

SPEECH

Remarks by Monika Stankiewicz, Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention, at the **opening ceremony** of the second segment of the Fourth Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP-4.2)

21 March 2022

- *Your Excellency Siti Nurbaya Bakar, Minister of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia*
- *Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme*
- *Ms. Rosa Ratnawati of Indonesia, President of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties*
- *His Excellency, I Wayan Koster, Governor of Bali*
- *Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen*

It is a great honor and privilege to be here in Bali, Indonesia to welcome all of you to the second segment of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of this truly remarkable Convention.

Only a short 4 months ago, I was in Jakarta, looking straight into a camera in a largely empty room, welcoming you to the first, online segment, of the COP.

Today, as I stand before you, gazing beyond the lectern to see faces, expectant eyes, and smiles, I reflect on this mammoth undertaking that we, as a young Convention have achieved.

I would like to express my deepest admiration and gratitude to our Host Country, Indonesia, to its many professionals who worked many hours to make this meeting happen. I also would like to extend my gratitude to the government of Bali, and to its people for warmly welcoming us to Bali during these exceptional times.

As we start our important work this week, we still labor under the COVID-19 pandemic. The Secretariat and the Host Country have taken measures to ensure a safe and healthy meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

This effort also extends to ensuring meaningful participation to all parties, whether in person or online, participation that is essential to the negotiations that will be taking place this week. The threats to human health and the environment from mercury pollution are simply too urgent to let our deliberations wait.

You have very important work in front of you this week on evaluating the effectiveness of the Convention, the use of mercury in products and manufacturing processes, mercury releases, waste, national reporting, international cooperation, mainstreaming gender and more.

You will also consider matters related to the financial mechanism of the Convention.

Programmes and projects financed by donor support through the Global Environment Facility and the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity Building and Technical Assistance have been instrumental in making early progress to tackle mercury pollution.

In this regard, I strongly encourage the COP to take this opportunity to reflect upon the Executive Director's report on strengthening the Specific International Programme, recognizing its unique features and its provision of direct support to parties for their critical and time-sensitive implementation needs.

I am grateful to Norway, Germany, Austria, the United States, Sweden, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Denmark for your contributions to the Third Round of the Specific International Programme.

True to the Convention's ongoing efforts to enhance engagement of many stakeholders in our efforts, and I am very glad to have representatives of Indigenous Peoples attending our meeting.

I would like to thank Australia, who is also one of the new members that joined the Minamata Convention family, Denmark, and Norway for providing funding to support this participation.

This COP offers multiple opportunities to improve the engagement of Indigenous Peoples and pave a way to ensure that the implementation of the Convention is guided by their needs and priorities and, as a result, made more effective.

Before I conclude, let's me also express hope that through the example we undertake this week that our young Minamata Convention family contribute to the strength of multilateralism and dialogue in overcoming differences, and to affirm our unity as a community of nations.

Monika Stankiewicz

Executive Secretary

Minamata Convention on Mercury