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

Geneva, 3–7 November 2025

Item 4 (b) (ii) of the provisional agenda\*

**Matters for consideration or action by the Conference of the  
Parties: mercury-added products and manufacturing  
processes in which mercury or mercury compounds are used:  
cosmetics listed in part I of annex A**

## **Cosmetics listed in part I of annex A**

### **Note by the secretariat**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. The present note contains information on and a summary of the report on challenges in preventing the manufacture, import and export of cosmetics listed in part I of annex A to the Minamata Convention on Mercury, as well as on current or proposed measures for addressing those challenges taken by parties and others, prepared by the secretariat pursuant to decision MC-5/5.

#### **II. Report on cosmetics listed in part I of annex A**

2. The Conference of the Parties, in decision MC-5/5, requested the secretariat to prepare a report, compiling and synthesizing information submitted by parties and relevant stakeholders on challenges in preventing the manufacture, import and export of cosmetics listed in part I of annex A to the Convention, as well as on current or proposed measures for addressing those challenges taken by parties and others, for consideration by the Conference at its sixth meeting. In that report, the secretariat was to address topics such as, but not limited to, the following:

- (a) Phasing out sales and offers of sales of mercury-added cosmetics;
- (b) Strategies for discouraging the marketing, advertising and display of mercury-added cosmetics;
- (c) Advisories, detention lists and prohibited substances lists concerning mercury-added cosmetics;
- (d) Licensing and product ingredient approvals for cosmetics manufacturing facilities;
- (e) Developing and implementing product safety pledges for online platforms;
- (f) Raising awareness of the hazards of skin-lightening product use among physicians, dermatologists and beauty centre staff, as well as consumers and family members.

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

3. In the same decision, parties and relevant stakeholders were invited to submit information by 30 June 2024. Information was submitted by 23 parties and eight organizations<sup>1</sup> and was posted on the Convention website.<sup>2</sup> The secretariat, in consultation with the World Health Organization and the Global Mercury Partnership, developed a draft report and posted it on the Convention website on 1 April 2025, with a request for comments by 28 April 2025. Comments were received from five parties and eight organizations.<sup>3</sup> Gabon submitted information on, among other things, a document entitled “Libreville commitment on the elimination of mercury-containing skin-lightening cosmetics in Africa”,<sup>4</sup> which had been adopted at a high-level regional meeting of African ministers, international experts and civil society leaders held in Libreville from 20 to 22 January 2025, and requested the secretariat to include it in the document for the Conference of the Parties. The final report and the Libreville commitment are set out in annexes I and II to document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/8, respectively.

4. In their submissions, parties and stakeholders emphasized the dangers associated with the use of mercury-added cosmetics and the need to eliminate their use. They also highlighted the cultural and other challenges involved in achieving that aim. Although mercury-added cosmetics are manufactured in only a few countries, the use of those products is global, as is their marketing and distribution. The emergence of online platforms has presented further challenges.

5. The report concludes that eliminating mercury-added skin-lightening products is a multifaceted challenge that includes addressing regulations, supply chain management, capacity-building and awareness-raising. The following specific challenges are identified in the report:

(a) *Lack of national implementing legislation and/or measures.* Although some parties have legislative measures in place to phase out the manufacture, import and export of mercury-added cosmetics, other parties still lack legislation. Some parties also have measures in place to phase out sales and offers of sales of such cosmetics.

(b) *Inadequate enforcement.* Even when national regulations are in place, parties face challenges in enforcing them.

(c) *Lack of capacity.* A number of parties pointed to a lack of national capacity to develop and enforce measures to control mercury-added cosmetics, including industry regulation, customs and border control, surveillance of sales and advertising, and mercury measurement.

(d) *Lack of awareness.* The importance of raising awareness among key groups such as beauty centre staff, customs officials and healthcare professionals was recognized. The pervasiveness of colourism needs to be acknowledged as a major barrier to reducing the demand for mercury-containing cosmetics.

(e) *Need for global cooperation.* In their submissions, parties and stakeholders called for global and regional cooperation in enforcing regulations on mercury-added cosmetics, sharing information about illegal trade, capacity-building, awareness-raising, and research and development.

### III. Proposed action

6. The Conference of the Parties may wish to consider the final report by the secretariat on challenges in preventing the manufacture, import and export of cosmetics listed in part I of annex A to the Convention, as well as on current or proposed measures taken by parties and others to address those challenges, as contained in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/8, with a view to adopting a decision thereon, as appropriate.

<sup>1</sup> Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, China, Comoros, Dominican Republic, the European Union and its member States, Gabon, Guatemala, Guinea, Japan, Madagascar, Mauritania, the Niger, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the United States of America, as well as BAN Toxics, the Environment and Social Development Organization, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Mercury Policy Project, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Natural Resources Defense Council, WE ACT for Environmental Justice and the Zero Mercury Working Group.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://minamataconvention.org/en/intersessional-work-and-submissions-cop-6#sec2924>.

<sup>3</sup> Burkina Faso, Canada, Gabon, Italy and the United States, as well as the Africa Sustainable Climate and Environment Foundation, the African Women’s Network for Community Management of Forests, the Global Mercury Partnership, the Mercury Policy Project, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, WE ACT for Environmental Justice the World Health Organization and the Zero Mercury Working Group.

<sup>4</sup> Available at <https://minamataconvention.org/en/news/libreville-commitment-elimination-mercury-containing-skin-lightening-cosmetics-africa>.