



Distr.: General
7 October 2019

English only



**United Nations
Environment
Programme**

**Conference of the Parties to the
Minamata Convention on Mercury
Third meeting**

Geneva, 25–29 November 2019

Item 6 (b) of the provisional agenda*

**International cooperation and coordination: other
international organizations and bodies**

Report on the activities of relevant international bodies

Note by the secretariat

1. In paragraph 2 (c) of article 24, the Minamata Convention on Mercury includes among the functions of the secretariat coordination, as appropriate, with the secretariats of relevant international bodies, particularly other chemicals and waste conventions.
2. In its resolution on matters pertaining to other international bodies (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/CONF/4, annex I), the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury invited international bodies such as the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization and the World Customs Organization to cooperate closely with the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, and subsequently with the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention, to support the implementation of the Convention, particularly article 16, as appropriate, and to provide information to the Conference of the Parties on the progress made in that regard.
3. Accordingly, in fulfilling its functions, the secretariat has been cooperating closely with a number of organizations. Reports on the activities of several such organizations, prepared by the organizations themselves, are set out in the annexes to the present note, as follows: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (annex I), United Nations Development Programme (annex II), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (annex III), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (annex IV), Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (annex V), international metals study groups (annex VI), Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (annex VII), Group on Earth Observations (GEO) (annex VIII) and International Whaling Commission (annex IX). The reports are presented as received, without formal editing.
4. Reports by and on the activities of the Global Environment Facility; the secretariat of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization; and the United Nations Environment Programme, are set out in documents UNEP/MC/COP.3/INF/2, UNEP/MC/COP.3/INF/6, UNEP/MC/COP.3/18 and UNEP/MC/COP.3/INF/4, respectively.

* UNEP/MC/COP.3/1.

Annex I

FAO inputs to the report of Minamata Convention

FAO has continued supporting developing countries and countries with economies in transition in their efforts to reduce the use and release of mercury in agriculture and implement the Minamata Convention with aims to reducing risks of mercury product to human health and the environment and achieving sustainable agriculture. The efforts mainly focused on phasing out mercury-based pesticides and addressing Minamata Convention in agriculture

Phasing out mercury based pesticides:

FAO supported the phasing out of mercury-based pesticides and promoting alternatives in the world. All mercury-based pesticides, such as Phenyl Mercuric acetate, Mercuric Ethyl Chloride, and Fumiron, have been banned for agricultural use and there is no one being used in agriculture. Meanwhile, low risk alternatives including integrated pest management approach and bio-pesticides were developed to replace these pesticides. The FAO and WHO Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management advises that any pesticides listed in international conventions on chemicals should be identified as a highly hazardous pesticide (HHPs), but Minamata Convention on Mercury is not included in the current FAO/WHO Guidelines on HHPs as the guidelines was developed before the endorsement of the convention. However, the inclusion of Minamata Convention in the guidelines will be made when it is revised.

Addressing Minamata Convention in agriculture:

Within the framework of the project “Capacity Building related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries – ACP/MEAs II (GCP/INT/153/EC)” FAO supported the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) in implementing MEAs on Minamata Convention at the field level. It assisted four countries in Africa to prepare for the ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury and to implements its provision on mercury-added products phase-out. As of March 2018, three (Ghana, Mauritius, Nigeria) out of the four project countries ratified the treaty.

The project also assisted the four countries in phasing out mercury added products with a wide range of activities and tools, including: a Project Advisory Committee; a Stakeholder working group; a “Guide and Checklist for Phasing out Mercury added Products under the Minamata Convention”; drafts of national legislation to phase out mercury-added products for two countries; and a general study assessing the national market transition towards mercury-free or Convention-compliant products. Several high-profile workshops were organised in the four target countries to bring together stakeholders from the governments, industry, NGOs, international agencies and affected communities. Many governments have already been using these tools in preparation of their national roadmaps towards phasing out mercury added products.

