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Geneva, 21 May 2020

COMMUNICATION

Update on the intersessional work to implement Decision MC-3/10 "Arrangements for the first effectiveness evaluation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury" with regard to the proposed indicators and development of monitoring guidance.

Dear Madam/Sir,

I am pleased to inform the Parties that the official meeting report of the third Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention, which includes the decisions taken at that meeting, is now available in all six official UN languages on the [website of the Convention](#).

Furthermore, the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention would like to inform the Parties of the progress of work on Decision MC-3/10 "Arrangements for the first effectiveness evaluation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury¹".

The Secretariat has prepared an overview of the provisions of the Minamata Convention and the guidance by the COP on the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Convention to guide intersessional work on that matter. The overview is posted on the Convention website, on the [page on intersessional work](#).

Intersessional work on the proposed indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of the Minamata Convention
Decision MC-3/10 includes the provisions on work on the proposed indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of the Convention. The proposed indicators are contained in annex I to the decision. Parties are invited to submit views on the indicators and the Secretariat is requested to compile those views in advance of COP-4. In consultation with the COP-4 Bureau, the Secretariat has prepared a plan of work with the modalities and timeline for providing and receiving comments so as to assist Parties at COP-4. The plan is attached to this communication.

Intersessional work on developing monitoring guidance under the Minamata Convention

In Decision MC-3/10 the Secretariat is requested to advance the work by securing services for drafting, among others, guidance on monitoring. According to this mandate, the Secretariat has prepared a roadmap for developing monitoring guidance (attached to this communication). The timeline in the roadmap has been developed taking into account comments by the COP-4 Bureau.

In line with this roadmap, an online information session is planned for 10 June 2020 to present a draft annotated outline of the guidance. Information on the registration for the session will be posted on the [web page on intersessional work](#). Further information, including a draft annotated outline of the monitoring guidance, call for consultants and call for interest in contributing to the drafting of guidance, will be posted on the website in late May 2020.

The Secretariat is inviting Parties to note the above-mentioned documents and actively contribute to the work planned for the intersessional period.

¹ The text of Annex I to MC-3/10 is captured on pages 51-57 in the Report of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury on the work of its third meeting, [UNEP/MC/COP.3/23](#)



The decision also requests the Secretariat to advance the work by securing services for drafting a trade, supply and demand report, which includes mercury waste flows and stocks, and an Article 21 synthesis report. While some initial work on a trade report could be possible in the second half of 2020, most of the work is foreseen for 2021 (funding from the General Trust Fund is for 2021). The planning for an Article 21 synthesis report will be launched at a later stage.

I thank you for your commitment to the implementation of the Minamata Convention and your continued contribution to the intersession process.

Your sincerely,

Monika Stankiewicz

Monika Stankiewicz
Executive Secretary

To: Governments through their official channels of communication to the UN Environment Programme
Cc: National Focal Points for the Minamata Convention on Mercury
Permanent Missions to the UN Environment Programme and to the UN in Geneva

Attachments:
Plan of work on the proposed indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of the Minamata Convention
Roadmap for developing monitoring guidance under the Minamata Convention

Plan of work on the proposed indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of the Minamata Convention

The third meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-3) adopted decision MC-3/10: *Arrangements for the first effectiveness evaluation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury*.

In that decision the Secretariat is requested to compile views in advance of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Consideration of the proposed indicators will thus be included in the provisional agenda of COP-4 in agreement with the President.

Decision MC-3/10 does not specify the schedule or modality for compiling Parties' views on the proposed indicators. As the Secretariat is tasked to compile the views in advance of COP-4, it has prepared the following plan of work.

Plan of Work on the proposed indicators	
Indicative timeline	Action
Mid-September 2020	The Secretariat will avail itself to Parties and stakeholders for an online information session on the proposed indicators, as captured in annex I of Decision MC-3/10 ¹ , for evaluating the effectiveness of the Minamata Convention. In advance of this information session, the Secretariat will prepare guiding questions, that may support Parties in their initial consideration and preparation of their initial views on the proposed indicators.
Monday, 30 November 2020	Deadline for the submission to the Secretariat by Parties of initial views and responses. The same deadline applies to stakeholders who may wish to submit their input.
Mid-December 2020	The Secretariat will make available a dedicated virtual work space to collate and access the initial views and responses received from Parties as well as input received from stakeholders by 30 November 2020.
Mid-December 2020	The Secretariat will prepare a document reviewing the available data and methods for quantified assessment of the proposed indicators as background information, and make the document available on the dedicated virtual work space. The Secretariat may also prepare other supplementary information, as appropriate, and as may have come forward through the initial views and responses.
By 31 January 2021	The Secretariat will facilitate an exchange session on the received initial views and initial responses by 30 November 2020. This exchange session is to enable clarifications on the views and responses submitted, additional questions that may have arisen, and other relevant information sharing and exchange on the proposed indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of the Minamata Convention. This opportunity to exchange is also to assist Parties in their formal preparation of their views , as requested by Decision MC-3/10, in advance of COP-4.
Wednesday, 31 March 2021	Deadline for the submission to the Secretariat of views of Parties in advance of COP-4.
July 2021	The Secretariat completes the document of views on the proposed indicators for COP-4.

¹ The text of Annex I to MC-3/10 is captured on pages 51-57 in the Report of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury on the work of its third meeting, [UNEP/MC/COP.3/23](https://www.unep.org/minamata/sites/default/files/2020-05/Annex_I_to_MC-3_10.pdf).

A roadmap for developing monitoring guidance under the Minamata Convention

The third meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-3) adopted decision MC-3/10: *Arrangements for the first effectiveness evaluation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury*.

