



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

**Matters for consideration or action by the Conference of the
Parties: artisanal and small-scale gold mining**

Matters for consideration by the Conference of the Parties pursuant to decision MC-5/7 on artisanal and small-scale gold mining

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. Artisanal and small-scale gold mining continues to be the sector with the largest use, emissions and releases of mercury globally, with significant impacts on human health, land, ecosystems and biodiversity.
2. The present note provides information on the status of implementation of the mandates set out in decision MC-5/7, on artisanal and small-scale gold mining, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury at its fifth meeting.

II. Implementation of decision MC-5/7

A. Progress made with respect to article 7 notifications, submissions and reviews

3. In paragraph 1 of decision MC-5/7, all parties that had notified the secretariat pursuant to paragraph 3 of article 7, and in particular parties that had received support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to develop their national action plans but had not yet submitted their plans, were called on to submit the final plans to the secretariat as soon as possible, taking into consideration the deadline set out in paragraph 3 (b) of article 7. In paragraph 2 of the decision, all parties that had submitted their national action plans were called on to provide a review of the progress made in meeting their obligations under article 7 and to include the review in their reports to be submitted pursuant to article 21, as set out in paragraph 3 (c) of article 7.
4. On 22 January 2024, the Executive Secretary sent a letter to all national focal points and permanent missions reminding them of the need to submit a national action plan or, if such a plan had already been submitted, to provide a review of the progress made in implementing article 7 of the Convention.

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

5. With respect to development of the national action plans, as at 30 June 2025, GEF has provided funding to 50 countries¹ to enable the development of their national action plans as well as including a global component on national action planning and knowledge management in its planetGOLD programme.²

1. Notifications

6. As at 31 May 2025, 51 parties had notified the secretariat that artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing using mercury amalgamation was more than insignificant in their territories. Four non-parties had also provided such notifications; the notification from non-parties is a requirement in the case of signatories seeking GEF funding for enabling activity. Notifications are posted on the Minamata Convention website under the “parties” tab.³

7. More detailed information on the submission of notifications and responses pursuant to question 7.4 of the full national report is available in annex II to the present note.

2. Submission of national action plans

8. With respect to the submission of national action plans to the secretariat:

(a) Of the 35 national action plans that have been submitted to the secretariat, 5 were submitted in 2024, subsequent to the report of the secretariat to the Conference of the Parties at its fifth meeting, in early November 2023.

(b) In addition, two non-parties submitted their national action plans.

(c) The list of parties and non-parties that have submitted national action plans is available in annex II to the present note. All of the plans submitted to the secretariat are published on the Minamata Convention website.

3. Reviews of implementation of article 7

9. Under paragraph 3 (c) of article 7, parties that have determined that artisanal and small-scale gold mining in their territory is more than insignificant, notified the secretariat of that determination and developed and submitted a national action plan are required to review the progress made in meeting their article 7 obligations and include their review in their article 21 report. While most of the national action plans submitted describe evaluation mechanisms for tracking progress, many lack the detailed procedures for the review called for in paragraph 3 (c) of article 7.

10. No reviews were due during the first short reporting cycle (16 August 2017–31 December 2018). During the first full reporting cycle (16 August 2017–31 December 2020), four parties responded to question 7.4, in which parties were requested to attach their most recent review to their report.⁴ No submissions were received during the subsequent second short reporting cycle (1 January 2021–31 December 2022). In response to the invitation in paragraph 3 of decision MC-5/7, the GEF Council, at its sixty-seventh meeting, approved the inclusion of a new enabling activity under the Minamata Convention, on reviews of the implementation of article 7, to support parties in preparing their review.

11. The secretariat, in collaboration with the Global Mercury Partnership, developed draft sections on the review of the implementation of article 7 for inclusion in the existing guidance document on

¹ Please see UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/13.

² UNEP, through the secretariat of the Global Mercury Partnership and the partnership’s artisanal and small-scale gold mining partnership area, supports a global knowledge management component of GEF-funded, UNEP-implemented national action plan projects. This includes maintaining the national action plan knowledge hub, organizing experience-sharing events and webinars, curating dynamic dashboards to track progress on national action plans and offering country-specific technical assistance.