The project contributed to the development of the Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining (ASGM) National Action Plans (NAPs) for Tanzania and Ghana. A “Miners consultation guide” and baseline reports were developed for these countries. Partner NGOs are now part of the official government committees for developing mercury baselines and NAPs, which reflects the success of capacity building in favour of these NGOs under the project. EEB work culminated with the organisation of two regional conferences held from the 22nd to 26th May 2018, in Nairobi, Kenya, in collaboration with UN Environment. These conferences focused on phasing out mercury-added products and on reducing mercury use in ASGM.

Overall, the project reached well over 2000 persons representing Ministries, Government agencies, UN agencies, NGOs, experts, miners and private sector. The total number of beneficiaries reached were estimated to be 235 in Nigeria, 165 in Mauritius, 570 in Ghana, and over 1000 in Tanzania. Over 500 stakeholders were also reached via the regional conferences and the partners’ active participation at international meetings, including the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee meetings and the First Conference of the Parties.

Annex II

UNDP and the Minamata Convention on Mercury

UNDP has been active in the area of mercury reduction efforts since the 1970s, when it administered the UN Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration (UNRFNRE) from 1975 to 1995 and implemented a number of artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) projects financed by the revolving fund.

Since then, UNDP has continued assisting developing countries and countries with economies in transition in their efforts to reduce the use and release of mercury. Such efforts have mainly focused on the extractives sector, by supporting the phase-out of mercury used in mining to extract gold, and on the health sector, where we support the phase-out of mercury-containing medical devices and the reduction of mercury emissions. In addition, the adoption of the Minamata Convention on Mercury with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as its financial mechanism has created new avenues and opportunities for providing financial and technical support to countries to assist them in reducing releases of mercury.

To assist countries prepare for the ratification of the Minamata Convention, meet their future commitments under the Convention and reduce releases of mercury from various sectors and release sources, UNDP, with the financial support of the GEF, supports countries in:

- Conducting Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA) activities and ASGM National Action Plans (NAPs). MIAs include mercury inventories and assessments of the legal and regulatory frameworks as well as institutional and technical capacity needs.
- Reducing emissions of mercury and mercury compounds to the atmosphere from point sources (e.g. coal-fired industrial boilers, incinerators, smelting and roasting processes used in the production/recycling of non-ferrous metals).
- Phasing-out mercury-containing products in the healthcare sector (e.g. thermometers, blood pressure meters, dental amalgam, etc.).
- Lifecycle management (LCM) of mercury, mercury-containing products and wastes (including treatment and storage).
- Reducing and eliminating the use of mercury in ASGM, and minimizing mercury releases to the environment from mining and processing.

UNDP has already provided support or is initiating support to a total of 46 countries to implement mercury-related projects through national, regional and global projects. UNDP's current mercury portfolio amounts to \$49 million in GEF grants and \$115 million in co-financing. An overview of these projects is shown in Table 1.

UNDP is also participating in the GEF GOLD programme, which is a programmatic approach to tackling the use of mercury in the ASGM sector. The GEF GOLD programme involves three UN agencies and one NGO and aims to support activities in countries that can help them generate global environmental benefits that correspond to more than one global environmental convention or GEF focal area, by tackling the underlying drivers of environmental degradation. Utilizing a programmatic approach offers more opportunities for exploring development links to multi-sectoral approaches, multi-stakeholder engagements and platforms, and increases the potential for delivering socio-economic co-benefits along with enhancing the sustainability of the associated investments. As one of its main goals, the programme will develop and connect responsible ASGM producers to international markets through transparent supply chains. Direct funding from the GEF is \$45.2 million, with co-financing of more than \$135 million from governments, sustainable finance institutions and the private sector.

With the formal [launch of the GEF GOLD](#) in February 2019, UNDP is starting its activities under the Programme. About 1.14 million people are engaged in ASGM in Colombia, Indonesia, Kenya, and Peru. As part of GEF GOLD, UNDP will support the adoption of sound mining practices in these countries through strengthening institutions, policy and regulation framework, increasing the access to mercury-free technologies, disseminating best practices, rising awareness and sharing information. These package of interventions will contribute to poverty alleviation, addressing inequality, and improving the health and

livelihoods of vulnerable communities engaged in ASGM.

