

Summary of the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Minamata Convention on Mercury: 19-23 November 2018

The second meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP2) to the Minamata Convention on Mercury took place from 19-23 November 2018 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Minamata Convention bans new and phases out existing mercury mines, contains measures to control trade, releases, and air emissions, and regulates the informal sector of artisanal and small-scale gold mining.

Billed as a “working COP,” delegates came prepared to engage with technical issues to further the implementation of the Convention. Delegates were able to agree on permanent arrangements for a stand-alone Secretariat, based in Geneva. COP2 also adopted decisions on, among others:

- cooperation with the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions;
- rules of procedure for the Implementation and Compliance Committee;
- mercury waste thresholds;
- harmonized customs codes;
- contaminated sites;
- interim storage;
- capacity building, technical assistance, and technology transfer; and
- effectiveness evaluation.

In addition, the COP approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), although this was subject to debate throughout the week.

The COP was marred by procedural irregularities that led to delegates frequently calling on the legal advisor for clarification, and culminating in a vote during the COP’s final day. Despite this, the COP managed to make significant progress on substantive issues and successfully worked through many of the technical issues, but still left discussions on open burning, a review of the financial mechanism, as well as a review of Annexes A (mercury-added products) and B (manufacturing processes in which mercury or mercury compounds are used), to be dealt with at COP3.

A Brief History of the Minamata Convention

The Minamata Convention was adopted in 2013 to address mercury, a heavy metal that is widespread and persistent in the environment. As a naturally occurring element, it can be released into the air and water through the weathering of rock containing mercury ore or through human activities such as:

- industrial processes;

- mining;
- deforestation;
- waste incineration; and
- burning fossil fuels.

Mercury can also be released from a number of mercury-containing products, including dental amalgam, electrical applications (e.g. switches and fluorescent lamps), laboratory and medical instruments (e.g. clinical thermometers and barometers), batteries, seed dressings, antiseptic and antibacterial creams, and skin-lightening creams. Mercury exposure can affect fetal neurological development and has been linked to lowered fertility, brain and nerve damage, and heart disease in adults who have high levels of mercury in their blood.

To address these growing concerns, discussions related to the need for an international instrument to address the threats posed by mercury began in earnest in 2007, and the Minamata Convention on Mercury was adopted on 10 October 2013. The Convention bans new and phases out existing mercury mines, contains measures to control air emissions and trade, and regulates the informal sector of artisanal and small-scale gold mining.

It entered into force on 16 August 2017, 90 days after the deposit of the 50th instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. To date, there are 128 signatories to the Convention and 101 ratifications.

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Key Turning Points

24th Session of the UNEP GC/GMEF: In February 2007, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (UNEP GC-24/GMEF) discussed the issue of mercury extensively. Delegates' preferences for international cooperation on mercury ranged from starting a negotiating process for a legally-binding instrument, to incorporating mercury into existing agreements, or concentrating on voluntary actions, especially through partnerships. They agreed in decision 24/3 IV that a "two-track" approach could take forward actions on mercury, while keeping open the path to a binding instrument in the future. An *ad hoc* open-ended working group (OEWG) of government and stakeholder representatives was established. The OEWG met twice, agreeing on one legally-binding option and three voluntary options for consideration by the UNEP GC.

25th Session of the UNEP Governing Council/GMEF: In February 2009, the UNEP GC-25/GMEF took decision GC 25/5, by which delegates agreed to further international action consisting of the elaboration of a legally-binding instrument on mercury, which could include both binding and voluntary approaches, together with interim activities, to reduce risks to human health and the environment. It also requested the UNEP Executive Director to convene an OEWG meeting in 2009, and an intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) commencing its deliberations in 2010, with the goal of completing its work by GC-27/GMEF in February 2013.

INCs 1 and 2: The first and second sessions of the INC to prepare a global legally-binding instrument on mercury convened in June 2010 in Stockholm, Sweden, and in January 2011 in Chiba, Japan, respectively. The key outcome of INC1 was a request to the UNEP Secretariat to draft "elements of a comprehensive and suitable approach" to a legally-binding instrument, which served as a basis for negotiation at INC2, where delegates completed a first full reading of the paper and mandated the Secretariat to prepare a new draft text for further negotiation at INC3.

INCs 3 and 4: The third and fourth sessions of the INC convened from 31 October - 4 November 2011 in Nairobi, Kenya, and from 27 June - 2 July 2012 in Punta del Este, Uruguay, respectively. INC3 completed a comprehensive review of the text of the draft instrument and requested the Secretariat to compile a revised draft text based on plenary negotiations, the reports of the INC3 contact groups, and the work of the legal group. At INC4, delegates made progress on storage, wastes and contaminated sites, but views diverged on compliance, finance and control measures for products and processes. Delegates requested INC Chair Fernando Lugris (Uruguay) to "clean up" the negotiating text and, in cooperation with the Co-Chairs of the contact groups, to present possible compromise articles where there was divergence among countries. Delegates further requested the Secretariat to analyze, in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO), the extent to which the other provisions of the draft mercury instrument reflect the content of the draft article on health aspects, and to present a draft of the final act for consideration by INC5 to determine work to be completed between the signature of the instrument and its entry into force. INC4 also called for intersessional work on emissions and releases.

INC5: The fifth session of the INC convened in January 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland. INC5 addressed several policy and technical issues, including mercury air emissions and releases to water and land; health aspects; and phase-out and phase-down

dates for products and processes. A compromise was reached late on the final night, based on a package addressing outstanding issues related to the preamble, finance and compliance. Thus, delegates successfully completed the negotiation of a new global treaty: the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

27th Session of the UNEP GC/GMEF: UNEP GC-27/GMEF took place in February 2013 in Nairobi, Kenya. Decision 27/L.4 welcomed the completion of negotiations of the mercury treaty, authorized UNEP's Executive Director to provide an interim Secretariat to the instrument prior to its entry into force, and invited parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to consider the steps to facilitate cooperation and coordination with the Minamata Convention.

Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury and its Preparatory Meeting: The Minamata Convention on Mercury was adopted on Thursday, 10 October 2013, in Kumamoto, Japan, at the Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries attended by more than 1,000 participants from over 140 countries, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. During the conference, the Convention was signed by 91 countries and the European Union (EU). From 7-8 October 2013, an open-ended intergovernmental preparatory meeting convened. Participants negotiated resolutions on elements of the Final Act, including: promoting and preparing for the early implementation of the instrument; arrangements for the interim period before its entry into force, such as arrangements for financial and technical assistance during that period; and secretariat arrangements.

INC6: The sixth session of the INC convened in November 2014 in Bangkok, Thailand. INC6 was the first of two negotiating sessions planned for the interim period between the adoption of the Minamata Convention and COP1. Delegates initiated discussions on a range of issues including the financial mechanism, rules of procedure and financial rules, and possible approaches to reporting. Delegates established an *ad hoc* working group of financing experts to address finance prior to INC7.

INC7: The seventh session of the INC convened in March 2016 at the Dead Sea, Jordan. Delegates considered issues including, *inter alia*: procedures for export and import of mercury; operation of the financial mechanism; and draft rules of procedure and financial rules for the COP. They also discussed guidance on a range of issues, including on identification of stocks of mercury and mercury compounds and sources of supply, and best available techniques and best environmental practices for controlling emissions. INC7 provisionally adopted technical guidance documents related to emissions and to the identification of individual stocks of mercury and mercury compounds; and forwarded to the GEF Council an MOU between the Minamata Convention and the GEF, as well as its proposed guidance to the GEF on financing and activities related to implementation of the Convention.

COP1: COP1 met in Geneva in September 2017, with delegates considering a number of issues including matters related to:

- reporting;
- effectiveness evaluation;
- financial mechanism;
- arrangements for a permanent secretariat;
- compliance and guidance; and
- guidelines related to technical aspects of the Convention.

A High-Level Segment, which provided an interactive platform for high-level delegates to demonstrate political leadership and raise awareness of and support for implementation of the Convention, convened on Thursday and Friday, attended by two Heads of State and Government and 80 ministers.

After intense deliberations, COP1 was also able to agree on interim arrangements for the secretariat, which would be located in Geneva until a review of these arrangements at COP2. COP1 also established a Specific International Programme as one part of the financial mechanism, but was unable to agree on the MOU with the GEF, postponing this decision to COP2.

Minamata COP2 Report

The second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury opened Monday morning, 19 November 2018, in Geneva. In her opening remarks, Executive Secretary Rossana Silva Repetto congratulated the 101 parties that have ratified the Convention and those in the process of ratifying it.

COP2 President Marc Chardonens (Switzerland) stressed that COP2 will be a working COP, and outlined the matters facing it, highlighting the need to decide on a permanent secretariat. UNEP Deputy Executive Director Joyce Msuya called on delegates to reflect on why they are at COP2, underlining that rising mercury pollution is a global problem requiring a global effort to address it.

Zhao Yingmin, Vice Minister for Ecology and Environment, China, underscored the importance of constructing a Convention that works for all parties, with a proper oversight mechanism.

Gabon, for the African Group, emphasized the importance of COP2 work on open burning, guidance on contaminated sites, and developing a roadmap for the effective phase-out of dental amalgam.

Japan, on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Region, highlighted the need for proper assessment of mercury exposure in small island developing states (SIDS).