³ The date of notification is the date from which the national action plan submission deadline is calculated. Any party or non-party that submits a notification to the secretariat pursuant to paragraph 3 of article 7 of the Convention must submit its national action plan three years after the date of notification, or three years after entry into force of the Convention for that party, whichever is later.

⁴ Two parties attached their national action plan, one attached a national sectoral study that formed the basis of its national action plan and one attached a legal report outlining the legal, technical and strategic foundations of its national action plan.

developing an artisanal and small-scale gold mining national action plan.⁵ The aim of the new sections is to facilitate reviews and support national focal points in organizing information on the results of the review for inclusion in their reports required under article 21. The proposed amendments are contained in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/7/Add.1 and include sections on the effective engagement and participation of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and other stakeholders, as requested in decision 5/7, paragraph 7.

B. Effective engagement and participation of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and other stakeholders

12. In response to paragraph 7 of decision MC-5/7, the secretariat, with financial support from Australia and Norway, developed a draft provisional guide on the effective engagement and participation of Indigenous Peoples and of local communities in the development, implementation and review of artisanal and small-scale gold mining national action plans. The draft guide was posted on the Convention website from 26 March until 30 April 2025 for inputs from parties and others.⁶ The updated version is available as document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/11. The draft provisional guide is based on a desk review of similar engagement protocols and is aimed at reflecting the existing best practices for engagement of Indigenous Peoples and of local communities. It is proposed that the guide be considered provisional as it may need to be further developed based on feedback from parties using the guide, as well as from Indigenous Peoples and from local communities.

13. Pursuant to paragraph 8 of decision MC-5/7, the secretariat supported parties' efforts to raise awareness among Indigenous Peoples on the risks associated with mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining, including through in-person training on the Minamata Convention and artisanal and small-scale gold mining, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and introduced the results of the survey conducted on the needs and priorities of Indigenous Peoples with regard to the effects of mercury on their health, livelihoods, culture and knowledge. As part of those activities, the secretariat organized two events, both held in Geneva: a session held on 7 July 2025 at the Indigenous Fellows Programme; and a side-event entitled, "Dialogue on the needs and priorities of Indigenous Peoples in relation to the effects of mercury pollution", held on 17 July 2025 during the eighteenth session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

14. A list of all of the awareness-raising activities conducted by the secretariat is available in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/36.

C. Further efforts to advance the implementation of article 7

15. In paragraph 4 of decision MC-5/7, parties and GEF were called on to make further efforts to seek opportunities to advance implementation of article 7 in the context of projects relating to biodiversity, land degradation, international waters and trade, and to continue to advance the implementation of national action plans through projects and programmes. Key developments in this area include the following:

(a) The secretariat has worked with The Nature Conservancy to develop a technical document entitled "Integrating action to reduce mercury pollution from artisanal and small-scale gold mining into the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework national biodiversity strategies and action plans" (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/27). The document is intended to facilitate synergies and support countries in reflecting their national mercury reduction and control targets in their national biodiversity strategies and action plans once revised or updated to align with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

(b) Two projects aimed at addressing health and environmental matters pertaining to mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining were approved under the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance, one in Brazil and the other in Eritrea. The Brazil project is particularly relevant to paragraph 6 (d) of decision MC-5/7, as it focuses on engaging Indigenous Peoples and other groups involved in and affected by artisanal and small-scale gold mining in the Amazon region, raising their awareness of the health impacts of mercury and promoting safer and more sustainable mining practices. The Eritrea project will support the

⁵ The updated guidance on developing a national action plan to reduce and, where feasible, eliminate mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining is available at: <https://minamataconvention.org/en/documents/guidance-developing-national-action-plan-reduce-and-where-feasible-eliminate-mercury-use>.

⁶ Five comments were received, from one party, one international governmental organization and three Indigenous Peoples organizations.

implementation of the country's national action plan on artisanal and small-scale gold mining through awareness-raising campaigns for mining communities.