In addition, UNDPs 'Strategy for Sustainable Development and Equitable Management of the Extractive Industries' seeks to improve the benefits from fiscal revenues, jobs and incomes while minimizing negative effects on the environment, accountability, social and gender equality, and conflict. UNDPs current global portfolio related to extractive industries has over 70 projects in over 50 countries.

Table 1: UNDP/GEF Projects on Mercury (2002–2019)¹

Country	Mercury Area	GEF Grant (US\$)	Status
Global (Brazil, Lao PDR, Indonesia, Sudan, Tanzania and Zimbabwe)	ASGM	6,806,800	Financially Completed
Global (Argentina, India, Latvia, Lebanon, Philippines, Senegal and Viet Nam)	LCM and phase-out of mercury-containing medical devices and products	PPG ² : 144,990 2,210,281	Operationally Completed
Global (Bangladesh, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Mozambique and Samoa)	Minamata Initial Assessment	1,000,000	Ongoing
Regional (Ghana, Madagascar, Tanzania and Zambia)	LCM and phase-out of mercury-containing medical devices and products	PPG: 40,000 1,290,639	Ongoing
Regional (Bolivia and Peru)	ASGM	1,312,750	Ongoing
GEF GOLD (Colombia, Peru, Kenya and Indonesia)	ASGM	PPG: 420,000 20,910,000	Ongoing
Albania	Minamata Initial Assessment	200,000	Ongoing
Argentina	Minamata Initial Assessment	200,000	Ongoing
Argentina	Disposal of waste that contains or is contaminated with mercury	PPG: 60,000	Ongoing
Azerbaijan	Minamata Initial Assessment	200,000	Completed
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Minamata Initial Assessment	200,000	Ongoing
Burkina Faso ³	ASGM	120,000	Operationally Completed
Colombia	LCM and phase-out of mercury-containing medical devices and products	PPG: 30,000 1,120,000	Ongoing
Costa Rica	Minamata Initial Assessment	200,000	Completed
Ecuador	National Program for the Environmental Sound Management and Life Cycle Management of Chemical Substances	PPG: 200,000 3,795,00	Ongoing
Egypt	LCM and phase-out of mercury-containing medical devices and products	PPG: 28,000 820,000	Ongoing
Georgia	Minamata Initial Assessment	200,000	Completed
Ghana	Minamata Initial Assessment	200,000	Ongoing
Guyana	Minamata Initial Assessment	200,000	Completed

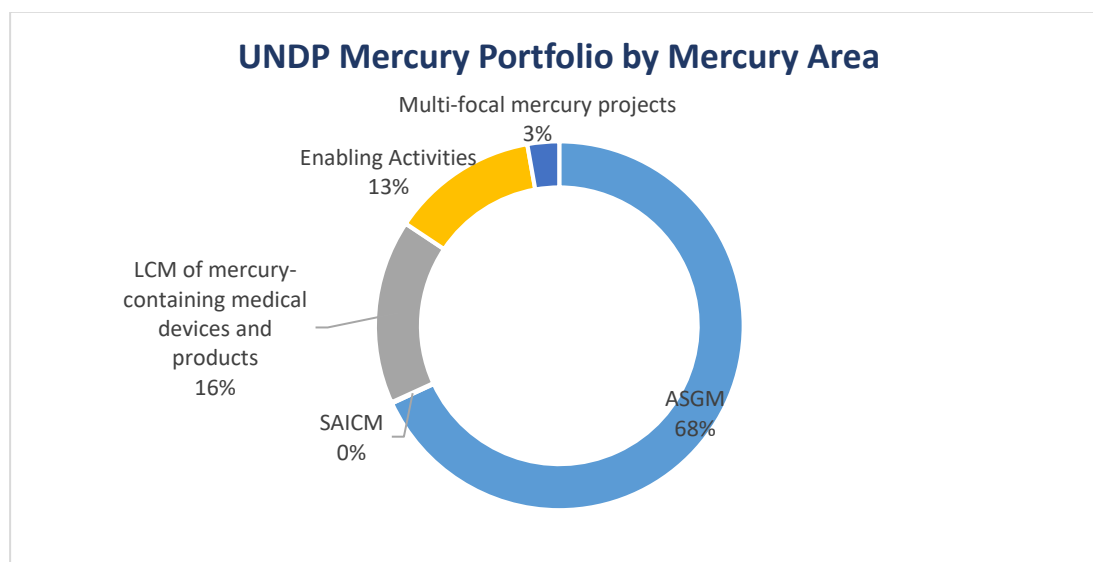
¹ In some cases, the management of mercury is a small component of a larger project focusing on reducing/phasing out other chemicals. For these medical waste projects, a 20% mercury component was applied to projects.

