

MEDIA ADVISORY

MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY

10 October marks a decade of global commitment to make mercury history
&
Fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (30 Oct. – 3 Nov. 2023)

Geneva, 10 October 2023

WHAT

On the occasion of the **10th anniversary of the adoption of the Minamata Convention on Mercury**, which was signed in Kumamoto, Japan, on 10 October 2013, the Secretariat wants to share broadly the journey that made the treaty what it is today, and all the pivotal work ahead to make mercury history.

- [UNEP story: How the Minamata Convention is aiming to end mercury's millennia-long toxic run](#)
- [10-year anniversary video featuring historic and inspiring voices to pay tribute to the past and share hope for the future](#)

The **fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties** to the Minamata Convention on Mercury ([COP-5](#)) will take place in person from **Monday, 30 October to Friday, 3 November 2023 at the International Conference Centre (CICG), Geneva, Switzerland.**

All official information related to the event is published on the Convention's website in a special section dedicated to COP-5: <https://minamataconvention.org/en/meetings/cop5>

For the members of the press wishing to attend the open events of the Conference, please fill out the [application form](#) for media accreditation and follow the [instructions here](#).

WHY

COP-5 main agenda items will focus on:

- The COP will consider phase-out dates for **mercury-added products** and the availability of non-mercury alternatives for two **industrial processes**. The COP will also consider amendment proposals from the Africa Region, including additional lighting categories for the complete phase-out of all fluorescent lamps, further measures and elimination of 1ppm threshold for skin lightening products, and a 2030 phase-out date for dental amalgam.
- **Artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM)** remains the largest source of mercury use and emissions globally. The COP recalls the relevance of engaging Indigenous peoples as well as local communities in the work to reduce and eliminate mercury use on this

informal sector including in development and implementation of National Action Plans. These measures are vital to protect human health (including women and children) from mercury.

- Mercury use in ASGM impacts **biodiversity and ecosystem services**. The recent adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework was a major milestone for the world and the Minamata Convention. The Secretariat has identified activities to be carried out in the biennium regarding pollution reduction.
- COP-5 is expected to conclude the second review of the Convention's **financial mechanism** (GEF and Specific International Programme). There is a need to increase efforts to augment funding in the Specific Trust Fund to continue its direct support to developing country parties in their implementation of the Convention.
- 95% of parties submitted their **first full national reports** on measures taken to implement the Convention at the national level. The **Implementation and Compliance Committee** examined issues based on such submissions and made recommendations to COP-5 relating to, *inter alia*, informal primary mercury mining, the identification of stocks, and exports which are not in compliance with the Convention.
- National reporting is expected to be an important input for indicators to monitor the effectiveness of the Convention. COP-5 will consider the end date of the first **effectiveness evaluation**, the establishment of the Effectiveness Evaluation Group to develop recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of the Convention, and the adoption of indicators.
- **Emissions, Releases, Waste:** Mercury emissions into the air are the major pathway for global environmental impact. Many Parties are already taking the required measures in advance of deadlines put in the Convention, but they still have a great deal of implementation to undertake. For mercury releases to land and water, the COP will consider adopting draft guidance on BAT/BEP prepared by the Group of Technical Experts. Regarding waste, COP-5 is expected to adopt thresholds for mercury waste contaminated with mercury or mercury compounds.
- **Gender, Knowledge Management:** The COP will consider the Gender Action plan and a digital strategy to guide its work to better support parties in the implementation of the Convention.
- The Minamata Convention on Mercury is part of the **global environmental agenda** and contributes to addressing the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. It cooperates with other international entities, particularly in the chemicals and waste cluster. The COP may welcome the opportunity for the Minamata Convention Secretariat to become an observer at the meetings of the UN Climate Change Conferences and the adoption of the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a planet free of harm from chemicals and waste that was recently adopted at the ICCM5 Conference in Bonn, requesting the Secretariat to further collaborate with them.

For more detailed information on COP-5, you can check the [Briefing co-organized with the Geneva Environment Network on COP-5 preparations](#).

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

- Special COP-5 Event: [Mercury in cosmetics – more than what meets the eye](#) (Tuesday 31 Oct. at 13:15h, CICG) Co-organized by the Global Environment Facility and the UN Environment Programme aims to reveal negative effects of skin lightening that is often perpetuated by harmful cultural norms.
- Special COP-5 event: [Minamata Convention: A Decade of Global Commitment to Make Mercury History](#) (Monday, 30 October, at 13.15h, CICG and streamed on YouTube), co-organized with the Geneva Environment Network. Through an interactive roundtable, at this event, stakeholders will share their views and provide insights into the Convention's progress over the past ten years, and express their hopes for the future. It will feature diverse voices, including representatives from Parties, NGOs, financial mechanism, Indigenous Peoples, and artists engaged in environmental causes, who will be invited to reflect on what the Convention means to them.
- [Minamata movie](#) projection: Sunday, 29 October, at 19.00h, CICG, Geneva presented by film Director Andrew Levitas, two Members of the Minamata Disease Mutual Aid Society and Minamata Convention Executive Secretary. Free, and co-organized with the Geneva Environment Network.
- During the COP-5 week, participants can visit the **#MakeMercuryHistory Photo Exhibition**, at CICG. This exhibition is part of the #MakeMercuryHistory Photo Contest 2022 that the Secretariat organized. Winners and the [virtual photo exhibition](#) were announced during World Environment Day and the virtual exhibition is accessible online.
- [Knowledge labs](#): designed to spur discussion and exchange of information during COP-5.
 - 13 knowledge labs events which will run from Tuesday 31 Oct. to Friday 3 Nov. at 14-14h45 at CICG, open space.
 - 3 events organized by Parties, 10 events organized by stakeholders – academia, IGOs, NGOs, including 2 from Indigenous peoples' organizations.

