the Secretariat to provide the Board with an update on this project at its next meeting.

27. One member asked the Secretariat for clarification on the implications of SIP project extensions, particularly with regard to specific project outputs and Parties' overall compliance with the Minamata Convention. The representative of the Secretariat clarified that, whenever extensions are requested within the maximum duration of the SIP, the Secretariat proceeds autonomously to extend the project duration through an amendment to the legal agreement; differently, when the requests concern extensions beyond the thirty-six-month SIP timeframe, the Secretariat refers to the Co-Chairs of the Governing Board, also taking into account the Secretariat's financial management requirements and the need to close full SIP rounds in a timely fashion. The Secretariat also explained that project extensions are granted at no additional costs for the SIP, to address projects' implementation issues and enable completion of all project activities and, through this, to advance implementation of the Convention.

28. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the Secretariat continued its presentation of the annual report on the operations of the Programme, illustrating the various communication and outreach activities conducted to raise the profile of the SIP: firstly, the representative recalled that the Secretariat had regularly updated the PowerBI dashboard on the Convention's website, improving it based on the proposal made by the Governing Board at its Ninth Meeting to add information on the number of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) that accessed SIP support. Secondly, she outlined that the Secretariat had posted additional fact sheets of the Third-Round projects on the website, as well as approved SIP project final reports, terminal review and terminal evaluation reports, the report on the mid-term evaluation of the SIP, the SIP Results Framework, the SIP Theory of Change and the Decision tree to apply for the UNEP Special Programme and the Specific International Programme's calls for funding. She further added that the Secretariat had continued improving and updating the SIP webpage on the Minamata Convention website. Thirdly, she highlighted that the Secretariat had developed a new tab of the SIP webpage, containing all information related to the Fourth Round of applications to the SIP. Lastly, she informed the Board that the Secretariat, with the generous financial support of Finland, was developing case studies on the gender dimensions of SIP projects. She further explained that this is one of the activities to be carried out by the Secretariat to advance the Minamata Convention's gender action plan during the biennium 2024-2025.

29. The Co-Chair opened the floor for questions and comments related to the communication and outreach activities carried out by the Secretariat.

30. No questions or comments were raised.

31. Subsequently, the Co-Chair turned to the last part of the annual report to the Governing Board on the operations of the Programme as contained in SIP/GB.10/2, namely the work programme for 2025.
32. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat informed the Board of the overall work programme of the SIP for 2025, which included: first, following the Board's decision on the Fourth Round projects to be funded, notifying the outcome to all applicants, working with the successful applicants to refine their project documents, drafting and finalizing project legal agreements, and disbursing the first instalments of funding, to enable the successful projects to begin. Second, supporting projects starting and under implementation. Third, fully closing the completed projects from the First and Second Rounds, as well as the six Third Round projects that will be completed in 2025. Fourth, supporting the terminal reviews and evaluations of completed projects. Fifth, continuing to update the PowerBI dashboard to make the SIP information as accessible, clear and informative as possible. Sixth, making use of the Results Framework of the SIP, developed by the independent consultant who undertook the mid-term evaluation of the SIP, and supporting the Board in implementing the recommendations of the second review of the financial mechanism and the mid-term evaluation of the SIP. Lastly, seeking and augmenting high-level opportunities to discuss resource mobilization in bilateral, regional and global engagements.
33. The Co-Chair invited the Board members to reflect and comment on the Secretariat's work programme for 2025.
34. No questions or comments were raised.

B. Status of the Specific Trust Fund

35. The Co-Chair Andrew Clark turned to the status and administration of the Specific Trust Fund.
36. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat recalled that the Programme is open to receive contributions for a period of ten years from the establishment of the Specific Trust Fund, and that the COP, at its Seventh Meeting in 2027, would be expected to take a decision on whether to extend the programme for up to an additional seven years, taking into account the review of the financial mechanism.
37. She further outlined that the SIP's support to Parties had been made possible due to the generous contributions from ten donor Parties since 2018, listing them in order of the amount contributed to the Specific Trust Fund: Norway, Switzerland, Germany, the United States of America, Sweden, Austria, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Denmark. Additionally, she underlined that the SIP is open to receive support from the private sector, foundations, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, academia and other types of civil society actors.
38. The representative of the Secretariat explained that the financial resources of the SIP as held in the Specific Trust Fund are used for the approved projects of eligible Parties, the meetings of the Governing Board, and the operations of the Programme, and that the Specific Trust Fund contributions are subject to 13% programmatic support costs (PSC). She noted that the General Trust Fund does not make staff posts directly available for the operations of the SIP other than a portion of the staff post of Programme Management Officer for Capacity-building and Technical Assistance, and that various Secretariat staff members service the SIP in addition to their other roles and responsibilities in the Secretariat. She further noted that the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) post, fully funded by the Government of Italy for two years, co-funded by the Government of Italy and the Specific Trust Fund for a third year, and partially funded by the Specific Trust Fund for a fourth year, will end in October 2025. The representative of the Secretariat added that, although the Secretariat had advertised the availability of a Junior Professional Officer post, no indication of a country offer to fill the post had been received as of 22 January 2025.
39. As part of its annual report on income and expenditure, the representative of the Secretariat outlined that the total amount of contributions to the First and Second Rounds of the SIP, as of 22 January 2025, was USD 3,701,909. She explained that the total projected expenditure for the First and Second Rounds, including operating expenditures for meetings and other costs of the Programme, was USD 3,402,901, and that the projected balance after the conclusion of the First and Second Rounds (inclusive of 13% PSC), the projects' respective terminal reviews or evaluations, the mid-term evaluation of the SIP, the co-funding of the JPO post, and contractual support for peak workloads, was estimated at USD 299,008. The Secretariat highlighted that the projected balance for the First Round alone was estimated to amount to USD 241,413 which, as agreed by the Board in its last meeting, had been reallocated to the Fourth Round in order to fully close the First Round.

40. Regarding the Third Round, she highlighted that the total amount of contributions available to the Governing Board at the time of decision-making for the Third Round and the operations of the Programme (excluding PSC) was USD 2,248,085.02. She recalled that, at its Sixth Meeting, the Board approved nine projects for the Third Round against this budget envelope amounting to USD 2,193,842 (excluding PSC) and that, subsequent to the meeting, an additional USD 225,826.85 was received (from the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States of America) bringing the total for the Third Round to USD 2,473,911.86 (inclusive of USD 284,609.33 of PSC). She updated the Board that, currently, USD 2,479,041 (including PSC) are programmed for projects.