² PPG = project preparation grant

³ Funded by Sweden as part of the Poverty Environment Initiative (PEI).

Country	Mercury Area	GEF Grant (US\$)	Status
Honduras	ASGM/LCM and phase-out of mercury-containing medical devices and products	PPG: 70,000 1,300,000	Ongoing
India	Minamata Initial Assessment	1,000,000	Ongoing
Jordan	Minamata Initial Assessment	200,000	Ongoing
Kazakhstan	LCM and phase-out of mercury-containing medical devices and products	PPG: 25,000 680,000	Ongoing
Kazakhstan	Minamata Initial Assessment	400,000	Ongoing
Kyrgyzstan	LCM and phase-out of mercury-containing medical devices and products	PPG: 15,000 285,000	Ongoing
Malaysia	Minamata Initial Assessment	250,000	Ongoing
Mauritius	Minamata Initial Assessment	199,749	Ongoing
Mauritius	Partnership Initiative for SAICM	46,207	Financially Completed
Montenegro	Minamata Initial Assessment	200,000	Ongoing
Morocco	Minamata Initial Assessment	200,000	Ongoing
Panama	Minamata Initial Assessment	200,000	Ongoing
Serbia	Minamata Initial Assessment	200,000	Ongoing
Seychelles	Minamata Initial Assessment	199,100	Completed
Suriname	Minamata Initial Assessment	200,000	Ongoing
Suriname	National Action Plan for ASGM	500,000	Ongoing
Uruguay	LCM and phase-out of mercury-containing medical devices and products	PPG: 35,000 1,237,800	Ongoing

Figure 1: UNDP Mercury Portfolio by type of project



UNDP's key approaches to assisting countries to advance the sound management of mercury include:

Advocacy and Awareness Raising - Campaigning among stakeholders, decision-makers and population groups at risk on the importance of mercury reduction, phase-out and its management.

Capacity Building – Identification of innovative and successful practices; policy, regulatory and institutional enhancements to help countries put in place mercury management systems; identification of financing needs and options; application of lessons learned and experiences from other countries; and development and application of guidelines and tools to facilitate the management and monitoring of mercury.

Technical Assistance – Supporting countries in identifying and introducing Best Environmental Practices (BEP) and Best Available Technologies (BAT), along with customized training for their use and application, which have proven successful elsewhere and will help address national challenges and constraints with regards to the sound management of mercury.

Monitoring – Assisting countries to assess their situation relating to mercury and tracking their progress towards reducing its use and releases.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Minamata Convention on Mercury

The Minamata Convention aims to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. Supporting countries in their efforts to prepare for and meet their future commitments under the Minamata Convention is an important component of UNDP's efforts to achieve sustainable, inclusive and resilient human development through the SDGs, which were adopted in September 2015. Some of the key linkages between UNDP's work in support of the Minamata Convention's efforts to reduce the use/phase-out of mercury and the SDGs are highlighted below.