WHO

More than eight hundred participants – including Parties' representatives, non-parties governments, intergovernmental organizations, UN bodies and NGOs – are already confirmed to attend the meeting. Among the high-level participants at the meeting, the Conference will include:

- **Roger Baro**, Minister of Environment, Water and Sanitation, Burkina Faso.
- **Thierry Kamach**, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Central African Republic
- **Claudia Dumitru**, President of the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury, Romania.

- **Monika Stankiewicz**, Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention on Mercury
- **Tani Yoichi**, Minamata Convention on Mercury Promotion Network (MicoNet) the Collaboration Center for Minamata Disease Victims (Sunday 29 and Monday 30 Oct.)
- **Mr. and Mrs. Sato**, Members of the Minamata Disease Mutual Aid Society (Sunday 29 and Monday 30 Oct.)
- **Andrew Levitas**, filmmaker and professor (Sunday 29 and Monday 30 Oct.)
- **Amira Adawe**, Director, Beautywell (Tuesday 31 Oct.)
- **Kheris Rogers**, Flexin' In My Complexion (Tuesday 31 Oct.)
- **Meera Senthilingam**, Editor CNN (Tuesday 31 Oct.)

WHEN and WHERE

- **Projection of the Minamata movie** – Sunday, 29 October at 19.00h at CIGC.
- **Plenary sessions** from Monday 30 October to Friday 3 November from 10.00h – 13.00h and from 15.00h – 18.00h, at CIGC and streamed on YouTube. It includes the opening ceremony on Monday 30 October from 10.00h to 11.00h
- Special event: **Minamata Convention: A Decade of Global Commitment to Make Mercury History** – Monday, 30 October at 13.15h at CIGC and streamed on YouTube.
- Special event: **Mercury in cosmetics – more than what meets the eye** – Tuesday, 31 October at 13:15h at CIGC
- **Photo Exhibition #MakeMercuryHistory** from Monday 30 Oct. to Friday 3 Nov. at CIGC.
- **Knowledge labs**, from Tuesday 31 Oct. to Friday 3 Nov. at 14:00h at CIGC.
- **Exhibition area**, from Monday 30 Oct. to Friday 3 Nov. at CIGC.

Registration is needed to attend plenary sessions and special events.

All the information for participants, documents, and meeting agenda are already available on the [Convention's website](#).

KEY FACTS about the Convention

- The fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury ([COP-5](#)) will be pivotal for the future work of the Convention and the protection of human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury. The Convention was adopted in 2013 in Kumamoto, Japan. On 10 October 2023, the international community commemorates a decade of global commitment to making mercury history.
- The Minamata Convention on Mercury is the most recent global Convention on environment and health, adopted in October 2013. Since it entered into force on 16 August 2017, **147 parties** have been working together to control the mercury supply and trade, reduce the use, emission and release of mercury, raise public awareness, and build the necessary institutional capacity.

- Through the Minamata Convention, the international community can tackle the [entire life cycle of mercury](#), a highly toxic heavy metal considered by the World Health Organization as one of the top 10 chemicals of major public health concern. From supply and trade; use, emissions and releases to storage and waste management, the Minamata Convention helps countries to control, reduce and eliminate mercury with the ultimate goal to protect human health and the environment.
- While mercury is naturally occurring, it is also a by-product of industrial processes and can be found in many everyday objects, including batteries, dental amalgam, thermometers and fluorescent lamps. Once released to the atmosphere, soil and water – often through coal burning, and artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) – mercury bioaccumulates in fish, animals and humans, posing a **serious threat to human health and the environment**. The Convention is named after the bay in Japan where, in the mid-20th century, mercury-tainted industrial wastewater poisoned thousands of people, leading to severe health damage that would become known as “Minamata disease”. Since then, the Minamata Convention has used the name as both a tribute and a promise of a **world free of the harmful effects of mercury**.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- [Media accreditation](#)
- [Full meeting schedule](#)
- [Meeting documents including agenda](#)
- [COP-5 newsroom](#)
- [Coverage by IISD ENB](#)
- [Minamata Convention website](#)
- Communication materials in our [Trello board](#)
- Follow us on:
 - X [@MinamataMEA](#), [#MinamataCOP5](#), [#MakeMercuryHistory](#)
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