41. The Co-Chair asked the Board if they had any questions or comments related to the status and administration of the Specific Trust Fund regarding the first three rounds of the SIP. He emphasized that the Junior Professional Officer post dedicated to the SIP was extended for a fourth year, until October 2025, and that this extension was important given the work involved in implementing the Fourth Round of applications. He further noted that the Secretariat would be ready to share information on the procedures for providing JPO posts, should any country be interested.

42. One Board member enquired whether any deadlines apply to SIP rounds and requested clarification regarding the funding retained by the Secretariat for the purpose of conducting terminal evaluations. The Secretariat explained that no deadlines are set for the closure of SIP rounds, which can remain ongoing and be extended as long as projects are open and until funds are fully utilised. Regarding the terminal evaluations, the representative of the Secretariat explained that the Secretariat had opted to group these consultancies to simplify their management and facilitate the consultant's full understanding of the Programme. The Secretariat further recalled that the consultancy for the completion of five terminal evaluations, one of a First-Round project and four of Second Round projects, had just begun.

43. Another Board member asked whether the Secretariat would be able to estimate the total expenditure for the Third Round of applications and whether any project funds might remain unspent. The representative of the Secretariat noted that, unless any project encountered serious difficulties, it appeared likely and was the Secretariat's expectation that the full amount of the Third Round would be spent, given the fierce competition for the Third-Round funding at the time of decision making by the Board.

44. Subsequently, the Co-Chair turned specially to the update on the funds and pledges available for the Fourth Round of the SIP and the operations of the Programme. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat showed that the total amount of contributions and pledges available for the Fourth Round and the operations of the Programme, plus the unspent balance from the First and Second Round projects, as of 22 January 2025, was USD 2,523,817. Following deduction of operational costs, including the estimated PSC amount (13%), peak workload needs, and the amount to be set aside for project terminal evaluations, the total estimated amount available for the Fourth-Round projects was USD 2,074,347.

45. The Co-Chair emphasized that the total estimated amount available for the Fourth Round projects would be USD 2,074,347; thanked the donors who had contributed and pledged to the Fourth Round: 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; noted that the second and third days of the Governing Board meeting would be devoted to the Board's considerations of the 29 eligible applications submitted for funding against this funding envelope; and asked Board members to raise any other matters in relation to the operation and status of the Specific Trust Fund, particularly in relation to the funding available for the Fourth Round.

46. One Board member thanked the SIP donors for their generosity and asked the Secretariat to provide further clarification on the duration of the operational costs. The Secretariat explained that the indicated amount referred to the operational costs estimated to be needed to fully manage the Fourth Round of applications throughout the life of the approved projects.

IV. Information from national reporting vis a vis Convention obligations and deadlines pursuant to decision MC-5/11 (agenda item 4)

47. The Co-Chair Obed Meringo Baloyi invited the Board to turn to the meeting documents SIP/GB.10/3 Information from national reporting vis a vis Convention obligations and deadlines pursuant to decision MC-5/11.

48. The Co-Chair recalled that COP-5 requested the Secretariat to keep the SIP Governing Board informed of relevant Convention obligations and deadlines and the extent to which such obligations and deadlines are being met by Parties, based on national reporting.

49. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat explained in more detail that in Decision MC-5/11 on Review of the Financial Mechanism, COP-5 requested the Secretariat to keep the SIP Governing Board informed of relevant Convention obligations and deadlines and the extent to which such obligations and deadlines are being met by Parties, based on national reporting. In this regard, he noted that the Secretariat had made available a table on obligation deadlines on the Convention website, and a National Reporting Dashboard providing summary data and information gathered through national reporting, in addition to the national reporting information made available to the Implementation and Compliance Committee and to the Conference of the Parties. Further, he highlighted that the annex to document SIP/GB.10/3 included relevant information collated from the first full reports and from the first and second short reports.

50. The Co-Chair noted that the second full reporting cycle was in progress, covering the period from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2024, and that full national reports are to be submitted by 31 December 2025. He subsequently opened the floor for any questions or comments.

51. No questions or comments were raised.

V. Consideration of eligible and complete applications for the Fourth Round of funding under the Specific International Programme for decision by the Governing Board (agenda item 5)

52. The Co-Chair Obed Meringo Baloyi invited the Board to turn to the meeting documents for agenda item 5, namely SIP/GB.10/4 Fourth Round of applications to the Specific International Programme and SIP/GB.10/4/Add.1 Compilation of appraisals of applications to the Fourth Round of the Specific International Programme. He noted the substantial task ahead for the Board at this meeting, namely, to review the 29 eligible applications received for funding in the Fourth Round, and invited the Secretariat to present the work undertaken to review and appraise the applications.

53. The representative of the Secretariat recalled that the Fourth Round was launched on Wednesday, 24 April 2024, with a mandatory deadline for submission by Wednesday, 31 July 2024. She remarked that the launch of the Fourth Round of applications was announced through a joint campaign with the UNEP Special Programme, which launched its eighth round of applications on the same day. By 31 July 2024, the mandatory deadline set by the Governing Board, 35 countries had submitted their applications. The representative of the Secretariat explained that all applications were subsequently checked for eligibility and completeness, resulting in 30 applications deemed provisionally eligible and complete and 6 applications deemed ineligible.

54. The representative of the Secretariat, with respect to the submissions that were deemed ineligible, explained that the Secretariat was unable to accept them for the following reasons: one application was submitted in Spanish only and did not focus on the implementation of the Minamata Convention; one was submitted by a non-governmental organization; another was submitted by a non-Party to the Minamata Convention; one was not accompanied by the mandatory Forms B and C; another was submitted by a non-government entity, its Form C lacked all the required signatures and included incorrect National Focal Point contact details; and one was submitted past the deadline, on 2 August 2024. Furthermore, two countries, one of which is a new Party to the Minamata Convention, requested to be allowed to submit their proposal after the 31 July-deadline. Such request was rejected by the Secretariat to ensure fairness and equity in the application process, as well as strict adherence to the timeline for the timely review and appraisal of all submissions. The representative of the Secretariat added that the Secretariat provided feedback to Parties whose ineligible applications were received within the application deadline, providing them with the opportunity to address eligibility conditions; however, none were able to subsequently submit eligible applications.

55. The representative of the Secretariat noted that, of the 30 eligible applications, 14 applications were received from Africa, eight from Asia and the Pacific, five from Latin America and the Caribbean and three from Central and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, of the 30 applications, three were from Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and 14 from Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Of these, one application was submitted by a Party categorized as both a SIDS and an LDC. The representative of the Secretariat explained that, following screening for eligibility and completeness, the Secretariat proceeded to the technical review of the applications, counting also on the review and insights from the representatives of the GEF Secretariat, the Special Programme Secretariat, and the Secretariat of the Global Mercury Partnership as part of the Cross-Secretariat Task Team. The representative of the Secretariat further recalled that the Secretariat provided technical review comments to each applicant by 30 September 2024, with a deadline for resubmissions of applications of 31 October 2024. Almost all applicants availed themselves of the opportunity to revise their applications based on comments

received, within the deadline. One applicant did not revise its application: as the initial application was submitted by a local government entity instead of a national government entity, a situation that was not rectified in a revised submission, the application was therefore deemed ineligible following technical review. The representative of the Secretariat concluded explaining that, following the resubmission of applications, the Secretariat began the formal appraising of the 29 eligible applications.