Chile, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), called on parties to approve the MOU between the GEF and the COP, and emphasized the importance of cooperation with the Basel Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions.

Moldova, on behalf of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), reiterated the role of COP2 in advancing the achievement of Convention's objectives, including protection of human health.

Palau, on behalf of Pacific SIDS, called on the COP and international partners to strengthen regional entities, national universities, and non-governmental organizations to assist at the national level.

The EU supported close cooperation with the BRS Conventions to advance sound management of chemicals and waste.

Chad requested GEF funding for artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM). Nigeria highlighted advances made in the country including developing mercury-free alternatives.

Iran lamented the "politicization" of the designated financial mechanism and called on delegates to fully implement Article 14 (capacity building, technical assistance, and technology transfer) to minimize such challenges.

Syria reported on the creation of a national working group of public and private stakeholders and a national action plan for reducing mercury. Indonesia said it is drafting a national action plan that covers, *inter alia*, ASGM, health and manufacturing, and energy. Cambodia shared progress on national legislation for mercury management and raised the issue of evaluating and prioritizing emerging chemicals management issues as they relate to developing countries.

The Zero Mercury Working Group drew attention to intersessional workshops and laboratory testing of beauty products, the results of which are described in its recently released report on "Mercury-Added Skin-Lightening Creams."

Organizational Matters

Election of Officers: On Thursday, delegates elected David Kapindula (Zambia) as President of COP3, by acclamation. Regions then nominated nine Vice-Presidents: Bolocan Svetlana (Moldova) and Karel Blaha (Czech Republic) for the CEE; Mariscia Charles (Guyana) and Maria del Mar Solano Trejos (Costa Rica) for GRULAC; Nina Crommier (Sweden) and Alison Dickson (Canada) for the Western Europe and Others Group; Serge Molly Allo'o Allo'o (Gabon) for the African Group; and Mohammed Khashashneh (Jordan) and Adel Jahankhah (Iran) for the Asia and Pacific Group.

Agenda and Organization of Work: On Monday delegates adopted the agenda (UNEP/MC/COP.2/1 and Add.1) with no amendments.

Rules of Procedure: On Wednesday, the Secretariat drew attention to bracketed provisions in Rule 45 on deciding matters when consensus cannot be reached. President Chardonens proposed, supported by GRULAC, Switzerland, and Nigeria, but opposed by Iran, language allowing the President to determine whether an issue is a matter of substance or procedure, subject to appeal, decided by a majority vote. Iran stressed all decisions should be adopted by consensus, and in the absence of this, all matters should be considered substantive. The EU, opposed by Iran, proposed deciding on whether matters are substance or procedure by a two-thirds majority vote. President Chardonens proposed, and parties agreed, to defer this matter to COP3.

The Russian Federation then raised the issue of Rule 44.2 on voting by Regional Economic Integration Organizations, pointing to his country's past request for a written clarification from the Legal Advisor on how this would function in practice. Stadler Trengove, UNEP Legal Advisor, responded that the Convention would require a COP decision requesting this clarification in order to provide the advice.

Credentials: On Tuesday, Karel Blaha, Chair, Credentials Committee, reported on the current state of credentials submissions, calling on delegations that have not done so to submit their credentials as soon as possible. On Thursday, Blaha presented a final oral report on credentials.

Matters for Consideration or Action by COP2

Releases: On Tuesday, the Secretariat presented the document on releases (UNEP/MC/COP.2/4/Rev.1), noting its recommendation to defer action on guidance until after parties submit their first reports on releases in 2021. Norway presented its proposal (UNEP/MC/COP.2/CRP.8), supported by Switzerland and the EU, for a stepwise approach to developing guidance, starting with a Secretariat report to COP3. Argentina, for GRULAC, presented a proposal (UNEP/MC/COP.2/CRP.7) noting the importance of having guidance on methods for identifying point sources so that information is: comparable, trustworthy, and relevant to decision making.

The EU supported starting work on releases. The African Group, the US, and Thailand suggested deferring a decision to allow parties to submit their reports.

Switzerland proposed the Secretariat collect information on point sources. GRULAC said much information is available, but it may not be comparable, nor can it form a basis for measuring effectiveness. The International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) said that information submitted by parties should be decoupled from developing guidance on releases, which he said should be approved at this meeting.

The COP agreed in principle to defer further work on the development of the guidance until parties submit full reports on best available techniques and best environmental practices.

The issue was referred to the contact group on technical matters, co-chaired by Silvija Kalniņš (Latvia), and Teeraporn Wiriwutikorn (Thailand), for further discussion. The contact group met from Monday to early Friday morning.

The group agreed to ask Norway and GRULAC to merge their proposals to be used as the basis for deliberation. On Wednesday the group reviewed the non-paper and forwarded it to plenary. Delegates adopted the decision without amendments.

Final Outcome: In the final decision on releases (UNEP/MC/COP.2/L.4), COP2:

- decides to establish a group of technical experts drawn from all UN regions to develop draft guidance on methodologies for the preparation of inventories for a list of potentially relevant point source categories;
- requests the Secretariat to call for nominations of group members from parties by 15 January 2019 and to support the work of the group of technical experts on releases; and
- instructs the group, with a view to cost effectiveness, to work primarily through electronic means, including webinars.

The decision further requests the Secretariat to:

- invite parties, signatories, and other stakeholders to identify possible point source categories of releases to be included in the list;
- compile in a report the information and include the relevant point source categories identified in, *inter alia*, the UNEP toolkit for identification and quantification of mercury releases, the Minamata Initial Assessments, and the forthcoming Global Mercury Assessment; and
- share the report with the group of technical experts for its consideration.

The decision requests the group of technical experts to:

- present the report, including a list of any significant anthropogenic point source of release categories not addressed in provisions of the Convention other than Article 9, along with a suggested roadmap and structure for the development of draft guidance on methodologies for preparing its inventories, for possible adoption by COP3;
- develop draft guidance on standardized and known methodologies for preparing inventories for the sources for possible adoption by COP4; and
- develop guidance on best available techniques and best environmental practices be deferred until after the draft guidance on methodologies for preparing inventories is completed.

Interim Storage of Mercury other than Waste Mercury:

On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced the guidelines on sound interim storage (UNEP/MC/COP.2/5). Japan and the US introduced their proposal (UNEP/MC/COP.2/CRP.12), noting the importance of adopting the guidelines at COP2. GRULAC said the guidelines need to take into account the diversity of countries.

The EU, Nigeria, Thailand, Jordan, Zero Mercury Working Group, and IPEN supported adopting the guidelines at COP2. China, with Indonesia, stressed the importance of taking into account country and local specificities. China called for financial resources to enable countries to effectively implement these guidelines, and Nigeria requested technical assistance and capacity building. Jordan proposed establishing a work programme to ensure effective implementation of the guidelines. IPEN highlighted the need for resources to be allocated to ensure that interim storage facilities are not overwhelmed by confiscated mercury from illegal sources.

President Chardonens proposed referring this issue to the contact group on technical matters, with a view to forwarding it for intersessional work. The EU and the US noted that most delegations were ready to adopt the guidelines at COP2.

Delegates agreed to refer the guidelines to the contact group on technical matters for finalization. The group went through the draft guidelines paragraph-by-paragraph, dealing with competing text proposals on such issues as regional storage, public consultations, and closure of a facility (UNEP/MC/COP.2/CRP.12/Add.1 and Add.1/Rev.1). They also drafted a short decision text to adopt the guidelines, call on parties to take them into account in complying with their obligations under Convention Article 10 (interim storage), and leave open the option of revising the guidelines in the future, if needed to ensure that they continue to reflect best practice.

On Friday in plenary, President Chardonens introduced a draft decision. Canada requested most recent version of the guidance document, asking for clarification on whether it had been edited by UNEP, with the Secretariat noting that it had not been edited.

Given the concerns about the one decision, GRULAC requested more time to review all the remaining draft decisions, with China, drawing attention to substantive discrepancies between what was agreed in the contact groups and the text appearing in final decisions.

Technical matters contact group Co-Chair Silvija Kalniņš noted that the version of the text available on the website during the afternoon was different from the final text agreed to in the group.

After consultations, the President suspended plenary to allow time for the Secretariat to upload all decisions, and he requested all contact group Co-Chairs to review the final versions of the decisions that their groups drafted. GRULAC requested documentation with tracked changes.

The Co-Chairs requested time to confer with the Secretariat to compare versions of the text to ensure accuracy in all draft decisions.

Apologizing for the discrepancies, the Secretariat updated parties on the status of documents uploaded to the intranet. The President requested the Co-Chairs of the technical group and others to review their respective decisions and report back to plenary.

Following a careful consideration of the text, delegates adopted the final decision.

Final Outcome: In its decision on interim storage (UNEP/MC/COP.2/L.7/Add.1/Rev.1), COP2 adopts the guidelines, contained in annex to the decision, and calls on parties to take them into account in complying with their obligations under Convention Article 10. The decision also notes that the guidelines may need to be revised in the future to ensure that they continue to reflect best practice.

Mercury Waste Thresholds: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced the documents (UNEP/MC/COP.2/6, INF/6, and INF/10). Japan introduced a proposal, submitted with the EU, which proposes setting mercury waste thresholds. The EU called on the COP to consider the function of thresholds, and whether these thresholds are necessary in all cases. GRULAC supported two working groups to address different waste thresholds. The US called for a definition of the scope of the three types of wastes (waste consisting of mercury or mercury compounds; waste containing mercury or mercury compounds; or waste contaminated with mercury or mercury compounds) and supported a single expert group to deal with thresholds.

