Submission by the Government of Japan for relevant point sources at the national level pursuant to paragraphs 2 (b) and 3 of Article 9 of the Minamata Convention on Mercury

June 25, 2018

1. Identification of release of mercury and mercury compounds to water and land from point sources

Japanese legislation has taken such measures as prohibiting primary mercury mining and artisanal and small-scale gold mining or ensuring proper managements of mercury wastes to reduce release of mercury and mercury compounds to water and land pursuant to the articles other than Article 9 of the Minamata Convention on Mercury (hereinafter referred to as "the Convention"). These measures let us identify that anthropogenic release of mercury and mercury compounds to water and land from factories and workplaces is the potential target to be carried out measures to reduce releases under Article 9 of the Convention in Japan. Regarding the releases from these point sources, we have a system under the Water Pollution Control Act to identify facilities that might discharge mercury through the notifications submitted to prefectures prior to installing the facilities.

Under this Act, facilities which discharge polluted water or wastewater, which contains harmful substances that might negatively affect public health including mercury and its compounds, or has certain level of pollution indicated by chemical oxygen demand, etc. that might negatively affect living conditions, are defined as the Specified Facilities. Factories and workplaces which have any Specified Facilities and discharge water to areas of public waters, such as rivers, lakes and seas, are required to comply nationally-uniform effluent standards established by the Government as maximum permissible level. Furthermore, if these factories or workplaces have a Specified Facility that manufactures, uses, or treats harmful substances, they are further required to comply with the additional standards on the permeation of effluent into underground. The nationally-uniform effluent regulations have been implemented since 1971, and the underground permeation regulations have been established in 1989.

The total number of factories and workplaces which submitted notifications to prefectures based on the Water Pollution Control Act in Japan is approximately 260 thousands in March 2017, and this number is stable in recent years. Variety of facilities and workplaces are covered as the Specified Facilities by the Act with approximately 100 kinds of industries and facilities such as mining and manufacturing industries, coal-fired power plants, municipal wastewater facilities including sewage treatment plants, large-scale hospitals, restaurants, etc. Although the effluent standards on release of mercury and its compounds to public water areas or undergrounds can be applied to all of those facilities and workplaces under the Act, no exceeding case of the standards on mercury is observed. Therefore, Japan has no identified relevant point sources stipulated in Article 9, paragraph (2), item (b), of the Convention.

2. Inventory and material flows of mercury releases

As mentioned above, there is no identified relevant point sources stipulated in Article 9 of the Convention, therefore there is no releases amount from relevant point sources in Japan.

In addition to this identification of mercury releases from relevant point sources based on the Convention, we have estimated the amount of mercury released into public water area and soil based on mercury material flows and

other information that include such releases from miscellaneous sources other than relevant point sources. This estimation will be further refined for preparing, maintaining and updating the release inventories.