56. The Co-Chair invited the Board Members to ask any clarifying questions on the review and appraisals prepared by the Secretariat, in preparation for considering them in more detail.

57. No questions or comments were raised on the process of review and appraisal of the Fourth Round applications.

58. Subsequently, the Co-Chair recalled that at its Sixth Meeting in August 2021 the Governing Board made provision for a mid-term evaluation of the SIP, and that at its past two meetings the Board addressed some of the recommendations provided in the mid-term evaluation report and the corresponding next steps proposed by the Secretariat, and considered that the remaining recommendations could be addressed at the Tenth Board meeting, as they relate specifically to the Fourth Round of applications to the SIP.

59. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat presented the recommendations that could be considered and addressed by the Board at its Tenth Meeting, and the proposed next steps, namely: recommendation 1 about revisiting the resource mobilization strategy and updating it for approval and implementation, particularly regarding the additional human resource needs for administrative support in the Secretariat; recommendation 2 on contracting appropriate monitoring and evaluation expertise; recommendation 5 on soliciting the commitment of Parties to map out the steps for the necessary national approvals/legal documents during the proposal preparation process; recommendation 9, addressed to the Convention's Parties and inviting them to commit to completing the signing of the legal document within a specified time frame; recommendation 10 about explicitly including gender-disaggregated indicators in the applications' logical frameworks; and recommendation 11 about conducting ongoing fundraising efforts from the highest possible levels of leadership.

60. The Co-Chair noted that the consideration of these recommendations completed the consideration of the recommendations provided in the mid-term evaluation report, and opened the floor for any questions or comments from the Board members.

61. No questions or comments were raised.

62. The Co-Chair then recalled the elements of the appraisal framework, corresponding to the criteria agreed upon by the Board at its first meeting and presented in the application guidelines for the SIP Fourth Round, namely to:

- a. Check for completeness;
- b. Check for eligibility;
- c. Check for coherence; and
- d. Check for prioritization.

63. Furthermore, the Co-Chair recalled that for the Fourth Round, the application guidelines:

- a. Strongly encouraged the Applicant Governments to submit applications addressing the issue(s) identified as the most important national priorities for funding from the SIP.
- b. Required the project applications to be submitted in English.
- c. Allowed Applicant Governments to jointly submit sub-regional, regional or inter-regional projects, in addition to national projects.
- d. Specified that the proposed activities are not to duplicate funding of activities that are already funded or planned to be funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) or the Special Programme.

64. He also noted that there were some repeat applicants, and that there were no regional applications submitted for funding in the Fourth Round.

65. With this as a background, the Board deliberated on the 29 eligible applications received.

66. Following deliberations on each of the 29 eligible applications the Board succeeded to reach consensus on the projects to fund in the Fourth Round, and approved ten projects amounting to USD 2,020,630. The projects that were approved, pending finalisation of project documents as per Governing Board recommendations, were the following:

Projects approved for funding in the Fourth Round		
Party	Project Title	Amount in USD
Brazil	Artisanal and small-scale gold mining in Brazil: health and environmental aspects of mercury use	240,000
Chad	Controlling trade in mercury and mercury-added products in Chad	220,000
Djibouti	Strengthening the legal and institutional framework for the environmentally sound management of mercury and mercury-containing wastes	193,000
Eritrea	National capacity building to raise awareness of the health and environmental effects of mercury in ASGM activities in Eritrea	85,000
Georgia	Empowering National Capacities and Knowledge Management for Minamata Convention Compliance	234,000
Madagascar	Strengthen the capacity of Madagascar for the implementation of the Minamata Convention and the management of mercury containing products	234,000
Montenegro	Development options for mercury remediation of the contaminated site of former Brskovo metal mining in Montenegro	237,980
Sri Lanka	Provide an environmentally sound integrated solution for management of wastes consisting of, containing or contaminated with mercury or mercury compounds generated in the Ayurvedic drugs manufacturing process to protect the human health and the environment – detailed study from Sri Lanka	189,650
United Republic of Tanzania	Strengthening National Capacity for implementation of the Minamata Convention on mercury in the United Republic of Tanzania	201,000
Zimbabwe	Mitigating Mercury Emissions & Releases from Coal Combustion Power Plants in Zimbabwe towards fulfilling Article 8 Obligations under the Minamata Convention	186,000

67. A total of 19 applications were not approved for funding in the Fourth Round. For these applications, the Board formulated comments and recommendations that the Secretariat would transmit to each of the applicants for their consideration and strengthening of applications for possible submittal to the Fifth Round or a subsequent Round. These applications were the following:

Projects not approved for funding in the Fourth Round	
Party	Project Title
Afghanistan	Strengthening national capacity for effective implementation of Minamata Convention focusing on mercury inventory and increase awareness of key stakeholders on mercury related issues
Antigua and Barbuda	Facilitating capacity-building with technical assistance and technology transfer for managing mercury for the newly established Caribbean Region Mercury Monitoring Network
Bangladesh	Ensuring Health and Environmental Compliance of Mercury added products and Mercury contaminated wastes in Bangladesh

Projects not approved for funding in the Fourth Round	
Party	Project Title
Burkina Faso	Reducing the impact of mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) on biodiversity
Cambodia	Enhancing Regulatory and Technical Capacity for Mercury Free Cosmetics in Cambodia
Cameroon	Institutional Strengthening, Capacity-Building and Awareness-Raising for a Transition to a free Mercury-Added Products Era in Cameroon
Colombia	Promoting Compliance with the Minamata Convention in Colombia: Development of Low-Cost Sensors for Mercury Monitoring in the Mining District Communities for Productive Diversification and Peace in Northern Cauca
Comoros	Strengthening the Control, Monitoring System, and Institutional Capacities in Comoros for the Implementation of Articles 3 and 4 of the Minamata Convention
Cuba	Institutional, Organizational and Stakeholder Capacity Building for the Implementation of the Minamata Convention in Cuba
Ecuador	Strengthening national capacity to control and/or restrict trade in mercury compounds and products with added mercury, as well as their environmentally sound management
Ghana	Reducing Mercury Pollution through Proper Tailings Management and Mercury Waste Management
Guinea	Elaboration of the National Management Profile of Cosmetic Products containing added mercury in the Republic of Guinea
Kenya	Strengthening national institutions to control mercury and mercury compounds
Lao PDR	Enhancing Mercury Inventory for Effective Implementation of the Minamata Convention
Mozambique	Strengthening Mozambique's regulatory, legislative and institutional framework to Implement Minamata Convention
Republic of Moldova	A step forward to shape a future mercury free environment in Moldova
State of Palestine	Enhancing the State of Palestine Capacities in Implementing Minamata Convention: Comprehensive Field Inventory, Capacity Building and Preparing the Initial Assessment
Uganda	Strengthening institutional capacity in protecting human health and the environment from impacts of dental mercury exposure in Uganda
Viet Nam	National Capacity Building in Viet Nam to Reduce Mercury Emissions from the Viet Nam's Coal Power Sector

68. The Board expressed its sincere appreciation to all the donors to the Fourth Round, namely 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.

