

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Briefing by the Secretariat
Thursday 7 September 2017
After the close of Sub-Committee starting at 9:30 a.m.
United Nations Office at Nairobi Gigiri,
Conference Room 4

Briefing note on the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury

Introduction

Following the entry into force of the Minamata Convention on Mercury on 16 August 2017, the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties will be held in Geneva, Switzerland from 24 to 29 September 2017. The meeting will be hosted by the Government of Switzerland, and is expected to be presided over by the Vice Minister of Environment of Switzerland, Mr. Marc Chardonens. The Minamata Convention is the first new global Convention on environment and health adopted for close to a decade. At the time of entry into force the Convention counted 74 Future Parties.

Structure of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties

- The meeting will be formally opened at 3 p.m. on Sunday, 24 September.
- A High-Level Segment will be held in the afternoon and evening of Thursday, 28 September and the morning of Friday, 29 September. The High-Level Segment to **Make Mercury History** will be hosted by Her Excellency Ms Doris Leuthard, President, Confederation of Switzerland.
- During Friday afternoon, the plenary will reconvene to formally adopt its decisions and take final decisions.
- The meeting of the Conference of the Parties will be preceded by regional consultations, which may be held in the afternoon of Saturday 23 September and the morning of Sunday 24 September.

Main issues for the meeting of the Conference of the Parties

There are a number of technical and policy issues to be considered at the first meeting, including a number of decisions to be adopted. Work finalized by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument is forwarded to the first meeting for formal adoption, while a number of ongoing issues will be discussed. The work of the first meeting is mandated by the Convention text, by the Final Act of the Conference

of Plenipotentiaries of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, and from the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

Outstanding issues requiring further discussion include:

- Technical issues such as reporting, effectiveness evaluation, interim storage, waste and contaminated sites.
- Financial mechanism for the Minamata Convention
- Programme of Work and Budget
- Location and structure of the secretariat of the Minamata Convention

High-Level Segment – Make Mercury History

The objective of the High-Level Segment is to provide a specific platform at the highest level for the celebration of the entry into force of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

This gathering will allow the articulation of the high ambition the international community has set itself to address the adverse effects of mercury and mercury compounds, and the importance of fulfilling that ambition. By bringing attention to the different challenges faced in different parts of the world, government dignitaries will together be able to underline the global commitment to address the effects of mercury in all its forms as set out in the Convention. There will be an opportunity to explore these challenges in ministerial roundtables.

The High-Level Segment will also provide senior representatives of the United Nations, as well as other speakers, the opportunity to share their perspectives on the journey of negotiating the Minamata Convention, their aspirations for a world without mercury contamination, and to inform on their work to support the Minamata Convention. Finally, the High-Level Segment will afford an important opportunity for Ministers to voice Action Messages for the Minamata Convention on Mercury. The High-Level Segment will conclude with the President of the Conference presenting some Key Messages on the outcome of the Segment.

Other events in the margins

Reflecting the lifecycle approach of the Minamata Convention, a number of events in the margin of the meeting have been designed to inform delegates on aspects of mercury impacts.

During the week, **Thematic Sessions** will address impacts of mercury on Land, Air and Water, with these themes carried through to the High-Level Segment ministerial roundtables.

A series of **Clinics** on the work undertaken under **Minamata Initial Assessments*** will provide opportunities for countries to present and discuss the experiences they encountered as they have prepared to implement the Minamata Convention.

The **Exhibition Space** is being structured to consider aspects of mercury impacts: *Where does mercury come from? How is mercury used?, What happens to mercury after use?, Why do we need to act on mercury?*).

Knowledge Labs will provide a chance for hands-on interaction on specific issues with nominated experts, while **Show Case Events** will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to demonstrate efforts undertaken towards the ratification and early implementation of the Convention.

During the week, in cooperation with the Government of Switzerland, the City of Geneva, other Geneva-based stakeholders a series of events will be held outside the venue to celebrate the entry into force of the Convention, another opportunity to Make Mercury History.

Current registration status

As at 28 August 2017, there were 930 registered participants for the meeting, including 550 Government participants. As a number of governments are yet to finalize their delegations, this number is expected to increase. Of these participants, there are currently 65 ministerial level participants, with an expectation that this will also increase as the meeting approaches.

Please visit: <http://cop1.mercuryconvention.org> Email: mercury.chemicals@unep.org



** Minamata Initial Assessments have been key to the quick entry into force of the Convention. They are enabling activity projects funded by the Global Environmental Facility that assist countries in their initial efforts to ratification. As of entry into force, 104 countries have accessed this funding, of which 40 have ratified.*