The African Group supported the establishment of relevant mercury waste thresholds. Nigeria proposed that the COP focus

on thresholds for waste contaminated with mercury or mercury compounds.

Thailand underlined that waste thresholds should not put an undue burden on developing countries. China said that the characteristics of waste and associated waste management costs should be considered.

IPEN stressed the need to prioritize thresholds related to waste contaminated with mercury, proposing that the threshold should be 1 part per million (ppm).

The issue was forwarded to the contact group on technical matters. The group heard a detailed outline of the proposal by Japan and the EU (UNEP/MC/COP.2/CRP.2), and then discussed, *inter alia*: whether the CRP conflicts with Article 11 (waste thresholds); whether thresholds should be set for wastes containing or consisting of mercury and its compounds; whether supplementary guidance on mercury wastes should be added to that provided in the Basel Convention technical guidelines; and the possible scope of a mandate for an intersessional expert group. Work on the draft decision was finalized on Wednesday.

The COP adopted the decision on mercury waste thresholds on Thursday. Japan pledged USD 125,000 to support additional expert groups during the intersessional period.

Final Outcome: In the final decision (UNEP/MC/COP.2/L.3), COP2:

- creates a group of technical experts to work intersessionally until COP3, with the group's terms of reference detailed in the decision's annex;
- invites the Basel Convention to consider reviewing, as appropriate, the technical guidelines on environmentally sound management of mercury wastes to provide additional guidance for certain mercury wastes; and
- invites parties, taking into account relevant information contained in the Basel Convention technical guidelines, to submit information on: examples of wastes consisting of, or containing, mercury or mercury compounds to be added to a list of mercury waste types; current practices of managing overburden, waste rock, and tailings from mining other than primary mercury mining; and sampling and analysis methods that may be useful for verifying waste thresholds.

The decision calls for COP3 to review progress made by the group of technical experts and decide on further action.

Contaminated Sites: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced the document (UNEP/MC/COP.2/7) and its proposal for a further round of comments.

The EU suggested areas for further work, including the role of inventories of site risks. The African Group, Jordan, Togo, and Syria called for technical assistance and capacity building. Norway suggested revised guidance should include financial models. GRULAC said the Secretariat should submit revised guidance to COP3. The US called for additional discussion on site identification and priority-setting for risk assessments. Switzerland suggested refining the draft decision to specify what input the Secretariat should seek. China suggested including a digest of examples of environmentally sound site treatment. IPEN called for banning trade in mercury and providing clear and effective revised guidance for adoption at COP3.

The issue was forwarded to the contact group on technical matters. The group examined an EU non-paper on decision text regarding the guidance on contaminated sites, and discussed a Co-Chair's draft of a decision using elements of the EU proposal in addition to comments and observations and submissions offered by group members.

In the discussions, GRULAC announced that, while work could proceed on the language of the decision, until a separate

decision is approved on harmonized customs codes, they intended to bracket the entire decision on contaminated sites.

Several delegations proposed laying out a roadmap or timeline for parties to submit information, calling for the experts appointed by decision MC-1/20 (Guidance on the management of contaminated sites) to provide advice on guidance revision. Delegates also suggested that the experts be asked to develop a recommended framework and initial decision tree for the management of contaminated sites.

On Friday in plenary, delegates adopted the decision on contaminated sites, after a careful review of the text by the Co-Chairs of the technical matters contact group.

Final Outcome: In its decision on contaminated sites (UNEP/MC/COP.2/L.9), COP2 calls for parties and stakeholders to submit, by 15 February 2019, additional comments and information to complement and further improve the draft guidance, including case studies, on:

- situations that are site-specific to mercury that parties may face, such as the decommissioning of chlor-alkali plants and addressing contamination due to ASGM activities, etc.;
- the role played by inventories of contaminated sites in strategies and policies relating to contaminated sites;
- prioritization for further action on contaminated sites based on risk assessment;
- the interface between contaminated site policies and land use planning policies;
- existing procedures for the characterization of contaminated sites, including approaches and techniques for sampling and analysis;
- the existing range of proven and emerging remediation techniques, including situations in which certain techniques may or may not be appropriate, and environmental advantages, drawbacks and costs;
- socio-economic and cultural considerations during the remediation of contaminated sites; and
- information on approaches to financing work on, and building capacity for, the identification, assessment, remediation, and risk management of contaminated sites, including frameworks for domestic financing.

The Secretariat is requested to compile the information submitted and make it available on the Convention website. It further requests the Secretariat to prepare, by 31 March 2019, with the support of an external expert, and taking into account the information received by parties and stakeholders:

- revised draft guidance on the management of contaminated sites, drafted in non-prescriptive language, providing general advice to parties taking into consideration the variety of national circumstances of parties, that distinguishes between contaminated sites and mining sites that are being managed in an environmentally sound manner; and
- a draft framework and decision tree for the management of contaminated sites.

The Secretariat is requested to submit the two products to the group of experts, parties, and other stakeholders for comments. The experts, parties, and stakeholders are asked to provide comments on the revised draft guidance and draft framework and decision tree by 30 April 2019. The Secretariat is requested to further revise the guidance, taking into account the comments received in the new round, by 31 May 2019, for consideration by COP3.

Financial Mechanism: Global Environment Facility (GEF): On Monday, the Secretariat introduced documents (UNEP/MC/COP.2/8 and INF/3). The GEF presented its report to the COP, which includes information on 16 Small Grants Programme

projects on mercury management, with a total of USD 674,859 GEF funding, which generated USD 689,794 in co-financing.

President Chardonens proposed, and the COP agreed, to approve the MOU with GEF.

GRULAC supported the MOU with the GEF, underscoring the importance of financial resources, technical assistance, capacity building, and technology transfer.

Iran said that political considerations should not be used to deprive countries of GEF resources and suggested an amendment to the MOU and, with the Russian Federation, opposed the adoption of the MOU, noting that this issue had been scheduled for discussion on Tuesday, and stressing that the decision should not have been approved without Iran present. President Chardonens said the decision would not be re-opened.

Discussions on Iran's proposed amendment continued in a Friends of the President group for the rest of the week. The group was co-chaired by David Kapindula (Zambia), who, on Friday, reported a lack of consensus in the group's discussions.

On Friday evening in plenary, Chardonens proposed conclusion of discussions on the agenda item. In response to Iran's request for clarification, Chardonens explained that there was no agreement in the Friends of the President group, and no decision was presented, and thus no decision was put forward for adoption.

In an extended statement, Iran expressed concern at the way in which the draft decision on the MOU with the GEF was being addressed, referring to it as a "strange situation" noting that the draft decision had been published and discussed for three days by the Friends of the President. Reminding the COP that the Convention defines the basis for the GEF to provide new, predictable, adequate, and timely financial resources in support of implementation of the Convention, he underscored that the GEF must consider any project based only on "its technicality" and be free from political biases against certain countries, noting that his country has been barred from receiving GEF funding a result of the influence of one individual GEF Council member. Iran noted that such an approach has contributed to long-term environmental degradation, highlighting that the GEF has been prevented from exercising its critical mandate in funding relevant projects for management of chemicals. He said the US was not available for further consultations on the matter, as reflected in the reports of the Chair of the Friends of the President group. Finally, he objected to the approval of the MOU with the GEF, underlining the need for legal consistency in the COP's practice and expressing regret in the manner in which the COP had been conducted. Delegates agreed to note the statement in the meeting report.

Final Outcome: As noted in paragraph 77 of the official meeting report (UNEP/MC/COP.2/L.1) the Conference adopted the MOU, as contained in Annex II to document UNEP/MC/COP.2/8, and requested the Secretariat to prepare a draft decision to that effect. The MOU contains sections on: definitions; purpose; guidance from the COP; conformity with guidance from the COP; reporting; monitoring and evaluation; cooperation between secretariats; reciprocal representation; amendments; interpretation; entry into effect; and termination.

Review of the Financial Mechanism: On Tuesday, the Secretariat drew attention to Article 13(11) on the review of the financial mechanism. The EU introduced its proposal on terms of reference for the review of the GEF component of the financial mechanism (UNEP/MC/COP.2/CRP.4). President Chardonens suggested adopting the draft decision contained in the EU's proposal. The US asked for more time to consider the proposal. Citing no opposition to CRP.4, Chardonens gave the adoption

of the decision. The US reiterated that it had concerns about the proposal. Chardonens suggested bilateral discussions between the EU and US and proposed returning to discussion of the decision later.

Iran objected, supported by Syria, Cuba, and the Russian Federation, asking how this situation differed from Monday's approval of the MOU with the GEF. After some discussion, the Legal Advisor clarified that the decision had been gavelled as adopted but would be discussed again later.

Iran, with the Russian Federation, requested, and UNEP Legal Advisor Trengove clarified, the limitations placed on observer states during the decision-making process. Namibia proposed, as a way forward, that Iran could appeal the decision at a later stage.

Iran then objected to the approval of the MOU with the GEF, pointing to the similarities in the process. Chardonens deferred discussions on the review of the financial mechanism to a Friends of the President group for further consideration.