69. The Board acknowledged that the Fourth Round resulted in the highest number of applications to the Programme to date. Further, the Board commented all the applicants for their diligent work in preparing and submitting outstanding applications, resulting in very challenging deliberations for the Board. The Board also expressed its sincere regret for not having been able to approve a greater number of projects for funding. The Fourth Round attracted more persuasive and well-articulated applications than the Board was able to approve, showing on the one hand the strong commitment of Parties to the full implementation of the Convention, and on the other hand the ongoing and growing need for support

from the financial mechanism. In order not to exceed the available funding envelope but nevertheless approve some worthy projects, the Board found it necessary to request some successful applicants to revise their project budgets downwards.

70. With respect to terminal evaluation funding, the Board instructed the Secretariat to notify the successful applicants whose requested SIP project budgets had reached the maximum amount of USD 250,000 to adjust their budget downwards by USD 10,000, to accommodate the needed terminal evaluation funding. The Board acknowledged that this arrangement would ensure fairness vis-à-vis approved projects from previous SIP rounds, which budget did not exceed the maximum amount of USD 250,000 in total.

71. In light of the consensus reached on the projects to be funded by the Fourth Round, the Co-Chairs thanked the Board members for their constructive, patient and flexible approach to enable the Board to arrive at a decision on the approved projects.

72. To conclude, the Co-Chair requested the Secretariat to describe the next steps on the applications. The representative of the Secretariat outlined that all successful applicants would receive a letter in February 2025, detailing the next steps required to complete the project documents and conclude the legal agreement to begin implementation, against a timeline to support a timely start of the project. All applicants whose projects were not approved for funding in the Fourth Round would also receive a letter in February 2025, with comments and recommendations from the Board for the applicant's consideration to strengthen their application for possible submittal to the Fifth or subsequent rounds.

73. As no objections were raised by the Board members, the Co-Chair instructed the Secretariat in this regard and closed agenda item 5.

VI. Items for consideration by the Governing Board (agenda item 6)

A. Update on the Secretariat's draft analysis of expected funding needs and related staffing needs through the second half of the initial terms of the Specific International Programme, taking into consideration the mid-term evaluation of the Specific International Programme and the second review of the financial mechanism, as per MC-5/11, paragraph 8

74. The Co-Chair Andrew Clark invited the Board to turn to the meeting documents SIP/GB.10/5 Update on the Secretariat's draft analysis of expected funding needs and related staffing needs through the second half of the initial term of the Specific International Programme.

75. The Co-Chair recalled that COP-5 requested the Secretariat to prepare an analysis of expected funding needs and related staffing needs through the second half of the initial term of the SIP, taking into consideration the mid-term evaluation of the SIP and the second review of the financial mechanism. He further recalled that both the second review of the financial mechanism and the mid-term evaluation of the SIP, conducted by independent consultants in 2023, highlighted the critical need for SIP funding, and that the Board itself also emphasized the need in the course of its deliberations and communications. The mid-term evaluation also concluded that the current staffing arrangements in the Secretariat are challenging in terms of properly serving future SIP rounds of applications. Against this background, he noted that the Secretariat will prepare an analysis of expected funding needs and related staffing needs through the second half of the initial term of the SIP, for submission to COP-6, and encouraged Board members to provide any advice they may have to the Secretariat, following the Secretariat's presentation of the information.

76. The representative of the Secretariat highlighted that, as determined in Decision MC-1/6, the SIP Terms of Reference, the SIP is open to receive voluntary contributions and applications for support for an initial period of ten years from the establishment of the Specific Trust Fund in January 2018. The COP may decide to extend the Programme beyond 31 December 2027, not exceeding an additional seven years, taking into account the regular review process of the financial mechanism in accordance with paragraph 11 of Article 13 of the Minamata Convention. The report on the second review of the financial mechanism of the Minamata Convention, covering the period August 2019–July 2022, and on the basis of which COP-5 undertook the second review, recommended that the COP request the Secretariat to develop, and launch in partnership with stakeholder groups, a SIP resource mobilization strategy based on the widest sharing of information extracted from project reports, applications received, projects funded, problems addressed and project results of SIP-funded activities, with a view to attracting a broader range of donors, including donors from the private sector, donor aid agencies and

civil society organizations. Similarly, the mid-term evaluation of the SIP highlighted the critical need for funding and recommended that fundraising efforts be continuous rather than focused on one round at a time, and that the Secretariat develop an overall estimate of funding needs over the life of the Programme. The representative of the Secretariat explained that the Secretariat will prepare an analysis of expected funding needs and related staffing needs through the second half of the initial term of the SIP, for submission to COP-6, and invited the Board to consider the Secretariat's update on this work and the draft outline prepared by the Secretariat for the analysis as presented in the annex to document SIP/GB.10/5.

77. The Co-Chair invited the Board members to share their input or advice for the Secretariat, or questions or comments related to the Secretariat's update on this work and/or the draft outline for the analysis.

78. No questions or comments were raised.

B. Review of the financial mechanism of the Minamata Convention on Mercury: Specific International Programme considerations as per MC-5/11, paragraph 9, on the draft terms of reference for the third review

79. The Co-Chair Obed Meringo Baloyi invited the Board to turn to document SIP/GB.10/6 Review of the financial mechanism of the Minamata Convention on Mercury: Specific International Programme considerations as per MC-5/11, paragraph 9, on the draft terms of reference for the third review.

80. The Co-Chair recalled that COP-5 completed the second review of the financial mechanism, in accordance with paragraph 11 of Article 13 and as set out in Decision 5/11, and that the Governing Board discussed the review findings and recommendations at its past two meetings. He further recalled that COP-5 Decision 5/11 requested the Secretariat to draft terms of reference for the third review of the financial mechanism, for consideration by COP-6; and noted that some Board members would have responded to the survey or interview requests made by the consultant who drafted the report for the second review, and other Board members may have particular reflections on the review and how it was conducted, and that this would be an ideal time to make suggestions to the Secretariat with respect to the draft terms of reference for the third review.

