

REPORT OF THE FOURTH MEETING

BUREAU OF THE SIXTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY

22 May 2025 virtual

Participants

Present: Mr. Osvaldo Patricio Álvarez Pérez (Chile, for Latin America and the Caribbean, President), Mr. Muhamed Abdulai Kamara (Sierra Leone, for Africa), Aisha Humera Moriani (Pakistan, for Asia Pacific), Ms. Claudia Dumitru (Romania, for Eastern European States), Ms. Irma Gurguliani (Georgia, for Eastern European States), Mr. Linroy Christian (Antigua and Barbuda, for Latin America and the Caribbean), Ms. Rachel Burgess (Australia, for the Western European and Others), Ms. Tuulia Toikka (Finland, for the Western European and Others), Yunfang Hu (China) (Chair of the Implementation and Compliance Committee, Ex officio member).

Mr. Sidi Aloueimine (Mauritania, for Africa), Mr. Saeed Ahmed Al-Zahrani (Saudi Arabia, for Asia Pacific), could not attend.

Opening of the meeting:

Osvaldo Patricio Álvarez Pérez, the President of the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention (COP-6), welcomed the members of the Bureau. He indicated that the purpose of this fourth meeting was to finalize discussions on several time-sensitive pending issues which were introduced and initially discussed during the third meeting of the Bureau on 26 April in Geneva.

On 29 April, Monika Stankiewicz, the Executive Secretary, had distributed the list of pending issues for discussion to the Bureau.

COP-6 meeting report

At the previous meeting of the Bureau, there was a proposal by the Secretariat to reduce the usual length of the main body of the meeting report by half to reduce cost. The report would still include all agenda items, and the text of adopted decisions would be included in an annex, but the content of interventions from the floor would not be reflected in full. The Bureau did not conclude on this matter and requested to bring it forward to a fourth meeting.

At this fourth meeting, the Bureau continued discussion during which some questions were raised about the transparency of the proceedings with a shortened meeting report. One Bureau member asked whether the interventions from the floor would be reproduced in full or paraphrased. In addressing these points, the President expressed appreciation that the recording of COP-6 will be available in six UN languages for the first time, and this will offer a full transcript of the plenary sessions of the COP, ensuring full transparency of the proceedings. He also noted that the report will still be made available in all six official languages.

The Bureau supported the approach to shorten the meeting report of COP and to save costs. The Bureau invited the Executive Secretary to work with UNON Conference Services accordingly.

Possible amendment to rule 11 of the COP rules of procedure

At the previous meeting, the Secretariat informed it planned to prepare a proposal to COP-6 to amend rule 11, which states that COP working documents are to be distributed to Parties in six languages at least **6 weeks** before the COP. The proposal is to change this deadline to 8 weeks. The proposal relates to the availability of official COP working documents in languages for regional meetings in advance of a given COP considering that it is challenging to arrange all four of the regional meetings within the six weeks before the COP. The Bureau did not conclude on this matter and requested to bring it forward to a fourth meeting.



At this fourth meeting, Bureau members were supportive of and encouraged an eight-week deadline for working documents to be distributed to Parties in advance of the COP as proposed by the Secretariat. However, the Bureau noted concerns in opening the Rules of Procedure, requesting other modalities be explored to advance the translation deadlines. It noted that the RoP specify that '*working documents are to be distributed to Parties in six languages at least 6 weeks before the COP*' and suggested that 'at least' is not a barrier to producing the documents earlier.

Considering the views expressed, the Bureau proposed that the Secretariat could address this issue in a COP-6 decision in moving forward instead of opening RoP. The President requested the Secretariat to review the approach from a legal perspective and to check with UNON Conference Services if this is something they can adhere to. He also requested the Secretariat to update the Bureau on this matter via email before COP-6 so that Bureau members can share information and discuss within their regional groups in advance of COP-6.

Tentative schedule of COP-6

At the last Bureau meeting, the Bureau members requested more time to consider the draft tentative schedule for COP-6, in particular the approach to contact groups. At this fourth meeting, the Bureau supported the proposed tentative schedule and agreed that the target of three contact groups is a good way forward, particularly given that delegations are small. The three tentatively planned contact groups are: (i) programme of work and budget; (ii) technical matters (for agenda item 4b); (iii) mercury supply sources and trade (for agenda item 4a).

It was noted that the COP may establish other groups were needed to advance on issues. This could include contact groups but also informal groups and Friends of the President. In closing the item, the President highlighted that he intended to use the Bureau as much as possible to seek advice on matters and may call for additional meetings of the Bureau during the COP week as necessary.

Organization of work for COP-6 agenda item (j) on cross-cutting issues

At the last Bureau meeting, the Secretariat proposed that, at COP-6, a representative of Indigenous People and a representative of Women's Caucus could be given the floor at the opening of agenda items 4(j)(i) on implementation of decision 5/1 and 4(j)(ii) on implementation of decision 5/15, respectively, as these sub-items relate to these groups' engagement in the work of the Minamata Convention, and it may be useful for Parties to hear from them first.

At this Bureau meeting, the Bureau members agreed with this proposal. In closing the item, the President stressed that he would open the floor to only one representative per group in opening these agenda items and the constituency should coordinate to speak with one voice. He also stressed that Bureau members should share this information with their regional groups in order to ensure a smooth flow of these agenda items in the plenary.

High-level segment at COP-7

The President recalled that at the third Bureau meeting there was a discussion on a possible high-level segment (HLS). He noted that the Secretariat had circulated some questions in advance of this meeting for consideration.

At this fourth meeting, the Bureau recognized the value of a HLS to advance political will. However, several Bureau members expressed concerns over holding a HLS at the upcoming COP-7 as it could distract from the actual work of the COP and would have budgetary consequences. One Bureau member supported a HLS at COP-7 and proposed a theme for it.

Some Bureau members suggested the option to merge with another HLS or to organize a high-level event at UNEA-8 in 2027 as a better option. One Bureau member highlighted the BRS high-level event that took place in Stockholm in 2022, held in conjunction with the Stockholm +50 international meeting, as a good example of an alternative model. In addition, a virtual high-level event was identified as a possible option to save costs.



The President closed the agenda item requesting the Secretariat to keep exploring options, including having a HLS at UNEA.

Other business

One Bureau member raised concern over election of officers at COPs. This concern was linked to the events that unfolded in electing officers at the recent BRS COPs. She noted that while this may not be an issue at COP-6, she is looking for examples from other regions on how this can be addressed in the future. She asked Bureau members to reach out to her directly to share their thoughts.

Another Bureau member reminded the Secretariat of the need to avoid clashes of future COP with other big events in future planning.

Closure of the meeting

The President thanked Bureau members for participating, noting this was the final meeting in intersessional period. He noted the next meeting will take place on 2 November 2025 in Geneva just before COP-6.

He closed the meeting at 13.12 (Geneva time).
