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**United Nations  
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**Conference of the Parties to the  
Minamata Convention on Mercury  
First meeting**

Geneva, 24–29 September 2017

Item 5 (c) (iii) of the provisional agenda\*

**Matters for action by the Conference of the Parties at its  
first meeting: matters recommended by the  
intergovernmental negotiating committee: physical  
location of the permanent secretariat**

**Clarification provided by the Government of Switzerland on its  
offer to host the permanent secretariat of the Minamata  
Convention on Mercury in Geneva**

**Note by the secretariat**

As its seventh session, the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury considered an offer provided by the Government of Switzerland to host the secretariat in Geneva, which was received on 30 June 2015. Upon the request of the committee, the Government of Switzerland has provided clarification of the offer, which was received on 27 June 2017. The clarification, as received from the Government of Switzerland, is set out in the annex to the present note, without formal editing.

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\* UNEP/MC/COP.1/1.

## Annex



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of the Environment,  
Transport, Energy and Communications DETEC

**Federal Office for the Environment FOEN**  
**International Affairs Division**

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27.6.2017

### **Additional clarification of the offer by the Government of Switzerland to host the permanent secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury in Geneva**

The first Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Minamata Convention on Mercury will be held in September 2017 in Geneva. It is foreseen that at this first COP, the Parties among other things will take a decision on the hosting of the permanent secretariat of the Minamata Convention and how the permanent secretariat will be provided. Switzerland would like to thank the interim secretariat for having prepared different documents on these issues which were presented to and discussed at INC7.<sup>1</sup>

Following the discussion at INC7 after the presentation of the Swiss offer to host the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention in Geneva as described in document UNEP/Hg/INC.7/INF/5 and upon request by the participants at INC7, Switzerland would like to submit the following clarifications on the Swiss offer to host the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention.

Switzerland offers a contribution of 2.5 million CHF each year for a fully integrated Secretariat in Geneva, as well as rent-free office space and free rental of the Geneva International Conference Center. The 2.5 million CHF comprises CHF 2 million<sup>2</sup> each year provided without any restriction on how it is used (in particular no restriction regarding the location of meetings), and CHF 500,000 each year earmarked specifically for certain purposes, namely for financing a position for supporting the integration of the Secretariat and, subsequently, for joint activities of the Minamata, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. In addition, there will be an initial single payment of CHF 100,000.- for the consolidation of its infrastructure.

The offer foresees a full integration of the Minamata Secretariat into the current structure of the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions immediately after the first COP of the Minamata Convention. The functions to be performed by the Minamata secretariat would be divided among the three expanded existing branches of the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions (the Conventions Operations Branch, the Technical Assistance Branch and the Scientific Support Branch), as well as through the Executive Office of the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. The function of the Executive Secretary, Deputy Executive Secretary and Branch Chiefs, as well as many functions supporting more than one convention will be sourced from existing staff, with cost-sharing by the Minamata Convention.

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<sup>1</sup> In particular *UNEP/Hg/INC.7/15 Report on proposals on how the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme will perform the functions of the permanent secretariat for the Minamata Convention on Mercury* and *UNEP/Hg/INC.7/16 Analysis of offers to host the permanent secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury*.

<sup>2</sup> This amount includes Switzerland's assessed contribution as a party to the Convention. The shares of the contribution going to the core and to the voluntary fund are to be decided by the COP as part of the financial rules for the Minamata Convention.

Reference: Q234-0237

An integrated secretariat arrangement does not imply Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm, Minamata quadruple COPs. The Minamata parties are free to decide the frequency and format of its COPs regardless the arrangement of the conventions secretariat.

Switzerland recognizes that at INC7 an additional option for merging the Secretariat of the Minamata convention with the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions was presented. This option would on the one side allow for making benefit of synergies with the existing BRS secretariat structure, but that at the same time maintain a certain independence for specific Minamata functions (option 1b of document UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/15). According to the proposal discussed at INC7, this option foresees that the BRS secretariat could deliver general supporting functions while a separate Minamata Branch within the overarching BRS secretariat framework would fulfill Minamata specific key functions. This Minamata Branch would be responsible for carrying out capacity-building, and, technical assistance activities as well as science activities. This option is a compromise between a full integration immediately after the first COP on the one side and the stand-alone option on the other side. It could be established for a transitional phase in view of a later decision on full integration. Some parties have expressed their preference for this new option.

This option was not covered by the initial Swiss offer to host the Permanent Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury in Geneva, which foresaw a full integration of the Minamata Secretariat into the current structure of the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions immediately after the first COP. At INC7, Switzerland was requested to clarify whether and how its offer could be extended to this new option of a partial integration with an independent Minamata Branch within the BRS structure. Switzerland would like to inform that for this option, the Swiss host country contribution would be CHF 2 million annually, including the assessed contribution. The table below takes that into account and clarifies how the Swiss Offer applies to the three categories of different arrangements that might be considered in the decision to be taken at the first COP.

**Application of Swiss Offer to different arrangements that might be considered in the decision to be taken at COP1.**

	<b>1a) Full Integration immediately after the first COP</b>	<b>1b) Partial Integration with a separate Minamata Branch</b>	<b>2) Stand alone secretariat in Geneva</b>
Head / Management structure	Joint Executive Secretary	Joint Executive Secretary	Minamata Executive Secretary
Organizational structure	Shared Branches using existing BRS structure: Conventions Operations Branch, Scientific Support Branch, Technical Assistance Branch	Organizational structure with shared branches and services and a separate Minamata Branch to deal with specific aspects to the implementation of the convention	Stand alone secretariat. BRS services to Minamata Secretariat are possible but invoiced
Host country contribution	Switzerland committed to paying <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CHF 2 Mio. per year of unearmarked contributions</li> <li>- initial payment of CHF 100'000.-</li> <li>- CHF 500'000 per year of earmarked contributions for financing a position for supporting the integration of the secretariat and, subsequently, joint activities of the Minamata, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions</li> </ul>	Switzerland committed to paying <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CHF 2 Mio. per year of unearmarked contributions</li> <li>- initial payment of CHF 100'000.-</li> </ul>	Switzerland committed to paying <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- initial payment of CHF 100'000.-</li> </ul>

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	<b>1a) Full Integration immediately after the first COP</b>	<b>1b) Partial Integration with a separate Minamata Branch</b>	<b>2) Stand alone secretariat in Geneva</b>
Office space	Rent free office space	Rent free office space	Rent free office space
CICG	Rent free use of CICG	Rent free use of CICG	Rent free use of CICG

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