81. Upon invitation by the Co-Chair, the representative of the Secretariat noted that, pursuant to paragraph 11 of Article 13, the third review of the financial mechanism, of which the SIP is one component, is to reflect on the level of funding, the guidance provided by the Conference of the Parties, the effectiveness of the SIP, and the ability of the Programme to address the changing needs of developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition. She added that the third review is also to suggest, where necessary, actions appropriate to improve the effectiveness of the Programme and the financial mechanism. She emphasized that, should the Parties at COP-6 approve the use of the draft terms of reference and call for the third review of the financial mechanism to be completed at COP-7 in 2027, this timing would be congruent with the expected decision by the COP on whether or not to extend the SIP beyond its initial duration of ten years, which ends in December 2027, for an additional seven years.

82. The Co-Chair opened the floor for any questions or views with respect to the draft Terms of Reference for the third review of the financial mechanism, to guide the Secretariat in completing the draft document for consideration by COP-6.

83. No requests for the floor were made and the Co-Chair moved to the next agenda item.

C. Update from the Secretariat on coordination with the Special Programme and the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund

84. The Co-Chair Andrew Clark invited the Board to turn to agenda item 6 (c) and invited the Board to turn to document SIP/GB.10/7 Update from the Secretariat on coordination with the Special Programme and the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund.

85. The Co-Chair noted that the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6), which took place in Nairobi from 26 February to 1 March 2024, adopted a resolution on the sound management of chemicals and waste, which among other things requested UNEP Executive Director to facilitate coordination between the new Global Framework on Chemicals Fund, the Specific International Programme and the Special Programme. Recalling that the representatives of the Special Programme Secretariat and of the Secretariat of the Global Framework on Chemicals were present at the Tenth Meeting, invited the Minamata Convention Secretariat and the observers to update the Board on coordination with the Special Programme and the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund.

86. The representative of the Minamata Convention Secretariat explained that the Secretariat continues to coordinate with relevant Funds as called for in UNEA-6 resolution UNEP/EA.6/Res.9 on sound management of chemicals and waste. She recalled that the Secretariat had cooperated with the Special Programme Secretariat since the SIP was operationalized in 2018, and this cooperation is ongoing, with both Secretariats participating in cross-secretariat task teams to review and comment on respective applications in each round of funding, as well as in respective Board meetings as observers, as appropriate. This cooperation further deepened in 2024 with the concurrent and coordinated launch, on 24 April 2024, of the SIP Fourth Round of applications and the Special Programme Eighth Round of applications. She emphasized that an important function of this cooperation is to ensure that there is no duplication of effort among approved projects, and that, in part as a result of this coordination, no applications which should have been submitted to the SIP Fourth Round were submitted to the Special Programme, and vice versa. As part of the new coordination effort that includes the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund, she informed the Board that the Secretariat presented information on the SIP at an information session for the members of the Special Programme Executive Board and the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund Executive Board in April 2024, and expects to participate in future sessions. Furthermore, the Secretariat cooperates with the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions and the United Nations Environment Programme Chemicals and Health Branch through a joint task force established under COP-3 Decision 3/11.

87. The representative of the Special Programme Secretariat intervened to emphasise the close collaboration with the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention, and the strong working relationship that has over the years benefited both funding mechanisms. She added that the coordinated launch of the two rounds of applications in 2024 had run smoothly, and that no single applicant got confused applying to the wrong funding mechanism. Furthermore, she added that the substantial and actionable feedback provided by the SIP team in the internal task team meetings that reviewed applications submitted for Special Programme funding had effectively supported the applicants in strengthening their applications.

88. The representative of the Global Framework on Chemicals Secretariat noted that the first round of applications for funding by the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund was launched on 1 October 2024, with a deadline of 31 January 2025. She observed that the Global Framework on Chemicals Secretariat encouraged applicants to consider both the SIP and the Special Programme to ensure complementarity among financial mechanisms. She also informed the Governing Board that, unlike in the SIP, the Global Framework on Chemicals Secretariat will support the Executive Board's decision-making process without preparing the project appraisals. Regarding resource mobilisation, she emphasised the value of collaboration to avoid competition in fundraising and to ensure the sustainability of the various mechanisms.

89. Noting with appreciation the ongoing good coordination between the SIP and the Special Programme, and welcoming the new coordination efforts with the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund, the Co-Chair highlighted that these funds operate within their respective mandates in order to enhance complementarity and avoid overlaps. Subsequently, he invited Board members to discuss the update and how the Secretariat and the Governing Board might further advance coordination, in response to the resolution.

90. As no request for the floor was received, the Co-Chair moved to the next agenda item.

VII. Dates and venue of the next meeting (agenda item 7)

91. The Co-Chair Andrew Clark turned to agenda item 7, on dates and venue of the next meeting. He reminded that at its meetings the Board is to oversee the operations and administration (including implementation of projects) of the Programme, the launch of rounds of the SIP, and decision-making on applications to the rounds. He noted that the Board, with this meeting, had fulfilled these tasks, but that should any Member see a need for an additional Board meeting prior to COP-6, it would be possible to arrange an online meeting. To this end, he further reminded that 2025 is a COP year, so it was important for the Secretariat to be able to wrap up decision making on the round very early in the year, given staffing constraints.

92. The Co-Chair also informed the Board members that the term of the current Board members extends to the end of COP-6, and that at COP-6 the Board members for the next term will be confirmed following nomination by the UN regions. Following COP-6, the Secretariat will work with the current Co-Chairs, whose tasks conclude at the time of election of the next Co-Chairs of the subsequent Board, to prepare the next meeting.

VIII. Other matters (agenda item 8)

93. No other matters were raised by the Board members.

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

94. The Board agreed that the Secretariat would complete the draft meeting report, including the Board's decision on the applications to the Fourth Round. The draft meeting report would be first reviewed by the Co-Chairs and subsequently shared with all Board members for their final review prior to adoption by electronic means as soon as possible and no later than mid-March. The finalized report of the Tenth Meeting would be posted on the website and be made available to COP-6.

X. Closure of the meeting (agenda item 10)

95. To conclude, the Co-Chairs acknowledged that the approval of the ten projects to be funded from the Fourth Round is an important and long-awaited achievement of the Governing Board. Recalling that resource mobilization to meet funding and staffing needs remains a key imperative for the success of the SIP, and that COP-7 will have to decide whether to extend the initial term of the SIP by a maximum of seven years, he emphasized that the views of Board members, both current and past, will be very important in this regard.

