

DRAFT REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING

BUREAU OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY

Thursday, 23 March 2023, by teleconference

Participants

Present: Ms. Claudia Dumitru (Romania, for Eastern European States, President), Ms. Anahit Aleksandryan (Armenia, for Eastern European States), Mr. Roger Baro (Burkina Faso, for Africa), Ms. Oarabile Serumola (Botswana, for Africa), Dr. Saeed A. Alzahrani (Saudi Arabia, for Asia Pacific), Ms. Cheryl Eugene-St. Romain (Saint Lucia, for Latin America and the Caribbean), Mr. Sverre-Thomas Jahre (Norway, for the Western European and Others), Ms. Paulina Riquelme (Chair of the Implementation and Compliance Committee, Ex officio member) and members of the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

Mr. Syed Mujtaba Hussain (Pakistan, for Asia Pacific), Mr. Osvaldo Patricio Álvarez Pérez (Chile, for Latin America and the Caribbean), Ms. Marie-Claire Lhenry (France, for the Western European and Others) could not attend the meeting.

1. Opening of the meeting

- Ms. Claudia Sorina Dumitru, the President of the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention (COP-5), welcomed the members of the Bureau and thanked them for joining the online meeting.
- Ms. Monika Stankiewicz, the Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, added her warm welcome to the members of the Bureau.
- The agenda of the meeting was adopted without change.

2. Matters related to COP-5

a. Provisional agenda of COP-5

- The Secretariat presented draft provisional agenda for COP-5, as submitted to this meeting.
- One Bureau member sought clarification on actions foreseen under proposed specific agenda items or sub-items on mercury supply sources and trade, gender, biodiversity, implementation of the 2020 mercury-added products phaseout deadline and emissions of mercury.
- The Secretariat explained that the purpose of including in the COP-5 agenda of the sub-item on mercury supply sources and trade (Article 3), as a separate agenda item from item K on effectiveness evaluation, was to bring to the attention of the COP items arising from national reporting. Since two cycles of national reporting had taken place with respect to Article 3, the proposed agenda item would provide the COP with information on the status of implementation of Article 3, including on consent to exports provided by Parties, as reported by Parties in their national reports. The Secretariat further explained that this was a different exercise from the trade report which was to compile information on trade in mercury from different sources.
- On gender, the Secretariat provided an update on the ongoing preparation of the draft gender action plan, in line with COP-4 decision MC-4/10 on gender mainstreaming, to be submitted for consideration at COP-5.



- On biodiversity, the Secretariat explained that the addition of this agenda item to the COP-5 agenda had its origin in COP-4 decision on international cooperation where the COP requested the Secretariat to gather knowledge, raise awareness and demonstrate where the implementation of the Minamata Convention could contribute to other international processes, including biodiversity. In the same decision, COP-4 requested the Secretariat to prepare a report, including possible recommendations, on how the Convention could contribute to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, once adopted, for consideration by COP-5. One of the preliminary findings of the report, which is being developed by the Secretariat, is that items for consideration by the COP would also include cooperation on national level and therefore would warrant a separate agenda item to be addressed. Bureau members suggested more explicit wording in the agenda item to focus on the global biodiversity framework.
- On the 2020 mercury-added products phase out deadline, the Secretariat informed that the idea of including item 4 b (i) in the COP-5 agenda was to bring information forward on this milestone during the reporting period. Any proposed related actions would be facilitative in nature.
- On emissions of mercury, the Secretariat drew attention to the fact that the submission of the existing national plans under paragraph 3 of Article 8 was within the last reporting period under Article 21, and that it is for the COP to receive such submission. Therefore, the intention was to provide information on the implementation of Article 8, including on the submission of national action plans, and suggest facilitative actions to adopted by the COP.
- The Bureau member also requested clarification on the intention of inclusion of 'review' in the agenda sub-item on review and amendment of Annexes A and B. The Secretariat explained that the intention of this item is to cover amendment to Annexes A and B and consideration of feasibility of mercury-free alternatives for manufacturing processes in which mercury or mercury compounds are used, as agreed in COP-4 decision on this issue. The Secretariat informed the wording of the item would be amended to make it clearer.
- Another representative informed the Bureau that his region was preparing an amendment proposal to Annex A of the Convention on lighting.
- A Bureau member raised the point of delegations' limitations in representing their country during the COP and expressed the need to avoid overlapping contact groups and plenary sessions, following the good practice of the Montreal Protocol.