- (c) GEF has advanced the implementation of paragraph 4 in several areas, including by:
 - (i) Approving a regional project to promote better understanding of mercury trends and improve the control of mercury flows in six countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the initiative, aimed at directly preventing and avoiding the entry into the international market of approximately 176 tons of mercury through improved trade control in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, was launched in Bogotá in March 2025;
 - (ii) Expanding the number of countries participating in the planetGOLD programme to 27, further broadening the reach of interventions and supporting parties' implementation of their national action plans; by June 2024, interventions under the planetGOLD programme had prevented the emission of 33.8 tons of mercury into the environment and supported approximately 12,400 miners in their formalization process;
 - (iii) Allocating \$284.8 million under the eighth GEF replenishment to the Amazon, Congo and Critical Forest Biomes Integrated Program, including five programme framework documents that cover the globally significant biomes of the Amazon, Congo, Indo-Malay, Guinean Forests of West Africa and Mesoamerica; the programme will support 25 countries through various means, including by providing assistance in the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity, that are in line with the goals of the Minamata Convention, notably in the areas of artisanal and small-scale gold mining, mercury use reduction and restoration of former mining sites.

16. The finalized technical document on in-situ monitoring of mercury and mercury compounds in and around artisanal and small-scale gold mining sites (UNEP/MC/COP.5/INF/9) was made available on the Convention website in January 2025.⁷ The document provides insights into how to effectively engage with Indigenous Peoples and with local communities, inform policymakers to help protect human health and the environment, reduce environmental damage and human health impacts and strengthen environmental protection and biodiversity conservation in areas where artisanal and small-scale gold mining is prevalent.

17. In response to paragraph 6 (c) of decision MC-5/7, in which parties and other stakeholders were encouraged to improve multilateral cooperative efforts to enforce national laws pertaining to the international trade of mercury, the secretariat organized a workshop entitled "Managing Mercury Trade: Experience from Parties with an artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector", held on 6 June 2024, to share information on mercury-trade-related challenges faced by parties with an artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector and potential solutions. The event was supported financially by the European Union and organized by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources of the Philippines, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and BAN Toxics. Representatives from 27 parties with artisanal and small-scale gold mining in their territories participated, including eight national focal points. The event took advantage of the presence of participants attending the planetGOLD Global Forum on Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining,⁸ who shared their experiences with mercury trade in their countries, including trade in mercury from primary mercury mining.

⁷ Available at <https://minamataconvention.org/en/resources/monitoring-mercury-and-around-artisanal-and-small-scale-gold-mining-sites>.

⁸ The planetGOLD Global Forum on Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining was held from 3–5 June 2024 in Batangas, the Philippines. The event brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including miner representatives, government officials, international agencies, technical experts and private sector members, to share evidence, ideas and lessons learned in advancing artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector formalization and moving towards a mercury-free future. The forum was supported by GEF and led by UNEP, in partnership with the Minamata Convention secretariat, Conservation International, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

III. Challenges identified from national reporting

18. Pursuant to Article 21 of the Convention, each party is required to report to the Conference of the Parties on the measures it has taken to implement the provisions of the Convention, and on the effectiveness of such measures and the possible challenges in meeting the objectives of the Convention. The latest available national reports are those submitted by parties as part of the second short national reporting cycle, covering the reporting period from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2022.

19. In the second short reporting cycle, 14 (27 per cent) of the 51 parties that submitted comments in part C of the reporting format, regarding possible challenges in meeting the objective of the Convention, reported mercury-trade-related challenges with potential linkage to artisanal and small-scale gold mining, including:

- (a) Illicit trafficking of mercury;
- (b) Smuggling of mercury for use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining;
- (c) Trade of prohibited mercury-added products.

20. Additionally, one party reported two specific concerns, one related to the facilitation of mercury trade through e-commerce or online trading platforms and the other to the ongoing issue of mercury sold through dental clinics being illegally diverted for use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining. More details on the part C responses from the second short national reports can be found in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/20.

IV. Suggested action by the Conference of the Parties

21. The Conference of the Parties may wish to consider adopting a decision along the lines of the text set out in annex I to the present note.