96. The Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention thanked the Co-Chairs for their leadership, as well as the full Board for its hard work. She especially thanked those members who will be completing their second term of service on the Board at COP-6. Further, she emphasised the Secretariat's commitment to continuing and intensifying fundraising efforts for the SIP.

97. Lastly, the Co-Chairs thanked the Board members for their diligent and constructive work over the three days, and the Secretariat for the excellent preparation of and support to the meeting.

98. The Co-Chairs declared the meeting closed at 15:42 on Friday, 24 January 2025.

Appendix I

List of participants

GOVERNING BOARD (2024-2025)

<p>AFRICA MADAGASCAR Liliane Randrianomenjanahary Assistant Technique auprès de la Direction Générale du Développement Durable/ DPRIDDD, Point Focal National de la Convention de Minamata sur le mercure Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable Rue Farafaty, Ampandrianomby, B.P. 571 101 Antananarivo Madagascar Email: randrialiliane@gmail.com</p> <p>ASIA AND THE PACIFIC IRAQ Luay Sadeq Almkhtar Department Manager Department of Chemical Control and Evaluation of Contaminated Sites Ministry of Environment Alwaziriya - Almaghreb Square, Baghdad Iraq Email: luay_al_mokhtar@yahoo.com; moen.iraq@gmail.com</p> <p>EASTERN EUROPE CROATIA Mario Vujić Senior Adviser Specialist Directorate for Climate Transition; Sector for Air, Soil and Protection from Light Pollution; Division for the Implementation of Pollution Prevention and Reduction Measures Ministry of Environmental Protection and Green Transition Radnička cesta 80 10 000 Zagreb Croatia Email: mario.vujic@mzozt.hr</p> <p>LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN BRAZIL Ana Cristina Linhares Environmental Analyst Coordination for the Control of Waste and Emissions Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources Setor de Clubes Esportivos Norte, Trecho 2, Edifício Sede do Ibama - CEP 70818-900 - Brasília/DF Email: ana.linhares@ibama.gov.br</p> <p>WESTERN EUROPE AND OTHERS GERMANY Rafael Zubrzycki Desk Officer International Chemical Safety, Sustainable Chemistry Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety Köthener Str. 2 - 3 10963 Berlin Germany Email: rafael.zubrzycki@bmuv.bund.de</p>	<p>AFRICA SOUTH AFRICA Obed Meringo Baloyi Chief Director Chemicals Management Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Private Bag X447, 0001, Pretoria South Africa Email: obaloyi@dffe.gov.za</p> <p>ASIA AND THE PACIFIC SRI LANKA R. H. M. P. Abeykoon Additional Secretary Environment Policy & Planning Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment "Sobadam Piyasa", 416/C/1, Robert Gunawardana Mawatha, Battaramulla Sri Lanka Email: addlsecepp@env.gov.lk; pathma66a@gmail.com</p> <p>EASTERN EUROPE NORTH MACEDONIA Suzana Andonova Project Advisor POPs Unit Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning Plostad Presveta Bogorodica 3 1000 Skopje Republic of North Macedonia Email: s.andonova@pops.org.mk; suzana_andonova@yahoo.com</p> <p>LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN GUYANA Michelle Astwood Environmental Specialist Ministry of Natural Resources 96 Duke Street Kingston, Georgetown Guyana Email: mastwood@nre.gov.gy</p> <p>WESTERN EUROPE AND OTHERS UNITED STATES OF AMERICA Andrew Clark Division Chief for Chemicals, Air Quality, and Waste Office of Environmental Quality U.S. Department of State 2201 C St NW 20520 Washington, DC Email: clarkad@state.gov</p>
--	--

SECRETARIAT

<p>Monika Stankiewicz Executive Secretary Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Email: monika.stankiewicz@un.org</p> <p>Marianne Bailey Senior Coordination Officer Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Email: marianne.bailey@un.org</p> <p>Alexander Romanov Programme Management Officer for Capacity-building and Technical Assistance Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Email: alexander.romanov@un.org</p> <p>Lara Ognibene Legal/Programme Officer Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Email: lara.ognibene@un.org</p>	<p>Maria Irene Rizzo Associate Expert for Capacity-building and Technical Assistance Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Email: irene.rizzo@un.org</p> <p>Linh Doan Programme Management Assistant Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Email: linh.doan@un.org</p> <p>Alexandru Sofroni Programme Management Assistant Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Email: alexandru.sofroni@un.org</p>
---	--

OBSERVERS

<p>Katherine Theotocatos Programme Management Officer Secretariat of the Special Programme International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Email: katherine.theotocatos@un.org</p>	<p>Kay Williams Senior Programme Management Officer Secretariat of the Global Framework on Chemicals International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Email: kay.williams@un.org</p>
--	---

Appendix II

Agenda

10. Opening of the meeting
11. Organizational matters
 - (a) Adoption of the agenda
 - (b) Request for disclosure of any possible personal and/or financial conflict of interest
12. Operations of the Specific International Programme
 - (a) Operations of the Programme, including status of implementation of First, Second and Third Round projects
 - (b) Status of the Specific Trust Fund
13. Information from national reporting vis a vis Convention obligations and deadlines pursuant to Decision MC-5/11
14. Consideration of eligible and complete applications for the Fourth Round of funding under the Specific International Programme for decision by the Governing Board
15. Items for consideration by the Governing Board
 - (a) Update on the Secretariat's draft analysis of expected funding needs and related staffing needs through the second half of the initial terms of the Specific International Programme, taking into consideration the mid-term evaluation of the Specific International Programme and the second review of the financial mechanism, as per MC-5/11, paragraph 8
 - (b) Review of the financial mechanism of the Minamata Convention on Mercury: Specific International Programme considerations as per MC-5/11, paragraph 9, on the draft terms of reference for the third review
 - (c) Update from the Secretariat on coordination with the Special Programme and the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund
16. Dates and venue of the next meeting
17. Other matters
18. Adoption of the meeting report
19. Closure of the meeting

Appendix III

Overview of the Implementation of projects from the First, Second and Third Round

Tables 1, 2 and 3 present the status of projects of the First, Second and Third Round, as per 22 January 2025.