On Friday morning, Friends of the President group Chair David Kapindula (Zambia) reported that the group had failed to reach consensus. President Chardonens explained that the decision on the first review of the financial mechanism, which was adopted by COP2 on Tuesday, contained substantive differences from the proposal on which the decision should have been based, CRP.4.

After review, he said, it had been determined that the adopted decision differed from the CRP text submitted by the EU, and that UN editors had made changes that affected the substance of the proposal. The decision adopted by the COP thus differed materially from the original EU proposal, even though the President had informed plenary that they were acting on the basis of the EU proposal.

UNEP Legal Advisor Trengove explained that when a decision is adopted that does not accurately reflect the content of a proposal, parties have two options: in the case of non-technical differences, a revision can be issued; or, in the case of significant differences, parties can void their original decision and adopt a new decision based on a corrected proposal.

The EU, supported by the US, Jordan, and Canada, confirmed the divergence between the decision and the CRP, and proposed voiding the decision taken, and reconsidering the proposal with the corrected text (CRP.4).

Drawing a comparison between the current discussion to void the decision on the financial mechanism and the discussion on the MOU with the GEF (UNEP/MC/COP.2/8), Iran expressed concern over decision-making conduct at the COP, protesting that it had not been equitably treated. The Russian Federation called for equal treatment of all delegations, saying the approval of the MOU with the GEF should also be reversed. UNEP Legal Advisor Trengove noted Iran's statement and said that in his view the two situations (re-opening discussions on the MOU with the GEF, and voiding the decision on the financial mechanism) were not comparable because the approval of the MOU with the GEF was based on a pre-session document that had been available since September and there were no textual discrepancies.

President Chardonens then proposed declaring the decision on the financial mechanism invalid because there was:

- a substantive error with respect to decision making; and
- procedural confusion about which document was being adopted, the EU's CRP or the text projected on the screen, which differed.

He then asked the COP if it agreed to void the decision. Iran objected, noting his instructions to disagree with the proposal. Plenary was then suspended to allow for informal consultations.

Reconvening the meeting, Chardonens insisted on the importance of voiding the decision in “the name of accuracy, transparency, and mutual understanding,” stating that it was “a matter of common sense.” Iran, supported by Cuba and Syria, opposed the proposal to reverse the decision, saying that if the decision on the financial mechanism could be voided, then the approval of the MOU with the GEF should be treated equally.

Chardonens then called for a vote on the reversal of the decision, the results of which were 47 in favor, 2 against, and 6 abstentions. The President gavelled the decision to reverse the decision on first review of the financial mechanism.

Cuba protested that the vote that had just taken place was “illegal” and “forced” by the President. Iran said it did not recognize the vote as legal, raised the issue of establishing a commission for voting and considering credentials, and called the entire process “astonishing,” saying that the President’s decision “violated our rights.” The Russian Federation protested the conduct of business at the COP, also raising the issue of credentials for voting.

UNEP Legal Advisor Trengove affirmed that: all credentials had been properly reviewed, the vote was valid, and the decision on first review of the financial mechanism had been reversed pursuant to the procedural vote taken moments earlier. President Chardonens then suspended the meeting.

In the afternoon President Chardonens reminded parties that Article 13 (financial resources and mechanism) requires COP3 to undertake a review of the financial mechanism and sets out the mandate for the review and information needed from the GEF, the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity Building and Technical Assistance (SIP), parties, and from others, noting that the Secretariat will need to prepare a working document for the meeting.

Norway proposed that the Secretariat be “requested to compile information to be provided by the GEF, the SIP, parties and other relevant sources as identified by Article 13(11) as being necessary for the review, and present it with a synthesis to COP3 for consideration.” The US, Jordan, and Switzerland supported the proposal. The African Group requested more time to consider the proposal on screen. After reviewing the text on the screen, delegates approved Norway’s proposal.

Final Outcome: COP2 agreed to request the Secretariat to compile information to be provided by the GEF, the SIP, parties and other relevant sources as identified by Article 13(11) as being necessary for the review, and present it with a synthesis to COP3 for consideration.

Specific International Programme to Support Capacity Building and Technical Assistance (SIP): On Monday, the African Group appealed to donors to further contribute to the SIP so it could serve the purpose for which it was established. Norway pledged USD 1 million to the SIP.

On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced the documents (UNEP/MC/COP.2/9 and INF/16), noting that eligibility requirements and board membership are yet to be agreed. Reginald Hernaus (Netherlands), Co-Chair of the SIP Governing Board, reported that the Board had approved five (out of 19) projects for capacity-related issues in Argentina, Armenia, Benin, Iran, and Lesotho, and welcomed Norway’s contribution to the Programme.

Nigeria and Syria called for information on why some projects had not been approved, with Hernaus responding that this was due to a lack of funds and calling on countries that missed out on project funding in the first round to resubmit their proposals given the recent contributions by Norway and Denmark.

Switzerland announced that, as the arrangements for the Secretariat have been agreed, the CHF 1 million contributed to the SIP made at COP1 would now be available for disbursement.

On resolving outstanding issues, Iran preferred that funding eligibility should be accorded to parties, and that Board Members should come from Convention parties. Kenya called for also considering project proposals from Minamata Convention signatories.

Final Outcome: In the final decision on the outstanding SIP rules of procedure, contained in Annex II of UNEP/MC/COP.2/9, the COP agreed that non-parties are not eligible to apply for funding, and the SIP Governing Board shall consist of 10 members from parties.

Capacity Building, Technical Assistance, and Technology Transfer: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced the documents (UNEP/MC/COP2/10 and INF/5) on capacity building, technical assistance, and technology transfer.

Uruguay, for GRULAC, presented their proposal (UNEP/MC/COP.2/CRP.11), which was supported by El Salvador, Jordan, the African Group, Guinea, Ecuador, and the Africa Institute. The EU, Japan, Nigeria, the US, and GRULAC requested additional time to consider the proposal. Lebanon supported formalizing arrangements between the Minamata Convention and the Basel and Stockholm Convention Regional Centres. Guinea and the African Group called for a focus on interim storage.

The EU proposed forwarding the issue to COP4, with GRULAC preferring it be considered at COP3.

The President called on delegates to consult informally and report back to plenary. After consultations, GRULAC requested more time to consider this issue.

On Friday in plenary, President Chardonens introduced the draft decision. Uruguay reported on agreed text, after discussions with the EU, Japan, and the US. The decision was adopted without objections.

Final Outcome: In the decision on capacity building, technical assistance, and technology transfer (UNEP/MC/COP.2/L.12), the COP:

- requests the Secretariat to collect the information received from the existing regional, subregional, and national arrangements on their capacity building and technical assistance to support parties in implementing their obligations under the Convention, and requests the Secretariat to report this to COP3; and
- emphasizes the relevance of using, as appropriate, regional, subregional, and national arrangements, including existing regional and subregional centres, in the delivery of capacity building and technical assistance.

Implementation and Compliance Committee (ICC): On Wednesday, the Secretariat explained the report on the work of the ICC and its appendix proposing the ICC rules of procedure (UNEP/MC/COP.2/11). GRULAC, the African Group, the EU, Switzerland, the US, Canada, Colombia, and Mexico supported adoption of the rules of procedure for the ICC at COP2. Supporting most of the rules of procedure, China requested more time to consider them. COP2 President Chardonens requested them to report back on Thursday.

On Thursday, China reported on its consultations with interested parties regarding Article 11 of the draft ICC rules of procedure, noting agreement on an amendment stating that “the committee may invite observers to its meetings if the matters under consideration are directly relevant to such observers.” Nigeria suggested limiting observers to two per region.

Delegates then adopted the rules of procedure for the ICC, with China’s amendment.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MC/COP.2/L.5), COP2 adopted the ICC Rules of Procedure, as set out in an annex.

Cooperation with the WHO and the International Labour Organization (ILO): On Wednesday, WHO outlined recent relevant work, including regional workshops and guidance on strategic planning and implementation of the Minamata Convention's health-related articles. The ILO outlined relevant work, including projects on reducing occupational exposure to mercury, and codes of practice on worker exposure risk in ASGM.

GRULAC requested the Secretariat to develop an action plan for intersessional work with the WHO and ILO to be reviewed at every COP. The EU suggested extending cooperation to the other agencies in the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals.

The EU, with the US, suggested adopting a COP decision on a framework for further cooperation. The African Group called for more WHO work on eliminating mercury in medical and dental products. Nigeria and Jordan requested WHO to be more active in providing technical assistance at the national level.

President Chardonnes noted that GRULAC's call for an action plan would be reflected in the meeting report.

Effectiveness Evaluation: The Secretariat introduced the documents (UNEP/MC/COP.2/13, INF/8 and INF/15). Kateřina Šebková (Czech Republic) and Mohammed Khashashneh (Jordan), Co-Chairs of the *Ad Hoc* Group of Experts on Effectiveness Evaluation, outlined the work undertaken by the Group at its first meeting during the intersessional period.

Japan and the EU discussed their joint proposal (UNEP/MC/COP.2/CRP.3), supported by Switzerland, calling for an amended mandate of the Group and modifications in the recommended terms of reference and timetable for the effectiveness monitoring committee. The EU called for the Group to outline global monitoring needs, including global background trends, identification of data gaps, and identification of available options to address gaps and lack of comparability, including the associated costs of each option.