Annex I

Draft decision MC-6/[--]: Artisanal and small-scale gold mining: review of the implementation of article 7

The Conference of the Parties,

Noting that pollution from artisanal and small-scale gold mining remains the largest global source of anthropogenic mercury emissions,

Recognizing the efforts made by the relevant parties to develop, submit and implement their national action plans pursuant to paragraphs 3 (a) and (b) of article 7,

Recalling paragraph 3 (c) of article 7, which requires all parties that have determined that artisanal and small-scale gold mining in their territory is more than insignificant, notified the secretariat of that determination, and developed and submitted their national action plans to provide a review of the progress made in meeting their obligations under article 7 and include the review in their reports to be submitted pursuant to article 21,

Recalling also its decision MC-4/4 calling on parties to engage Indigenous Peoples, local communities and other relevant stakeholders in the development and implementation of their national action plans for artisanal and small-scale gold mining,

1. *Calls on* parties whose national action plans on artisanal and small-scale gold mining are due pursuant to paragraph 3 (b) of article 7 to submit their final plans to the secretariat as soon as possible;
2. *Adopts* the amended sections on the review of the implementation of article 7, as presented in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/7/Add.1, for inclusion in the guidance document on developing a national action plan to reduce and, where feasible, eliminate mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining;
3. *Requests* the secretariat to incorporate the adopted amendments into the guidance document and to cooperate with the Global Mercury Partnership in disseminating the amended guidance;
4. *Calls on* all parties that have submitted their national action plans to provide a review of the progress made in meeting their obligations under article 7 and include the review, using the reporting template in annex 7 to the amended guidance, in their reports to be submitted pursuant to article 21;
5. *Invites* parties that have notified the secretariat pursuant to paragraph 3 of article 7 to make use of the provisional guide on the effective engagement of Indigenous Peoples and of local communities (UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/11) in the development and implementation of their national action plans as well as their review of progress pursuant to paragraph 3 (c) of article 7, and requests the secretariat to seek feedback on the use of the provisional guide;
6. *Requests* the secretariat, in collaboration with the Global Mercury Partnership and drawing on information from the submitted national action plans and reviews of progress in the implementation of article 7, to take stock of and report to the Conference of the Parties on:
 - (a) Measures taken to implement the national action plans;
 - (b) Identified successful strategies and activities, achievements in implementation, and challenges and barriers encountered in reducing and eliminating the use, emissions and releases of mercury in artisanal and small-scale gold mining, including information on formalizing or regulating artisanal and small-scale gold mining as well as managing trade and preventing the diversion of mercury to use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining;
7. *Also requests* the secretariat to report to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting on the implementation of the present decision.

Annex II

Status of artisanal and small-scale gold mining notifications, submissions and responses pursuant to question 7.4 of the full national report

Table 1 lists all parties that have notified the secretariat that artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing using mercury amalgamation was more than insignificant in their territories, pursuant to paragraph 3 of article 7, and shows the status of submission of their national action plans and their responses to question 7.4 of the first full national report, on the results of the review⁹ pursuant to paragraph 3 (c) of article 7 of the Convention. Table 2 lists the non-parties that have notified the secretariat that artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing using mercury amalgamation was more than insignificant in their territories.

Table 1

Parties that have notified the secretariat pursuant to article 7, paragraph 3, and the status of their submissions and responses to question 7.4 of the first full national report

| <i>Party</i> | <i>Notification date</i> | <i>Status of submission of the party's national action plan</i> | <i>Status of the party's response to question 7.4 of the first full national report^a</i> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| Afghanistan | 06/07/2020 | Not submitted | Not responded |
| Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | 30/05/2019 | Not submitted | Not responded |
| Botswana | 06/01/2025 | Not submitted | Not responded |
| Brazil | 20/11/2019 | Not submitted | Not responded |
| Burkina Faso | 15/06/2016 | 06/05/2020 | Not responded |
| Burundi | 21/03/2016 | 23/04/2020 | Not responded |
| Cambodia | 01/10/2021 | Not submitted | Not responded |
| Cameroon | 16/07/2015 | 28/06/2024 | Not responded |
| Central African Republic | 06/05/2015 | 18/01/2021 | Not responded |
| Chad | 29/07/2019 | 19/09/2022 | Responded |
| Colombia | 23/06/2016 | 15/01/2024 | Not responded |
| Congo | 05/12/2015 | 18/08/2021 | Not responded |
| Costa Rica | 19/07/2019 | 15/12/2023 | Not responded |
| Côte d'Ivoire | 07/01/2019 | 30/06/2023 | Not responded |
| Ecuador | 21/08/2015 | 13/10/2020 | Not responded |
| Equatorial Guinea | 19/08/2024 | Not submitted | Not responded |
| Eritrea | 04/07/2016 | 07/07/2023 | Not responded |
| Eswatini | 14/07/2015 | 15/09/2022 | Responded |
| Ethiopia | 14/03/2025 | Not submitted | Not responded |
| Gabon | 11/03/2020 | 22/03/2024 | Not responded |
| Ghana | 10/07/2015 | 21/04/2022 | Not responded |
| Guinea | Undated | 19/04/2021 | Not responded |
| Guyana | 29/07/2016 | 19/10/2022 | Not responded |
| Honduras | 08/05/2015 | Not submitted | Not responded |
| Indonesia | 08/05/2016 | 04/05/2023 | Not responded |