Table 1: First Round of Applications (2018)

Party name	Agreement details	Status
<u>Argentina</u> – COMPLETED		
1 August 2019 – 31 December 2021 (29 months, extended)	Project Cooperation Agreement with National Institute of Industrial Technology in cooperation with Basel Convention Regional Centre for South America	The project is completed. The Partner requested a five-month no-cost extension to December 2021 (for a new total duration of 29 months) to allow for additional time to finalize the project activities. Five rounds of reporting received, plus the final report. Minor amendment to the budget to shift funds to year two and away from travel requested due to COVID-19-related impacts. All four instalments of funds disbursed. Terminal evaluation completed.
250,000 USD		
<u>Armenia</u> – COMPLETED		
1 June 2019 – 30 November 2021 (30 months, extended)	Small-Scale Funding Agreement with the Hydrometeorology and Monitoring Center State Non-Commercial Organization of the Ministry of Environment	The project is completed. The project has experienced some limited delays in implementation due to COVID-19. The Partner requested a six-month no-cost extension to November 2021 (for a new total duration of 30 months) to allow for additional time to finalize the project activities. Five rounds of reporting received, plus the final report. All four instalments disbursed. Terminal evaluation completed.
162,000 USD		
<u>Benin</u> – COMPLETED		
20 May 2019 – 19 November 2022 (42 months, extended)*	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Living Environment and Sustainable Development	The project is completed. Final reports and project outputs were submitted, and reviewed and approved by the Secretariat in March 2024. The project experienced significant delays both in its initial stages, then later due to COVID-19-related impacts, administrative delays and national reforms in the procurement procedures. Therefore a no-cost six-month extension was requested in 2022, stretching the project duration to 42 months. Three rounds of reporting received, in addition to final reporting. Because the final expenditure report showed a total expenditure that matched the amount of the first instalment of funding, no further instalments of funds were disbursed. The Secretariat will retain USD 10,000 to conduct the terminal evaluation of the project. A balance of USD 174,113 remained at the conclusion of the project.
249,113 USD		
<u>Iran (Islamic Republic of)</u> – COMPLETED		
5 May 2020 – 4 August 2021 (15 months)	Small Scale Funding Agreement with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Research Institute of Petroleum Industry	The project is completed. All reporting including final reports were received. All instalments were disbursed. Terminal review was undertaken, completed and submitted by the project partner and accepted by the Secretariat.
100,000 USD		

Party name	Agreement details	Status
Lesotho – COMPLETED		
10 May 2019 – 9 November 2022 (42 months, extended)*	Project Cooperation Agreement with Department of Environment of the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture	The project is completed. Project activities commenced in January 2020. The project experienced some delays including due to COVID-19, therefore a no-cost six-month extension was requested, stretching the project duration to 42 months. All agreed activities were completed by the end of the project. Five rounds of reporting received, in addition to final reports. All five instalments of funds disbursed. Terminal evaluation completed.
200,550 USD		

**Projects with duration exceeding the 36-month maximum time set for SIP projects, were extended exceptionally with formal agreement of the Co-Chairs of the Governing Board*

Table 2: Second Round of Applications (2019)

Party name	Agreement details	Status
Antigua and Barbuda – COMPLETED		
13 October 2020 – 12 October 2023 (36 months, extended)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Department of Analytical Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs	The project is completed, and the Secretariat is awaiting submission of final reporting. The implementation of some in-person activities was disrupted due to COVID-19. A no-cost nine-month extension of the project duration (until October 2023) was provided to allow more time for finalization of the activities, through an amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement signed in 2023. Four of six rounds of reporting received. The Secretariat is still awaiting submission of final reporting and financial audit. Two of three instalments of funds disbursed to date. The final instalment of funding will be disbursed after approval of final reports Note: This is a regional project, also including Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.
210,000 USD		
Ecuador – COMPLETED		
6 July 2021 – 5 July 2024 (36 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition jointly with Investment Fund for Sustainable Environment	The project is completed, and improved final reports have been submitted to the Secretariat for review and approval. Notwithstanding the legal agreement was only signed in July 2021 and the project implementation only began in January 2022 due to delays in the national contracting process, all project activities were completed by July 2024. An amendment to the legal agreement was signed in September 2023 to undertake a number of shifts in budget categories and budget years. All five rounds of reporting received, and final report submitted for the Secretariat's review. Three of four instalments of funds disbursed to date.
250,000 USD		

Party name	Agreement details	Status
<u>Ghana</u> – COMPLETED		
4 December 2020 – 3 December 2023 (36 months, extended)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Health	The project is completed, and improved final reports have been submitted to the Secretariat for review and approval. Due to some initial delays, including a lengthy transfer of funds process and a change in the project focal point, an amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement to extend at no cost the project duration by six months was signed in May 2023, and the project completed the final activities by December 2023. Four of five rounds of reporting received. Improved final reports and equipment inventory submitted to the Secretariat in January 2025 for review and approval. Three of four instalments of funds disbursed to date.
250,000 USD		
<u>Indonesia</u> – COMPLETED		
21 September 2020 – 20 March 2023 (30 months)	Small-Scale Funding Agreement with Ministry of Health jointly with Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for Southeast Asia	The project is completed. All three rounds of reporting received. Final report and terminal review submitted in August 2023 and approved by the Secretariat. The first instalment of funds (USD 80,000) was disbursed upon signature of the legal agreement. Because final reporting showed a total project expenditure of USD 92,909, the Secretariat disbursed a second instalment of funds (USD 12,909) after acceptance of final reporting.
143,340 USD		
<u>Iran (Islamic Republic of)</u> – COMPLETED		
3 February 2021 – 2 October 2024 (44 months, extended)*	Small-Scale Funding Agreement with Department of Environment	The project is completed, and the Secretariat is awaiting submission of final reporting. An eight-month no cost extension of the duration of the project was requested in January 2024, due to severe COVID-19 pandemic-related delays and subsequent lengthy official procedures to make changes in the technical partner team. With the agreement of the Co-Chairs of the SIP Governing Board, an amendment to the project legal agreement was signed in February 2024, extending the project until October 2024. Three of five rounds of reporting received, in April 2022, December 2023 and April 2024. Two of three instalments of funds disbursed to date.
149,800 USD		
<u>Republic of Moldova</u> – COMPLETED		
3 September 2020 – 2 September 2023 (36 months, extended)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment	The project is completed. A first amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement was concluded in September 2022 to undertake minor changes to the project logical framework and budget table, including by planning additional activities to be implemented within the project period with savings resulting from COVID-19 impacts. A second amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement was concluded in May 2023 to extend the project duration by three months to complete final items, at no cost, until September 2023, and to undertake minor shifts in budget categories. All five rounds of reporting received, in addition to the final report. Audit report of the first year of implementation of the project, as well as final financial audit, received and accepted by the Secretariat. Final reporting and audit showed a project balance of USD 1,399, which was refunded to the Secretariat. A small amount of funding (USD 7,164) remained after project closure and completion of the refund process.
219,765 USD		