GRULAC recommended further honing the terms of reference of the Group. Iran emphasized avoiding duplication and called for a general evaluation that does not focus on singular party performance. Indonesia called for collaborative action to support generation of new credible scientific data.

The US encouraged continued coordination of global information on relevant scientific knowledge.

Canada supported the establishment of a contact group to elaborate on framework and monitoring arrangements, and urged the COP to first decide on "what" monitoring should be done.

The African Group emphasized the value of empirical data on mercury, noting that some existing global data is incompatible with African realities.

Delegates established a contact group, co-chaired by Karissa Kovner (US) and Šebková.

The contact group discussed the availability of data and the need to elaborate a global monitoring plan to fill gaps. Japan and the EU introduced their proposal, which elaborated a draft decision. The group focused on better defining the *ad hoc* expert group's tasks around policy relevant objectives so as to inform monitoring programme design. Delegates discussed whether conducting cost-benefit analyses fits into the expert group's mandate and what the COP means by "cost-effectiveness." They also discussed:

- modeling;
- filling in monitoring gaps;
- identifying sources of data; and
- technical inputs.

On Wednesday, the group finished work on the mandate for the expert group with regards to monitoring. The group also discussed amended membership and spent the afternoon working on amended qualifications for evaluation and monitoring experts. Discussion focused on the type of competencies that would be required to join the expert group.

The group also heard a summary of the Co-Chairs' draft decision on the mandate for the expert group. The Co-Chairs noted that two larger issues that had been raised were not included in the draft decision: a monitoring plan and the GEF project role.

Co-Chair Šebková reported to Friday's plenary that the resulting decision text should yield a refined effectiveness evaluation framework for consideration at COP3. She also noted that the contact group had held an extensive discussion of the role of the financial instruments in effectiveness evaluation, and asked that the COP2 report reflect that the group wants to continue the discussion on the role of financial instruments in effectiveness evaluation at COP3. After a careful review of the draft decision by the contact group Co-Chairs, delegates adopted it.

Final Outcome: In the final decision (UNEP/MC/COP.2/L.11), the COP:

- adopts the draft roadmap outlined in Annex 2;
- requests the *ad hoc* technical expert group to develop terms of reference for global monitoring arrangements;
- requests parties and others to provide information on their monitoring programmes;
- requests the *ad hoc* technical expert group to report to COP3 on progress made; and
- invites the GEF to consider supporting eligible parties in the collection of data and to facilitate sustainable input of monitoring information.

With regards to effectiveness evaluation, the *ad hoc* technical expert group will, *inter alia*:

- review and assess the detailed article-by-article process and outcome indicators as outlined by the COP and elaborate sources of baselines for those indicators;
- identify which indicators require more monitoring data; and
- develop a methodology for integrating the indicators.

With regard to monitoring, the *ad hoc* technical expert group will identify:

- which categories of data are most effective in providing information on global trends;
- what monitoring data could be used to assess the impact on levels and trends of mercury; and
- potential data limitations.

Additionally, the *ad hoc* technical expert group will:

- assess the extent to which the needs for monitoring are met;
- identify opportunities for future enhancements in monitoring, and available modeling capabilities to assess change in global mercury levels;
- examine options and identify sources of data that can be used for establishing baselines;
- provide other technical inputs as identified; and
- draft terms of reference for global monitoring arrangements including developing monitoring guidance.

Financial Rules: On Tuesday, the Secretariat highlighted outstanding items related to the financial rules (UNEP/MC/COP.2/14), particularly two references to the specific needs and circumstances of developing countries, in a section addressing parties' adherence to contribution payments. COP2 President Chardonnes proposed deleting the bracketed text, referring to developing countries. The EU supported resolving outstanding issues.

Argentina, supported by Brazil, Iran, the African Group, Nigeria, China, Peru, Syria, Cuba, and Venezuela, preferred retaining the reference to developing countries.

Venezuela, Argentina, and Cuba requested clarification of processes related to countries in arrears resulting from special circumstances. Armenia proposed inclusion of “countries in transition,” and Palestine proposed inclusion of “countries under occupation.”

CEE proposed that regional groups should further discuss this matter.

COP2 President Chardonens proposed the establishment of a contact group, which was opposed by the EU and the US, who noted a lack of consensus. Iran requested that the contact group include a co-chair from a developing country. President Chardonens said this would be addressed on Wednesday morning. Chardonens suggested Cuba and the Secretariat discuss payment arrears, which are a result of inter-bank challenges. Cuba, supported by Venezuela, protested that it was not a bilateral issue and should be discussed in plenary because it touched on the secretariat arrangements and could affect the efficiency and implementation of the Convention. The Secretariat promised a “more precise answer” on Wednesday.

On Wednesday, President Chardonens proposed, and delegates agreed, that this item be postponed until COP3 since there was no agreement on the establishment of a contact group.

After adoption of this proposal, the Russian Federation protested it was not able to intervene prior to adoption and questioned the conduct of the COP. UNEP Legal Advisor Trengove clarified that, regarding the participation of non-parties during the decision-making process, the decision by the President to open the floor only after the decision had been taken is not a rules violation. The Russian Federation, referring to the item on the MOU with the GEF, underlined the importance of equitable decision making on all items.

Final Outcome: The COP agreed to postpone further discussion on this item until COP3.

Secretariat: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced the document on secretariat arrangements (COP.2/15/Rev.1) and described the Bureau’s draft decision proposing:

- a standalone secretariat in Geneva with a host country contribution of CHF 1 million; and
- further discussing cooperation between the Minamata Secretariat and the BRS Secretariat.

The EU, the African Group, and GRULAC supported the proposal. Switzerland proposed discussions to explore areas for inter-secretariat cooperation to deliver more coherent and cost-effective services.

The US noted that the Minamata Secretariat may be able to cooperate with the BRS Secretariat on certain issues, but pointed to the unique needs of the Minamata Convention. The Russian Federation called for an independent secretariat, which cooperates with the BRS Secretariat. Peru proposed defining the role and scope of the secretariat. Iran called for geographic balance in staffing.

Parties agreed to a stand-alone permanent secretariat, based in Geneva, and welcomed the Swiss government’s host country contribution.

Delegates established a contact group, co-chaired by Nina Cromnier (Sweden) and Yingxian Xia (China). The contact group met until Thursday, and exchanged views on cooperation between the Minamata Secretariat and the BRS Secretariat, discussing options related to:

- informal versus institutionalized arrangements;
- joint services approach; and

- the purchasing-services approach.

The group also considered the benefits and challenges of shared arrangements for logistics, participants, and documents management; and addressed the EU proposal on cooperation between the two secretariats (UNEP/MC/COP.2/CRP.6).

On Thursday in plenary, contact group Co-Chair Cromnier presented a revised version of the proposal, based on the work of a smaller working group that highlighted, among other things, the legal autonomy of the respective Secretariats of the Minamata and the BRS Conventions and instructing the Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention, with the support of the Executive Secretary of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions and the UNEP part of the Rotterdam Convention, to prepare an operative proposal on institutional arrangements. Delegates adopted the decision.

Final Outcome: In its decision on the Secretariat (UNEP/MC/COP.2/L.2), COP2:

- decides to accept the offer of the Government of Switzerland to host the Secretariat in Geneva;
- welcomes the annual host country contribution from Switzerland of CHF 1 million, apportioned as established in the Financial Rules; and
- requests the UNEP Executive Director to continue performing the secretariat functions for the Convention through a Secretariat located in Geneva.

In its decision on cooperation between the Minamata Secretariat and the BRS Secretariat (UNEP/MC/COP.2/L.8), the COP requests the UNEP Executive Director, in the capacity of performing secretariat services to the Minamata Convention, to:

- maximize the effective and efficient use of resources of the Minamata Convention, including through the sharing of relevant secretariat services with the BRS Conventions, which are performed by the UNEP Executive Director, as appropriate, mindful of the legal autonomy of the respective secretariats, and to implement relevant arrangements as soon as feasible; and
- submit an operative proposal, prepared together with the Minamata Executive Secretary and with the support of the Executive Secretary of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions and the UNEP part of the Rotterdam Convention, on a stable framework for sharing of relevant services in areas such as conference services, knowledge and information management, administrative and information technology services, technical assistance, legal advice, and budget preparation, including possible options, for consideration by COP3.

The decision also requests, *inter alia*: the UNEP Executive Director to inform the BRS Secretariat and BRS COPs at their next meeting of this decision, and of any relevant secretariat arrangements already established or being developed or considered pursuant to the above decision provisions.

The decision invites the BRS COPs to consider adopting corresponding decisions on this matter at their next meeting.

Emissions of Mercury Resulting from the Open Burning of Waste: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced the document (UNEP/MC/COP.2/16). The EU, Samoa, and Thailand supported the proposal that the Secretariat continue compiling information and engaging, as appropriate, with the BRS Secretariat. The US said due to limited information it is not possible to assess the open burning of waste’s contribution to global mercury emissions, and did not support the Secretariat engaging further with the BRS Secretariat.

Nigeria and Kenya supported collecting additional information. Jordan highlighted the problem of burning medical waste. Sri Lanka and GRULAC called for technical assistance.

Final Outcome: Delegates agreed that the Secretariat shall continue to engage with the BRS Secretariat and provide an update at COP3.