In that decision the Secretariat is requested to advance the work by securing services for drafting guidance on monitoring to maintain harmonized, comparable information on mercury levels in the environment, taking into consideration the draft structure set out in UNEP/MC/COP-3/INF/15¹

The Secretariat will be advancing the process of developing monitoring guidance and has prepared this roadmap.

The roadmap comprises the following steps.

Further details about the envisaged work are included in the table below, where three steps are indicated using different colours.

1. Development of an annotated outline of the monitoring guidance.

Timeline: May – August 2020

This is a consultative step, as views and input will be sought from the parties and stakeholders.

The draft structure of the monitoring guidance document in Part II of document UNEP/MC/COP.3/INF/15 will be taken into consideration.

To support the work the Secretariat will start reach out to parties and stakeholders to collect:

- Information and lessons learnt about existing monitoring guidance and its use for effectiveness evaluation and follow-up on the implementation under other MEAs.
- Information on existing global, regional and national monitoring networks, including sampling, sample analysis, data handling, statistical analysis and reporting.

The work may be supported by a consultant.

2. Drawing on scientific expertise to create the content of the monitoring guidance.

Timeline: May – December 2020

This step involves a process that will a) be supported by consultants hired by the Secretariat and b) will draw on scientific expertise provided by the parties and stakeholders.

The aim of the step is to harvest existing scientific knowledge and experience in mercury monitoring, so that the guidance can represent scientifically sound approaches.

Consultants will be hired following UN procedures (advertising in INSPIRA). Consultants, representing specific expertise such as on air, biota, and human monitoring, will develop elements of the draft guidance. The Secretariat will draft introductory and other general parts of the document, and co-ordinate these elements into a draft guidance document.

¹ Secretariat has also been requested to advance the work by securing services for drafting Article 21 Synthesis report and a trade, supply and demand report, which includes mercury waste flows and stocks.

Input from a wide range of experts and scientists will be sought. The Secretariat will issue a call for interest to contribute to the drafting of the guidance. The call will be submitted to the parties and stakeholders.

The expected contribution of interested experts and scientists can range from sharing scientific background information and advising on scientific elements of monitoring guidance, including the technical aspect of monitoring methods and experience in using these methods, to reviewing the text of the draft guidance developed by consultants. The call will describe the necessary details of the expected contribution. The work will be organized online.

The progress of the work will be visible in an online web-based workspace. The COP Bureau will also be kept informed about the progress.

3. Consultation on draft monitoring guidance with the parties and stakeholders.

Timeline: January – July 2021

The draft monitoring guidance will be opened for review by the parties and stakeholders (together with a commenting template).

The Secretariat will take the comments into account when further developing the draft guidance, which will be submitted to a consultation meeting for the parties to be held in early 2021.

The aim of the meeting will be to resolve any potential outstanding technical issues stemming from the comments received.

Representatives of parties and stakeholders that submitted comments will be invited to the meeting while also considering the geographical and gender balance. Due to potential financial limitations in case a face-to-face meeting is held, participants may be asked to represent a group of parties and stakeholders that have submitted similar comments. The Secretariat may invite additional participants to ensure required scientific expertise.

If possible, the meeting will preferably be held physically, in which case travel for participants representing eligible parties and some invited experts will be funded by the Secretariat. Otherwise, the meeting will be held online.

The meeting will aim at reaching a common understanding on the content of the draft monitoring guidance in light of the comments received, or identifying potential technical issues on which views diverge and which should be noted in the COP-4 document for further consideration.

Indicative timeline	Action
Starting in May 2020	As a first step, the Secretariat collects information on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information and lessons learnt about the existing monitoring guidance and their use for effectiveness evaluation under other MEAs. - Information on existing global, regional and national monitoring networks, including sampling, sample analysis, data handling, statistical analysis and reporting. The collected information will be stored in an online web-based workspace.
Late May 2020	The Secretariat will advertise a call for consultants to develop elements of the draft guidance.
By 30 May 2020	The Secretariat develops a draft annotated outline of the guidance, taking into consideration the draft structure set out in UNEP/MC/COP-3/INF/15 and using the collected information. The draft annotated outline will be posted on the website for comments. Submission of technical information on sampling, chemical analysis, data handling, statistical analysis etc will also be invited.
Early June 2020	The Secretariat issues a call for interest in contributing to the drafting of the guidance on the Convention website. Parties and stakeholders are invited to identify experts and scientists to contribute to the drafting.
Early June 2020	The Secretariat makes itself available to present the draft annotated outline to interested parties and stakeholders.
By 31 July 2020	Parties and stakeholders submit their input on the annotated outline. The input received will be posted on the web-based workspace.
Early August 2020	The Secretariat will further develop the draft annotated outline taking into account the comments, and convening informal consultation as needed.
By 15 August 2020	The Secretariat will post the annotated outline on the website.
By 15 August 2020	Parties and stakeholders identify experts and scientists interested in contributing to the drafting of the guidance.
August 2020	The Secretariat will collect further technical information on sampling, chemical analysis, data handling, statistical analysis etc., in addition to the information already collected by the Secretariat and stored in the web-based workspace.
Early September	The first webinar of the identified experts and scientists is convened.
September – December 2020	The Secretariat and the consultants develop elements of guidance through thematic online meetings of identified experts and scientists. Thematic face-to-face meetings of relevant identified and scientists may be convened as needed.
By 15 January 2021	The Secretariat posts draft guidance on the website for comments.
By 31 March 2021	Parties and stakeholders submit comments on the draft guidance.
April – May 2021	The Secretariat further develop the draft guidance taking into account the comments received, in cooperation with the consultants as appropriate.
May - June 2021	The Secretariat convenes a final consultation meeting (preferably face-to-face meeting), inviting representatives of the parties and stakeholders that have submitted comments and other participants as appropriate.
July 2021	Guidance document finalized for processing as COP-4 document.