



Participation of observers at meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury

Paragraph 6 of Article 23 of the Minamata Convention on Mercury provides:

"The United Nations, its specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as any State not a Party to this Convention, may be represented at meetings of the Conference of the Parties as observers. Any body or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, that is qualified in matters covered by this Convention and has informed the Secretariat of its wish to be represented at a meeting of the Conference of the Parties as an observer may be admitted unless at least one third of the Parties present object."

It should be noted that the admission and participation of observers shall be subject to the rules of procedure that the Conference of the Parties will adopt for itself and any of its subsidiary bodies at its first meeting. Hence the below information may be subject to change further to that meeting.

1. Application for admission as an observer at meetings of the Conference of the Parties:

Note: the below procedure for application for admission as an observer does not apply to the United Nations, its specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as any State not a Party to the Convention and any entity operating the mechanism referred to in paragraph 5 of Article 13 of the Convention.

If your organization wishes to apply for admission as an observer at meetings of the Conference of the Parties, please provide the interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention (see contact details below) with the following information, at least one month prior to the opening of the meeting:

- A letter from the head office of your organization requesting admission, including information on contact person, geographical coverage and qualification of your organization in matters covered by the Minamata Convention;
- A copy of your organization's constitution, charter, statutes or by-laws, including any amendments to these documents, a list of affiliates (if any, including accreditation with the United Nations Environment Assembly or consultative status with the Economic and Social Council) and description of any network and/or membership system;
- A statement of your organization's mission and scope of work, including detailed accounts of the extent of outreach, indications of interactions within the community or other activities. Supporting documentation could include a published mission statement (available on a website or in brochures);
- Information on qualification in matters covered by the Minamata Convention, including description of activities undertaken by your organization over the last two years or more demonstrating its work in those matters. Such information could include annual reports, conference or seminar reports, project reports, press releases and copies of media statements, newsletters or other periodicals.

If your organization has been active in matters covered by the Minamata Convention for less than two years, an explanation of why it is qualified to be admitted at meetings of the Conference of the Parties should be submitted. This may be the case where an organization has changed its name, or a new coalition has been formed which consists of organizations with a longer history.

The interim secretariat will screen the applications to check their completeness and conformity with the requirements of the Convention. Successful applications will be submitted to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties following receipt of the relevant documents.



2. Number of participants:

There is currently no limit on the number of representatives each organization can register. A pre-registration shall be submitted for each representative. Due to space constraints or security and safety concerns, the secretariat however reserves the right to restrict the number of representatives attending the meetings.

3. Participation in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties:

Rule 6 of the "Draft rules of procedure for the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury" forwarded for consideration and possible adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its first meeting provides that the United Nations, its specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as any State not party to the Convention and any entity operating the mechanism referred to in paragraph 5 of Article 13 of the Convention, may, upon the invitation of the President, participate in the proceedings of any meeting without the right to vote, unless at least one third of the Parties present at the meeting object.

Rule 7 of the draft rules of procedure provides that any body or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, admitted as an observer may, upon the invitation of the President, participate without the right to vote in the proceedings of any meeting in matters of direct concern to the body or agency they represent, unless at least one third of the Parties present at the meeting object.

4. Oral and/or written contributions during the meetings of the Conference of the Parties:

Upon invitation by the President, observers may present their statements orally. The number of oral statements to be delivered at the meeting will depend on the time available. With respect to NGOs, preference will be given to those speaking on behalf of groups of organizations or coalitions. Written statements may also be submitted in one of the official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, or Spanish).

5. Participation in non-plenary meetings of the Conference of the Parties:

Participation in contact group meetings is open to observers, on a similar basis to their participation in plenary meetings. Observers are not invited to participate in the drafting of text. Observer representatives may organize or participate in parallel events or exhibition during the meeting when such opportunity is available at the venue.

6. Media coverage:

Observers are permitted to film, record interviews and take photos in all public areas of the venue unless otherwise restricted for security reasons. Generally, all open meetings of the Conference of the Parties are accessible, subject to the availability of space. For access by visual media, please contact the interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention (see contact details below). Please note that no access will be granted to close meetings of the Conference of the Parties or to office areas. Filming of contact groups, limited groups of participants or individuals is not permitted without the explicit consent of all participants.

7. Contact details:

Interim Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury
Chemicals and Health Branch, Economy Division
United Nations Environment Programme
11 - 13 chemin des Anémones, 1219 Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland
Fax: +41 22 797 3460, E-mail: mercury.chemicals@unep.org