Programme of Work and Budget

On Monday, COP2 President Chardonens introduced the update on the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2018-2019 (UNEP/MC/COP.2/18) and the progress report on the main activities of the Secretariat in the intersessional period (UNEP/MC/COP.2/17).

The BRS Secretariat presented the report on cooperative activities with the Minamata Secretariat in areas of mutual interest. The UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the ILO reported on their organizations' progress on mercury-related issues. The US presented the report on activities undertaken within UNEP's Global Mercury Partnership.

The African Group noted savings made in the 2018 budget and supported carryover to 2019, particularly to support developing countries' ratification. Iran noted the importance of announcing workshops in advance to enhance participation.

The EU called for more information on the programme of work to facilitate discussions in the budget contact group.

The COP established a contact group on budget, co-chaired by Reginald Hernaus (Netherlands) and Sam Adu-Kumi (Ghana). The group met until Friday evening and focused first on the general and special trust funds. They also began discussions on draft decision UNEP/MC/COP.2/CRP.6, as submitted by the EU.

Delegates requested an update of voluntary contributions and addressed specific budgetary items including translation services, funding of scientific matters, anticipated surplus amounts, reporting services, and website and outreach costs.

On Thursday the group spent some time on the budget detail sheets (UNEP/MC/COP.2/INF/9) for the programme of work and budget. The Secretariat explained the budget format, noting that it mirrors aspects of the BRS Conventions' budget formats which include, among others:

- conference and meetings;
- capacity building and technical assistance;
- overall management; and
- legal and policy activities.

Views diverged on the type of inputs that should be made regarding the format of the budget. Some preferred offering specific adjustments while others preferred requesting the Secretariat to take views into account.

Some recommended the use of factsheets modeled on the BRS factsheets, which integrate mandate, rationale, indicators, means of verification, resources, socio-economic aspects, and partners alongside budgetary allocations. The group also discussed issues relating to the capacity of the Secretariat to address additional requests by parties on the budget, including limitations in staff numbers, capacity of existing staff to conduct the work along with their other responsibilities, and the responsibility of the Secretariat to fulfil party requests.

On BRS Secretariat support for budget formulation, the Minamata Secretariat said that work on the budget was not included in shared arrangements for COP2. The contact group agreed that the issue of shared arrangements would continue to be discussed in the contact group on institutional issues in order to explore this collaboration, with delegates recommending that the Co-Chairs discuss areas of alignment on budget issues with that group.

On Friday in plenary, budget group Co-Chair Hernaus reported the group had finalized its work and approved an updated budget

for the General Trust Fund for 2019 of USD 4,080,374, while the Special Trust Fund would remain unchanged from the figure set by COP1. The COP approved the decision without amendment.

- Final Outcome:** In the final decision on the update on the budget for 2019 (UNEP/MC/COP.2/L.13) COP2, *inter alia*:
- encourages the Executive Secretary, if needed, to draw upon the available general trust fund cash balance in 2019 to enhance the early and effective implementation of the Convention including through the sharing of relevant secretariat services with the BRS Conventions;
 - approves the updated budget for the General Trust Fund for 2019 of USD 4,080,374;
 - authorizes the Executive Secretary to draw down from the available surplus of the General Trust Fund the amount of USD 237,300 in 2019;
 - adopts the indicative scale of assessments for the apportionment of expenses for 2019 and authorizes the Executive Secretary, to adjust the scale to include all parties for which the Convention is in force by 1 January 2019; and
 - requests parties to pay their contributions promptly and in full to enable the Secretariat to carry out its work.

Venue and Date of COP3

On Monday, COP2 President Chardonens noted that a reservation has been made to host COP3 at the International Conference Center in Geneva in November 2019. The EU introduced a proposal (UNEP/MC/COP.2/CRP.5), suggesting that other countries could offer to host COPs, but in the event that there are no other offers to host the meeting, the COP would be held in Geneva. A Friends of the President group was requested to consider this proposal. David Kapindula reported on the group's progress on this issue on Thursday, noting agreement on a draft decision.

Delegates adopted the draft decision without amendment on Thursday.

Final Outcome: In its decision (UNEP/MC/COP.2/L.6), the COP:

- decides to hold COP3 in Geneva, in the absence of another offer, from 25-29 November 2019;
- invites parties to submit to COP3 offers to host COP4, and to proceed in a similar manner for subsequent COPs; and
- requests the Executive Secretary to submit an assessment of hosting offers received for consideration by the COP.

Other Matters

On Wednesday, President Chardonens highlighted three items for discussion:

- review of Annexes A and B of the Convention;
- dental amalgam; and
- harmonized customs codes.

The Secretariat recalled the Convention provisions on review of Annexes A (mercury-added products) and B (manufacturing processes in which mercury or mercury compounds are used), noting that the review should be conducted no later than five years after the Convention enters into force.

On **dental amalgam**, the African Group presented their proposal (UNEP/MC/COP.2/CRP.13) on a roadmap towards the amendment of Annex A to address health-related impacts due to dental amalgam. Togo, Cameroon, Senegal, Jordan, Say No to Mercury, World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry, and the Asian Center for Environmental Health supported the proposal. Canada, Mexico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic proposed deferring consideration of this issue to COP3. The EU, supported by many African countries, but opposed by India, supported

addressing this issue in a contact group. President Chardonnes proposed forwarding this issue to the contact group on technical matters.

The EU presented their proposal on the **review of Annexes A and B** (UNEP/MC/COP.2/CRP.16). The proposal was supported by the African Group, Cameroon, and the Zero Mercury Working Group. Canada, Argentina, India, Brazil, the US, China, Colombia, and Australia proposed considering this issue at COP3 or later, noting that the review of annexes is “premature.” The EU requested moving the discussions to a contact group for further consideration. President Chardonnes proposed, opposed by many, forwarding this issue to COP3.

Addressing both proposals, the US and India opposed discussing the review of annexes at COP2. President Chardonnes suggested sending both proposals to a contact group. The US, Brazil, India, Canada, and Mexico opposed. The EU urged at least starting discussions on review procedure, and asked for time for consultation. President Chardonnes tasked the EU to report to plenary on Thursday with a proposal agreeable to all or the issue would be deferred to COP3. On Friday in the morning plenary, the EU proposed, and delegates agreed, to forward this issue, which includes the proposal to amend Annex A in relation to dental amalgam, to COP3.

On **harmonized customs codes**, GRULAC introduced its joint proposal with the African Group (UNEP/MC/COP.2/CRP.14), explaining it would task the Secretariat to work with the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the Global Mercury Partnership to get new harmonized codes to aid in identifying mercury-containing products. Jordan, Sri Lanka, Zambia, and Lebanon supported the proposal. The US preferred not to discuss it at COP2.

GRULAC, supported by the African Group, noted overwhelming support for the proposal. President Chardonnes stated that not every country supported the proposal and suggested reflecting the discussion in the meeting report, with a note that parties should cooperate on harmonizing customs codes, including through the Global Mercury Partnership.

Dissenting, Argentina, supported by GRULAC, Guinea, Zambia, Switzerland, and Nigeria, suggested discussing this issue in the contact group on technical matters. Guinea underlined the need for the Convention to use all facilities possible for discussion, including contact group meetings.

On Thursday, COP2 President Chardonnes noted contact group discussions relating this issue to the discussion on contaminated sites. Delegates agreed that the contact group on technical matters will consider options to assist parties to control trade of mercury added products, taking into account the options reflected in the joint GRULAC-African Group proposal. The contact group considered and modified the proposal on Thursday evening.

On Friday in plenary, after review by the contact group Co-Chairs, delegates adopted the decision.

Final Outcome: In its decision on harmonized custom codes (UNEP/MC/COP.2/L.10), COP2 requests the Secretariat, in collaboration with the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership and others, to:

- suggest approaches for customs codes to identify and distinguish non-mercury-added and mercury-added products listed in Annex A of the Convention, taking into account the results of the survey on the Harmonized System Initiative and including approaches for their possible harmonization;
- circulate to parties and other stakeholders a draft report for comments by May 2019;

- receive comments from parties and other stakeholders on the draft report until 1 August 2019;
- revise the draft report; and
- present the report to COP3 for its consideration.

Closure of the Meeting

On Friday evening, COP2 Rapporteur David Kapindula presented the report of the meeting (UNEP/MC/COP.2/L.1). The Russian Federation requested clarification on whether or not the MOU with the GEF had been approved, and the Secretariat responded that it had, but that the Friends of the President group was unable to reach agreement to submit a draft decision on this item. Delegates then adopted the meeting report.

In closing statement, the EU welcomed the adoption of the decision on enhancing cooperation between the Minamata Convention Secretariat and the BRS Secretariat for a stable framework for the sharing of services. She expressed reservations regarding interventions by non-parties and observers during decision making at the COP.

GRULAC applauded the decision to host the Minamata Secretariat in Geneva, welcomed the decision on harmonization of customs codes, and called for dialogue, mutual understanding, and inclusiveness in future work.

The African Group commended advancement of work at the COP on issues including initiating discussions on the process to amend Annex A on mercury-added products including dental amalgam, and on the harmonization of customs codes, among others. CEE said COP 2 welcomed progress on technical issues and effectiveness evaluation and welcomed the decision on the date and venue of COP3.