Party name	Agreement details	Status
Nigeria – COMPLETED		
6 April 2021 – 5 July 2023 (27 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Federal Ministry of Environment	The project is completed. All project activities were completed according to the agreed logical framework, budget and workplan. All reporting including final reports and audit reports were timely received. All four instalments of funds disbursed.
250,000 USD		
Peru – COMPLETED		
27 January 2021 – 26 January 2024 (36 months, extended)	Small-Scale Funding Agreement with Ministry of Environment	The project is completed, and final reporting and terminal review have been submitted to the Secretariat. The project only began implementation in September 2021 due to national procedures to access the project funding. A no-cost amendment to the Small-Scale Funding Agreement was concluded in July 2023 to extend the ending date for implementation of the project activities until January 2024, update the details of the project partners, revise the workplan and undertake minor shifts in budget years. All four rounds of reporting received. Two of three instalments of funds disbursed to date. Final reporting shows that all planned outputs and activities have been completed. The Secretariat is awaiting resubmission of improved final reporting and terminal review for approval.
126,000 USD		
Sri Lanka – COMPLETED		
24 March 2021 – 23 March 2024 (36 months, extended)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Environment	The project is completed, and final reporting has been submitted to the Secretariat. Due to internal reforms and extensive procedures, the beginning of the project was delayed, and implementation of the activities only began in September 2021. To make up for lost time, several activities were implemented simultaneously. A six-month no-cost extension of the duration of the project was requested in July 2023, to complete the rest of the activities by March 2024. An amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement, extending the duration of the project and making minor shifts in budget categories, was signed in September 2023. All five rounds of reporting received. Two of three instalments of funds disbursed to date. Improved final reporting submitted in December 2024, and the Secretariat is reviewing it.
178,659 USD		
Zambia – COMPLETED		
23 February 2021 – 22 August 2024 (42 months, extended)*	Project Cooperation Agreement with Zambia Environmental Management Agency	The project is completed, and the Secretariat is awaiting submission of final reporting. The implementation of the project has experienced significant delays, initially due to COVID-19-related restrictions and impacts and then to delays in consultant procurement. In light of this, in February 2024 the Secretariat received a request to extend the project beyond its thirty-six month timeframe. With the agreement of the Co-Chairs of the SIP Governing Board, an amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement to extend the project duration, at no cost, by an additional six months, was signed in February 2024. Several activities were implemented simultaneously to allow for completion of all or many of the activities by the end date. Six of seven rounds of reporting received. Two of four instalments of funds disbursed to date. The Secretariat disbursed the first instalment of project funding (USD 95,000) upon signature of the legal agreement. Because the approved April 2024 reporting showed total expenditures of USD 132,114, the Secretariat disbursed an additional instalment of USD 37,114 before the end of the
200,000 USD		

Party name	Agreement details	Status
		project. The Secretariat awaits receipt of final project reporting and financial audit.

**Projects with duration exceeding the 36-month maximum time set for SIP projects, were extended exceptionally with formal agreement of the Co-Chairs of the Governing Board*

Table 3: Third Round of Applications (2021)

Party name	Agreement details	Status
Burundi		
7 June 2022 – 6 June 2025 (36 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Burundian Office for the Environment Protection, Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock of Burundi	The project is underway. The legal agreement was signed in 2022 and implementation of project activities is progressing according to the agreed logical framework. Two of four instalments of funds have been disbursed to date. Five rounds of reporting received by the Secretariat to date.
250,000 USD		
Cuba		
17 August 2023 – 16 August 2026 (36 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Center for Environmental Studies of Cienfuegos, Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment jointly with Basel Convention Coordinating Centre and Stockholm Convention Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean Region	The project is underway. A tripartite legal agreement was signed in 2022 between the Secretariat, the Center for Environmental Studies of Cienfuegos of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment of Cuba (CEAC) and an implementing partner which was subsequently terminated due to unforeseen factors. A new tripartite legal agreement between the Secretariat, CEAC and the Basel Convention Coordinating Centre and Stockholm Convention Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean Region was signed in August 2023. One of four instalments of funds has been disbursed to date. Two interim reports have been received to date. The current delay in project implementation was due to lengthy national approval processes required for project execution.
249,210 USD		
Gabon		
4 July 2022 – 3 July 2025 (36 months, extended)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Forests, Oceans, Environment and Climate Change	The project is underway. The legal agreement was signed in 2022, however implementation has only recently started due to unforeseen issues in transferring the first instalment of project funding and to subsequent freezing of public administration accounts. An amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement to grant a twelve-month no cost extension until July 2025 was signed in April 2024, stretching the project duration from 24 to 36 months. One of four instalments of funds has been disbursed to date. Three rounds of reporting received. Note: This is a regional project, also including Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of the Congo, and Sao Tome and Principe.
249,500 USD		
India		
29 August 2023 – 28 February 2026 (30 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change	The project implementation period is underway. The legal agreement was signed in August 2023, but implementation was delayed due to unforeseen issues in transferring the first instalment of project funding. The instalment was disbursed in June 2024. The project partner has not yet confirmed whether the funding has been received in the project bank account and whether project implementation has started.
240,000 USD		

Party name	Agreement details	Status
Iran (Islamic Republic of)		
TBC (30 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade	Legal agreement is in the process of being signed.
238,000 USD		
Jordan		
20 October 2022 – 19 April 2025 (30 months, extension requested)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Environment	The project is underway. The legal agreement was signed in 2022 and implementation has begun. The implementation of the project is delayed due to a change in the project focal point, challenges in data collection, and lengthy hiring procedures to support project implementation. In November 2024, a no cost six-month extension of the project duration was requested, and the Secretariat is drafting an amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement. One of four instalments of funds disbursed. One interim report received to date.
250,000 USD		
North Macedonia		
8 June 2022 – 7 June 2025 (36 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning	The project is underway. The legal agreement was signed in 2022 and implementation is progressing according to the agreed logical framework. An amendment to the Project Cooperation Agreement was signed in December 2023 to undertake some shifts in budget categories. Two of four instalments of funds have been disbursed. Four rounds of reporting received to date.
248,500 USD		
Rwanda		
5 September 2022 – 4 September 2025 (36 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Rwanda Environment Management Authority	The project is underway. The legal agreement was signed in 2022 and project implementation is ongoing but delayed due to the expiry of a collaboration agreement and issues related to the end of Rwanda's fiscal year. Two of four instalments of funds have been disbursed. Four rounds of reporting received to date.
220,000 USD		
Senegal		
14 July 2022 – 13 July 2025 (36 months)	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development jointly with Regional Center of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions for French-speaking Countries of Africa	The project is underway. The legal agreement was signed in 2022 and implementation is progressing according to the signed legal agreement. Three of four instalments of funds have been disbursed. Five rounds of reporting received. Note: This is a regional project with Burkina Faso and Togo.
248,632 USD		