⁹ Article 7, paragraph 3 of the Minamata Convention on Mercury requires each party to notify the secretariat if at any time that party determines that artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing in its territory is more than insignificant. If it so determines, that party shall:

- (a) Develop and implement a national action plan in accordance with annex C;
- (b) Submit its national action plan to the secretariat no later than three years after entry into force of the Convention for it or three years after the notification to the secretariat, whichever is later; and
- (c) Thereafter, provide a review every three years of the progress made in meeting its obligations under this article and include such reviews in its reports submitted pursuant to article 21.

| <i>Party</i> | <i>Notification date</i> | <i>Status of submission of the party's national action plan</i> | <i>Status of the party's response to question 7.4 of the first full national report^a</i> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| Kenya | 06/08/2015 | 02/09/2022 | Not responded |
| Lao People's Democratic Republic | 09/05/2016 | 29/07/2021 | Not responded |
| Liberia | 08/06/2022 | Not submitted | Not responded |
| Madagascar | 13/01/2016 | 05/03/2019 | Not responded |
| Mali | 01/03/2016 | 01/06/2020 | Not responded |
| Mauritania | 02/04/2024 | Not submitted | Not responded |
| Mexico | 25/09/2017 | Not submitted | Not responded |
| Mongolia | 03/07/2016 | 09/06/2020 | Not responded |
| Mozambique | 12/12/2014 | 14/03/2024 | Not responded |
| Nicaragua | 30/01/2019 | Not submitted | Not responded |
| Niger | 10/06/2016 | 14/07/2022 | Not responded |
| Nigeria | 18/06/2015 | 08/06/2021 | Not responded |
| Pakistan | 06/10/2021 | Not submitted | Not responded |
| Paraguay | 29/07/2015 | 29/12/2021 | Responded |
| Peru | 08/05/2015 | Not submitted | Responded |
| Philippines | 06/09/2016 | Not submitted | Not responded |
| Rwanda | 24/06/2016 | 14/12/2023 | Not responded |
| Senegal | 31/12/2016 | 11/12/2019 | Not responded |
| Sierra Leone | 17/11/2015 | 19/08/2020 | Not responded |
| South Africa | 17/08/2023 | Not submitted | Not responded |
| Suriname | Undated | 19/03/2024 | Not responded |
| Togo | 12/03/2020 | 20/07/2023 | Not responded |
| Uganda | 07/06/2014 | 05/03/2021 | Not responded |
| United Republic of Tanzania | 20/07/2015 | 25/02/2022 | Not responded |
| Zambia | 29/07/2015 | 08/03/2023 | Not responded |
| Zimbabwe | 19/06/2015 | 16/03/2021 | Not responded |

^a Question 7.4 in the national report asks the party responding to attach to its national report the most recent review it has completed pursuant to paragraph 3 (c) of article 7, which relates to the review of the progress made by the party in meeting its obligations under article 7.

Table 2

Non-parties that have notified the secretariat that artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing using mercury amalgamation was more than insignificant in their territories and status of submission of their national action plans

| <i>Non-party</i> | <i>Notification date</i> | <i>Status of submission of the non-party's national action plan</i> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Angola | 28/08/2018 | Not submitted |
| Democratic Republic of the Congo | 25/02/2016 | Submitted on 19/08/2020 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 24/06/2016 | Submitted on 13/09/2022 |
| Myanmar | 18/10/2016 | Not submitted |