IPEN urged urgent action on ASGM as a means to address ocean pollution and food contamination. Zero Mercury Working Group welcomed the decision on harmonized customs codes and reiterated commitment to assisting countries, where appropriate. The World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry congratulated the incoming President of COP3 and noted progress made by COP2 on building consensus to ending mercury use in general.

Minamata Convention Executive Secretary Rosanna Silva Repetto reflected on the outcomes of the COP including the decision on Secretariat arrangements and strengthening cooperation between the BRS and Minamata Conventions.

President Chardonnes lauded delegates’ commitment to the process and work at COP2, noting that barriers were crossed, despite “some challenging moments.” He highlighted the importance of the work of the Convention to humankind and the environment and gavelled the meeting to a close at 8:08 pm.

A Brief Analysis of COP2

Delegates arrived in Geneva for the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP2) to the Minamata Convention prepared for a “working COP.” Following the Convention’s entry into force on 16 August 2017, COP1 had agreed on many of the foundational pillars, but there remained a number of institutional and technical elements to discuss. Thus, at the beginning of the “working COP,” the sense of urgency to make progress on matters initiated at COP1 was palpable. Although so much needed to be done, discussions at COP2 were impeded by procedural issues almost from the start, and the consideration of institutional issues was not as smooth as many had hoped.

In contrast to COP1, which marked a milestone in the process, COP2 built on the technical work already in place, setting up the intersessional activities to ensure parties will have the tools to implement the Convention. COP2 laid the groundwork for

COP3 to adopt strong decisions on issues such as effectiveness evaluation, mercury waste thresholds, contaminated sites, and interim storage of mercury waste. Aware that following COP3 parties would cease annual meetings and only come together biennially, delegates used COP2 to set the process in motion to accomplish the phase-out of manufacture and trade in mercury-added products by 2020.

COP2 marked a turning point for the Convention in the formalization of the Secretariat, which had been an open question at the close of COP1. Early on, delegates agreed on the hosting arrangements, basing the permanent Secretariat in Geneva. As this analysis will highlight, the institutional arrangements had an impact on the overall meeting, which were visible all week.

This brief analysis examines the progress made and challenges that still remain for parties to fully implement the Convention and looks at the hurdles delegates had to overcome at COP2 in their journey to make mercury history.

In Search of Lost Time

Delegates at COP2 had to walk what some perceived as a “thin line” between substance and process. Throughout COP2 concerns were raised—in the corridors, formally in plenary, and in contact groups—about the conduct of business at the meeting, including document quality control and flow, occasional confusion and lack of transparency, the uncertainty and inconsistency in the rules governing plenary interventions, decision-making, and voting.

Time and again during the course of the meeting, delegates expressed frustration with the unclear management of discussions in plenary. Emblematic of this was the week-long confusion over the status of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and an EU proposal regarding the first review of the Convention’s financial mechanism, including the GEF.

The matter of the MOU was taken up on Monday rather than Tuesday—a schedule change that came without clear notice. This led to the MOU’s approval despite the absence of a key delegate from Iran, who later requested that the issue be reopened, a request that was denied on the grounds that the COP2 President had “gaveled the adoption of the MOU, and an adopted decision cannot be reopened.” While sympathetic to Iran’s inability to access GEF financing on mercury due to certain donor policies, many did not support holding up the MOU with the GEF since, as one seasoned observer put it, this is a “broader geopolitical issue that cannot be resolved by the Minamata Convention.”

Standing on its own, this issue might have faded away, but a hasty swing of the gavel later in the week complicated matters and meant that the very conduct of the COP was called into question. On Tuesday, the President was “too quick” to approve the EU’s proposal on first review of the financial mechanism, a seemingly unremarkable act but for the unfortunate fact that the decision text “had been completely altered during the editorial process” and would need to be reissued, and the decision to adopt the erroneous document reversed. At the same time, the US called for more time to consider the draft but was silenced by the President’s gavel, a sound that during COP2 became cause for anxiety rather than applause. This “unforced error,” which seemed to evince carelessness in both COP procedure and document management, opened the proverbial floodgates, with Iran and the Russian Federation demanding the MOU discussion be reopened in order to “treat both proposals equally” and “avoid a double standard.” For the rest of the week confusion reigned, culminating in the rare spectacle of a counted vote—an act that Iran and Cuba were quick to call “illegal”—in which the financial review decision was revoked.

Commenting on how all this played out through the week in a Friends of the President’s group trying to untangle the mess, one seasoned observer noted that the two issues “would have been treated differently by a more experienced chairperson, and with better advice from the Secretariat.” Applauding the election of the “veteran negotiator” David Kapindula from Zambia as the next COP President, one observer acknowledged that “there is yet hope.”

Contributing to the challenges outlined above were concerns about the work of the Secretariat resulting in complaints about the flow, access, editing, and distribution of documentation before and during the meeting. There were also questions about the Secretariat response to parties’ requests during the COP. Some attributed these issues to a combination of factors: the very low staff numbers, the existing expertise in the Secretariat, and the insufficient cooperation with and use of the available resources from the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm (BRS) Secretariat.

These frustrations came to a head during terse exchanges in the budget group when delegates complained about responsibility of Secretariat to parties. “Ultimately, the Secretariat needs to respond to needs of parties. This is their *raison d’être*,” said one contact group participant. The promise of additional hiring led many to hope that COP3, and all future meetings, will achieve higher levels of quality so that delegates can “restore their trust in the process.”

Petite Madeleines

Despite the procedural challenges, delegates were not deterred from making progress on issues that will strengthen the implementation of the Convention. The “Swiss Break,” an event as regular as clockwork for the Minamata family, reconnected veteran negotiators, many of whom have known one another for the better part of a decade, with their memories of things past and their spirit of cooperation. During conversations at the Swiss Break, it became clear that most delegates were willing to put procedural debacles aside so as not to deter their mission to protect human health and the environment.

This spirit of cooperation allowed the COP to make progress on some technical and institutional issues. For instance, delegates were quite pleased with the increase in funding in the Specific International Programme (SIP). With agreement on the Secretariat, Switzerland requested UNEP to release the CHF 1 million it has been holding in trust since COP1 for capacity building projects submitted to the SIP. Norway also announced a USD 1 million contribution, to the delight of many developing country delegates. With over USD 1 million disbursed by SIP in 2018, SIP Governing Body Co-Chair Reginald Hernaus said in plenary, “No submission was rejected. We just ran out of money.” The SIP, as the second part of the financial mechanism, is widely seen as a way to access financing for “capacity building projects that the GEF may take time to approve.”

Another success was agreement on Secretariat arrangements, an issue that was left unresolved at the end of COP1. Although the decision to keep a stand-alone, autonomous Secretariat based in Geneva was decided early on, it took longer to agree on how best to cooperate with the BRS Secretariat to benefit from its years of experience and expertise. In the end, the COP agreed to give the Minamata Secretariat the freedom to cooperate and coordinate with the BRS Secretariat on sharing of relevant services under the direction of UNEP. “At least for now, this will be enough to ensure COP3 runs smoothly,” said one delegate.

Aside from the financial and institutional issues, delegates made some measure of progress on technical matters. The guidance on interim storage was adopted and hailed as a COP2

success, as it will assist many countries struggling with how to handle mercury waste. It also contributes to controlling trade in mercury and its compounds, and ensuring proper temporary storage is critical.

On both wastes and releases, COP2 established intersessional expert and working groups to further the development of guidelines and guidance to assist parties in their implementation of the Convention. During the intersessional period a group of technical experts will discuss the development of relevant approaches and methodologies for establishing thresholds for mercury waste. These thresholds hold the key to whether materials are treated as mercury waste, and can be disposed of in an environmentally sound manner, or whether they are defined as other waste. The risk of the latter definition for materials containing mercury is that mercury in the waste stream will continue to be released, putting human health and the environment at risk.

On effectiveness evaluation, the contact group worked on one of the more substantive issues of the week: the mandate for the *ad hoc* group of experts that will establish the monitoring regime to review the Convention's effectiveness. Monitoring the effectiveness of the Convention is key to assessing progress towards the elimination of mercury. Commenting on the importance of this work, one COP delegate summed it up nicely: "The Minamata Convention was set up to address one issue: mercury. It does not have an expanding mandate, and thus, once fully operational, in a few years the world could actually make history by making mercury history."

Time Regained

Although important progress was made, trust in the process was eroded and, if not restored quickly, "may impede delegations from fully engaging" in Convention activities going forward. Thus, to ensure parties remain engaged and are ready for the next phase and the challenges therein, delegates may need to, as UNEP Deputy Executive Director Joyce Msuya said during the opening ceremony "reflect on why we are here"—to protect human health and the environment from the risks associated with mercury. While COP2 did not focus directly on those most vulnerable, it did set up the structures that will eventually enable countries to protect their people from the risks associated with mercury.

Looking ahead, as national implementation of the Convention continues, COP3 will need to deliver additional tools, ensuring that countries will be able to rely on strong support structures. During the intersessional period, the Secretariat is expected to fill a dozen staff positions, which many expect will address the challenges related to capacity, experience, and expertise.

2020—the year by which the manufacture and trade of a plethora of mercury-added products will need to be phased out—is no longer in the distant future, but rather a looming deadline. COP3 will need to ramp up all efforts to ensure that this goal is accomplished. With David Kapindula, a strong champion of both the Convention and developing country concerns, taking the helm as COP President, one seasoned advisor expressed hope that "we'll move beyond matters of procedure and work on strengthening parties' capacity to implement the Minamata Convention."

