



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

Geneva, 3–7 November 2025

Item 4 (j) (ii) of the provisional agenda*

**Matters for consideration or action by the Conference of the
Parties: cross-cutting matters: implementation of decision
MC-5/15**

Activities to address health concerns of women and children in the biennium 2026–2027

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. In several parts of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, specific attention is paid to the needs of vulnerable populations, especially women and children. The preamble of the Convention highlights “health concerns, especially in developing countries, resulting from exposure to mercury of vulnerable populations, especially women, children, and, through them, future generations”. In addition, article 16 on health aspects, article 18 on public information, awareness and education, article 19 on research, development and monitoring and article 22 on effectiveness evaluation all refer to the needs of vulnerable groups and populations. Furthermore, annex C to the Convention states that national action plans to address artisanal and small-scale gold mining are to include strategies to prevent the exposure of vulnerable populations, particularly children and women of childbearing age, especially pregnant women, to mercury used in such mining.

2. In decision MC-5/15, on the gender action plan, the Conference of the Parties invited parties, and requested the secretariat, to carry out activities to address health concerns of women and children during the biennium 2024–2025. A list of possible activities to be carried out to that end was set out in annex I to document UNEP/MC/COP.5/18. In the same decision, the Conference also requested the secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to propose possible activities to be carried out by the secretariat, parties and other stakeholders during the biennium 2026–2027, as appropriate, for consideration by the Conference at its sixth meeting.

II. Implementation

3. A review of activities carried out during the biennium 2024–2025 to address health concerns of women and children is set out in document UNEP/MC/COP.6/INF/25. On the basis of the progress made, the secretariat has identified, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth

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

meeting, activities that could be carried out by the secretariat and the parties during the biennium 2026–2027. A list of suggested activities is set out in paragraph 2 of annex I to the present note.

III. Suggested action by the Conference of the Parties

4. The Conference of the Parties may wish to consider the information contained in the present note and adopt a decision along the lines of the text contained in annex II.

Annex I

Activities that the secretariat and parties could carry out to address health concerns of women and children during the biennium 2026–2027

1. Following is a list of activities that the secretariat and parties could carry out to address health concerns of women and children under the programme of work for the biennium 2026–2027, subject to the availability of resources from core and voluntary contributions.
2. Activities that the secretariat could carry out include:
 - (a) Supporting the integration and monitoring of strategies to prevent the exposure of vulnerable populations, particularly children and women of childbearing age, especially pregnant women, to mercury used in artisanal and small-scale gold mining, as appropriate, in the reviews of national action plans to be submitted by parties pursuant to paragraph 3 (c) of article 7, in collaboration with the Chemicals and Health Branch of the United Nations Environment Programme;
 - (b) Supporting the coordination of the women's caucus of the Minamata Convention on Mercury to advance the equality and empowerment of women in the implementation of the Convention;
 - (c) Collecting information from parties and other stakeholders on capacity-building needs and interests with respect to mercury exposure of women and children.
3. Activities that parties could, within the scope of their respective capabilities, carry out include:
 - (a) Integrating and monitoring the implementation of strategies to prevent the exposure of vulnerable populations, particularly children and women of childbearing age, especially pregnant women, to mercury used in artisanal and small-scale gold mining, as appropriate, in the reviews of national action plans to be submitted pursuant to paragraph 3 (c) of article 7;
 - (b) Providing financial resources to support the participation of representatives of the women's caucus in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to advance the equality and empowerment of women in the implementation of the Convention;
 - (c) Responding to requests for information to enable the secretariat to identify capacity -building needs and interests of parties with respect to the implementation of decision MC-5/15, including on the exposure of women and children to mercury.

Annex II

Draft decision MC-6/[--]: Addressing health concerns of women and children

The Conference of the Parties

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the activities carried out by the secretariat, parties and other stakeholders during the biennium 2024–2025 to address health concerns of women and children, as suggested in decision MC-5/15;
2. *Invites* parties to carry out activities to address health concerns of women and children during the biennium 2026–2027,¹ and to share with the secretariat their related experiences and good practices;
3. *Also invites* parties to provide comments, as appropriate, on possible activities to be carried out by the secretariat, parties and other stakeholders during the biennium 2028–2029;
4. *Requests* the secretariat to carry out activities to address health concerns of women and children, as listed in annex I to document UNEP/MC/COP.6/18, during the biennium 2026–2027,² subject to the availability of resources;
5. *Also requests* the secretariat to report to the Conference of the Parties on the implementation of the present decision and propose possible activities to be carried out by the secretariat, parties and other stakeholders during the biennium 2028–2029, as appropriate, for consideration by the Conference at its seventh meeting.

¹ Suggested activities are set out in paragraph 3 of annex I to document UNEP/MC/COP.6/18.

² Suggested activities are set out in paragraph 2 of annex I to document UNEP/MC/COP.6/18.