

PARTICIPATION OF OBSERVERS IN MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

The Minamata Convention on Mercury provides, in its article 23, paragraph 6, that the United Nations, its specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as any State not a Party to the Convention, may be represented at meetings of the Conference of the Parties as observers. Any body or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, that is qualified in matters covered by the Convention and has informed the secretariat of its wish to be represented at a meeting of the Conference of the Parties as an observer may be admitted unless at least one third of the Parties present object. The admission and participation of observers is subject to the rules of procedure for the Conference of the Parties, in particular its rules 6 and 7.

1. APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION AS AN OBSERVER

The below procedure for application for admission as an observer does not apply to the United Nations, its specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as any State not a Party to the Convention and any entity operating the mechanism referred to in paragraph 5 of Article 13 of the Convention. In addition, organizations approved to participate in the previous meetings of the Conference of the Parties do not need to resubmit an application. See organizations in the following documents:

[UNEP/MC/COP.1/INF/16](#), [UNEP/MC/COP.2/INF/19](#), [UNEP/MC/COP.3/INF/27](#), [UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/28/Rev.1](#) and [UNEP/MC/COP.5/INF/39](#).

If your organization wishes to apply for admission as an observer at meetings of the Conference of the Parties, please provide the secretariat of the Minamata Convention with the following information, at least two months prior to the opening of the meeting:

- ❖ A letter from the head office of your organization requesting admission, including information on contact person, geographical coverage and qualification of your organization in matters covered by the Minamata Convention;
- ❖ A copy of your organization's constitution, charter, statutes or by-laws, including any amendments to these documents, a list of affiliates (if any, including accreditation with the United Nations Environment Assembly or consultative status with the Economic and Social Council) and description of any network and/or membership system;
- ❖ A statement of your organization's mission and scope of work, including detailed accounts of the extent of outreach, indications of interactions within the community or other activities. Supporting documentation could include a published mission statement (on a website or in brochures);
- ❖ Information on qualification in matters covered by the Minamata Convention, including description of activities undertaken by your organization over the last two years or more demonstrating its work in those matters. Such information could include annual reports, conference or seminar reports, project reports, press releases and copies of media statements, newsletters or other periodicals.

If your organization has been active in matters covered by the Minamata Convention for less than two years, an explanation of why it is qualified to be admitted at meetings of the Conference of the Parties should be submitted. This may be the case where an organization has changed its name, or a new coalition has been formed which consists of organizations with a longer history.

The secretariat will screen the applications to check their completeness and conformity with the requirements of the Convention. Successful applications will be submitted to the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties following receipt of the relevant documents.

2. PARTICIPATION IN THE MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Rule 6 of the rules of procedure for the Conference of the Parties provides that the United Nations, its specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as any State not party to the Convention and any entity operating the mechanism referred to in paragraph 5 of Article 13 of the Convention, may, upon the invitation of the President, participate in the proceedings of any meeting without the right to vote, unless at least one third of the Parties present at the meeting object.

Rule 7 of the rules of procedure provides that any body or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, admitted as an observer may, upon the invitation of the President, participate without the right to vote in the proceedings of any meeting in matters of direct concern to the body or agency they represent, unless at least one third of the Parties present at the meeting object.

3. ORAL AND/OR WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS DURING THE MEETINGS

Upon invitation by the President, observers may present their statements orally. The number of oral statements to be delivered at the meeting will depend on the time available. With respect to NGOs, preference will be given to those speaking on behalf of groups of organizations or coalitions.

Written statements may also be submitted in one of the official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, or Spanish).

4. CONTACT DETAILS OF THE SECRETARIAT

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