Upcoming Meetings

Circular Economy Forum of the Americas 2018 (CEFA 2018): CEFA2018 is a two-day high-level event that offers interactive sessions, workshops, and other opportunities to gather insights on what is available in the field of circular economy

throughout the Americas. CEFA expected outcomes include: the Declaration of Santiago for regional cooperation on circular economy, the CEFA2018 report capturing the principle outcomes and recommendations, and announcement of new circular economy programmes and initiatives. **dates:** 27-28 November 2018 **location:** Santiago, Chile **contact:** Circular Economy Platform of the Americas (CEP-Americas) **email:** info@cep-americas.com **www:** <https://www.cefa2018.com/>

Basel Convention Expert Working Group on Environmentally Sound Management (ESM): The Expert Working Group is expected to revise the manual on transboundary movement notifications, guidance on recycling and recovery strategies, and guidance on ESM in the informal sector for consideration by COP14. **dates:** 5-8 December 2018 **location:** São Paulo, Brazil **contact:** BRS Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8271 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **email:** brs@brsmeas.org **www:** <http://www.basel.int>

Basel Convention Expert Working Group on the Review of Annexes: The second meeting of the Expert Working Group on Review of Annexes will prepare recommendations for revisions to Basel Convention Annex IV and Annex IX for consideration by COP14. **dates:** 10-13 December 2018 **location:** Buenos Aires, Argentina **contact:** BRS Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8271 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **email:** brs@brsmeas.org **www:** <http://www.basel.int>

55th Meeting of the GEF Council: The GEF Council will approve projects to realize global environmental benefits in the GEF's focal areas, provide guidance to the GEF Secretariat and implementing agencies, and discuss its relations with the conventions for which it serves as the financial mechanism, such as the Minamata Convention. **dates:** 17-20 December 2018 **location:** Washington DC, US **contact:** GEF Secretariat **phone:** +1-202-473-0508 **fax:** +1-202-522-3240/3245 **email:** secretariat@thegef.org **www:** <https://www.thegef.org/council-meetings/gef-55th-council-meeting>

World Resources Forum 2019 (WRF 2019): Organized and hosted by the Public Waste Agency of Flanders (OVAM), WRF 2019 will have the theme "Closing Loops – Transitions at Work." Thematic sessions will focus on such issues as: circular cities and regions; the contribution of ports to a low-carbon circular economy; the global metals flow; digital transformation as a driver for circular economy; sustainable materials and waste management; bioeconomy; soil and land as valuable resources to close loops; circular economy as an enabler for climate policy; upscaling sustainable lifestyles; and financing the circular transition. **dates:** 24-27 February 2019 **location:** Antwerp, Belgium **contact:** OVAM **phone:** +32- 15-284-148 **email:** woordvoerder@ovam.be **www:** <https://www.wrf-antwerp2019.be/>

9th Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific: The event, co-organized by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand, the Ministry of the Environment of the Government of Japan (MoEJ), and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), will convene under the overall theme of "3R as a Way for Moving towards Sufficiency Economy – Implications for the Sustainable Development Goals." **dates:** 4-6 March 2019 **location:** Bangkok, Thailand **contact:** C.R.C. Mohanty, UNCRD **phone:** +81-52-561-9416 **fax:** +81-52-561-9374 **email:** mohantyc@uncrd.or.jp **www:** www.uncrd.or.jp/

Fourth Session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA4): UNEA4 will focus on the theme, "Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production (SCP)," particularly: better global environmental data and partnerships; sustainable and efficient resource management; and robust engagement of civil society, citizens and academia

in promoting innovative approaches. It will be preceded by a meeting of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR) from 4-8 March 2019. **dates:** 11-15 March 2019 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** UNEP **email:** beatpollution@unenvironment.org **www:** <http://web.unep.org/environmentassembly/>

14th International Conference on Waste Management and Technology: The 14th International Conference on Waste Management and Technology (ICWMT) is a platform for specialists and officials to discuss scientific problems related to solid waste management, exchange experiences, and look for innovative solutions. Initiated by the Basel Convention Regional Centre (BCRC) for Asia and the Pacific and approved by China's Ministry of Environmental Protection, ICWMT has been held 13 times since 2005. With the theme of "To Build a Zero-Waste Society," the conference will focus in issues of solid waste management, chemicals management, and circular economy. **dates:** 21-24 March 2019 **location:** Beijing, China **contact:** BCRC for Asia and the Pacific **phone:** +86-10-82686410 **fax:** +86-10-82686451 **email:** icwmt@tsinghua.edu.cn **www:** <http://2019.icwmt.org>

Third Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG3) of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM): The OEWG is to consider the results of the first two meetings of the intersessional process addressing the possible post-2020 platform for addressing chemicals and waste, and prepare for the Fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5). **dates:** 2-4 April 2019 **location:** Montevideo, Uruguay **contact:** SAICM Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8273 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** saicm.chemicals@unep.org **www:** <http://www.saicm.org>

Basel Convention COP14, Rotterdam Convention COP9 and Stockholm Convention COP9: The 14th meeting of the COP to the Basel Convention, the ninth meeting of the COP to the Rotterdam Convention and the ninth meeting of the COP to the Stockholm Convention will convene back-to-back. **dates:** 29 April - 10 May 2019 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** BRS Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8271 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **email:** brs@brsmeas.org **www:** <http://www.brsmeas.org/>

9th SETAC Africa Biennial Conference: The 9th Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) Africa Biennial Conference (SAF 2019) seeks to provide a forum for novel discoveries and approaches related to environmental research for Africans and by Africans. The theme is "Development and Resilience through Environmental Science." Conference participation is expected to be a mix of academia, industry, and government agencies. **dates:** 6-8 May 2019 **location:** Cape Town, South Africa **contact:** SETAC North America Office **phone:** +1-850-469-1500 **fax:** +1-888-296-4136 **email:** setac@setac.org **www:** <https://saf2019.setac.org/>

29th SETAC Europe Annual Conference: The 29th SETAC Europe Annual Conference will discuss emerging research, regulatory developments and the latest methodologies in environmental toxicology and chemistry. The theme is "One Environment. One Health. Sustainable Societies." Conference participation is expected to be a mix of academia, industry, and government agencies. **dates:** 26-30 May 2019 **location:** Helsinki, Finland **contact:** SETAC Europe Office **phone:** + 32-2-772-72-81 **fax:** +32-2-770-53-86 **email:** setaceu@setac.org **www:** <https://helsinki.setac.org/>

Third World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF 2019): The third WCEF will have a strong emphasis on scaling up the circular economy transition and building the next era of the circular economy. **dates:** 3-5 June 2019 **location:** Helsinki,

Finland **contact:** Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra **phone:** +358-294-618-991 **fax:** +358-9-645-072 **email:** wcef2019@sitra.fi **www:** <http://www.wcef2019.com>

56th Meeting of the GEF Council: The GEF Council will approve projects to realize global environmental benefits in the GEF's focal areas, provide guidance to the GEF Secretariat and implementing agencies, and discuss its relations with the conventions for which it serves as the financial mechanism, such as the Minamata Convention. **dates:** 10-13 June 2019 **location:** Washington D.C., US **contact:** GEF Secretariat **phone:** +1-202-473-0508 **fax:** +1-202-522-3240/3245 **email:** secretariat@thegef.org **www:** <https://www.thegef.org/council-meetings>

15th Meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee: POPRC-15 will review the possible listing of hazardous chemicals under the various annexes of the Stockholm Convention. **dates:** 30 September- 4 October 2019 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** BRS Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8729 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **email:** brs@brsmeas.org **www:** <http://www.pops.int>

15th Meeting of the Chemical Review Committee: CRC-15 will address PFOA, its salts and related compounds, and other notifications submitted during the intersessional period. **dates:** 7-11 October 2019 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** BRS Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8729 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **email:** brs@unep.org **www:** <http://www.pic.int>

SETAC Latin America 13th Biennial Meeting: The 13th SETAC Latin America Meeting seeks to promote the interaction among Latin American professionals engaged in environmental science with colleagues from other parts of the world. The theme is "Industry, Academia and Government for a Global Sustainability." Conference participation is expected to be a mix of academia, industry, and government agencies. **dates:** 15-19 September 2019 **location:** Cartagena, Colombia **contact:** SETAC North America Office **phone:** +1-850-469-1500 **fax:** +1-888-296-4136 **email:** setac@setac.org **www:** <https://sla2019.setac.org/>

Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury: COP3 is expected to discuss, *inter alia*, waste thresholds, releases, interim storage, contaminated sites, open burning of waste, review of Annexes A and B, and harmonized customs codes. **dates:** 25-29 November 2019 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland (tentative) **contact:** Secretariat of the Minamata Convention **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** MEA-MinamataSecretariat@un.org **www:** <http://www.mercuryconvention.org>

For additional meetings, see <http://sdg.iisd.org>

Glossary

ASGM	Artisanal and small-scale gold mining
BRS	Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRP	Conference room paper
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GRULAC	Latin American and Caribbean Group
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEN	International POPs Elimination Network
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
POPs	Persistent organic pollutants
SIP	Specific International Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WHO	World Health Organization