b. The provisional list of documents to COP-5

- The Secretariat presented the indicative list of documents for COP-5, as submitted to this meeting.
- One Bureau member highlighted the importance of preparing concise documents given the delegates' busy schedules for 2023 and sought clarification on proposed documents related to national reporting and review of Annexes A and B.
- The Secretariat explained the structure of working documents on national reporting and confirmed that the Secretariat's analysis of the national reports under Article 21 will be submitted as information document. Regarding the documents on Annexes A and B the Secretariat clarified the title of the document would be amended in line with the amended agenda item on the Annexes.
- Another Bureau member enquired about the deadline for submission of amendment proposals. The Secretariat clarified the deadline of six months before the COP contained in Article 26 of the Convention was for the Secretariat to communicate to all Parties and signatories the text of any amendment proposed for adoption. Given this deadline, the Secretariat further explained that it would need to receive the text any amendments in advance of the deadline to allow time for review and translation of the text.

c. Items for preparation/consideration prior to COP-5 (lessons learnt from organizing COP-4)

- Bureau members agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.



d. Regional preparatory meetings

- The Secretariat provided an update on the dates and venues of the COP-5 regional preparatory meetings as follows: for Asia Pacific the tentative dates are 5 and 6 September, in Bangkok; for Africa the tentative dates are 12 and 13 September in Nairobi; for Eastern European States, the tentative dates 19 and 20 September in Armenia; and for Latin America and the Caribbean tentative dates are 2 and 3 October while the venue is to be confirmed.

3. Status of contributions to the Minamata Convention

- Upon invitation by the President, the Secretariat presented the status of contributions of the general trust fund of the Minamata Convention as of end of 2022 and as presented in the notes submitted to the meeting. The percentage level of contributions to the general trust fund at the end of 2022 is over 90% and remains at a similar level as at the end of the 2020-2021 biennium. Still, the missing few percent of contributions, including from the previous biennia, is from many Parties and can create cash flow issues in the budget, which would need to be bridged for the Convention programme of work to be fully implemented.
- The Bureau members took note of the information by the Secretariat on next steps the Secretariat will undertake to advance on the issue of outstanding contributions as per financial rules, including sending letters to Parties with outstanding contributions for two or more years, keeping the Bureau informed and reporting to COP-5 on the status of contributions.
- Several Bureau members commented on the issue, including that the payment of outstanding contributions is an important matter. One Bureau member asked about the 73 Parties with outstanding contribution and if a reminder, with a target date, had been sent by the Secretariat. Another Bureau member highlighted the problem of transferring money from African banks and US-based banks, which prevented the payment of contributions. Another Bureau member regretted to note that Parties were in arrears, no matter how small the amounts due, especially when arrears were for two years or in the case of Parties who had never paid contributions.
- The Bureau members encouraged the Secretariat to continue its work on this issue in cooperation with Parties concerned including with the aim of developing a payment schedule.
- The President thanked Parties for continuing payment of their contributions and encouraged Parties to make their best efforts to pay contributions for the general trust fund timely and in full. Further, the President invited the Bureau members to communicate on this issue in their respective regions and get back to the Secretariat as appropriate.

4. Any other business

- No other business was raised.

5. Closure of the meeting

- Following her closing remarks, the President thanked the members of the Bureau and the Secretariat for their work and declared the meeting closed at 3:00 p.m. (Geneva time).