SDG Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

The urban and rural poor routinely face unacceptably high risks of exposure to mercury because of their occupations (e.g. mercury mining, artisanal and small-scale gold mining, waste management, recycling), living conditions (proximity to dumpsites and incinerators) and lack of knowledge of potential health impacts of exposure to mercury. At the same time, ecosystems that provide essential resources for the survival of the rural poor, are affected by mercury contamination. UNDP-supported interventions assist partners in introducing alternatives, best practices and techniques to minimize the use and release of mercury, and also address the underlying socio-economic challenges that are at the core of existing practices that use mercury.



SDG Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

One of the main sources for exposure to mercury is through consumption of mercury-contaminated fish and shellfish. The consumption of fish containing high levels of mercury, in particular those high on the food chain as mercury bioaccumulates, can have serious health consequences (see SDG 3). This causes health concerns, in particular for pregnant women, the child in utero and young children, as well as for poor communities relying on subsistence fishing. UNDP helps countries decrease the use of mercury and its release into the environment from various sectors, indirectly halting and reducing the build-up of mercury in the food chain.



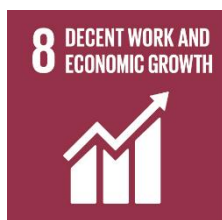
SDG Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Mercury is toxic to human health, posing a particular threat to the development of the child in utero and early in life. Human exposure occurs mainly by inhaling elemental mercury vapors during industrial processes and by consuming contaminated fish and shellfish, and can lead to mercury poisoning. Mercury exists in various forms: elemental; inorganic; and organic, which all have different toxic effects, including on the nervous, digestive and immune systems, and on lungs, kidneys, skin and eyes. UNDP supports governments, the private sector and other partners, to reduce or preferably phase-out the use of mercury and mercury-containing products, and minimize its releases, to ultimately protect human and environmental health.



SDG Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

Coal burning, and to a lesser extent the use of other fossil fuels to generate energy, is the second most significant anthropogenic source of mercury emissions into the atmosphere. Use of air pollution controls and more stringent regulations, combined with improved combustion efficiency, can offset most of the mercury releases associated with the increase in coal use, particularly in Asia and South America. However, reductions in current mercury releases will only be achieved after a shift to cleaner and more sustainable energy sources and the introduction of more efficient technologies and products (e.g. mercury-free energy-efficient lighting). UNDP supports countries in strengthening their regulatory frameworks, revising outdated industrial processes and technologies to reduce releases and increase efficiency and, most importantly, in adopting clean energy solutions.



SDG Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth

Exposure to mercury can occur through the inhalation of mercury vapors. Such exposure is most likely to happen in the workplace. Among the most dangerous professions and livelihoods in terms of mercury exposure are artisanal and small-scale gold mining, waste handling and recycling, mercury refining, and health and dental care. Phasing-out the production and use of products and processes which use mercury is the main way to reduce worker exposure. We assist governments and various sectors introduce mercury-free products and processes, while also supporting the development of workplace safety standards and procedures, introducing personal protective measures, and addressing the underlying socio-economic causes that led to the use of mercury and products containing mercury.



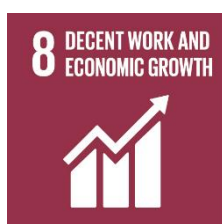
SDG Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Sustainable consumption and production aims at “doing more with less,” increasing net welfare gains from economic activities by reducing resource use, degradation and pollution, while increasing the quality of life. An important aspect of our work is the reduction of mercury pollution and mercury-containing wastes by introducing alternative products, processes and technologies that are mercury-free, cost-effective and in line with best available technology guidelines. Such interventions are aligned with those that increase resource efficiency, use clean and renewable energy, and reduce waste generation, all of which have important mercury reduction co-benefits.



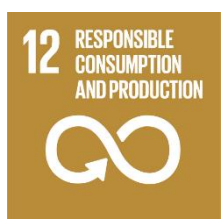
SDG Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Over three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods, which are being threatened by marine pollution reaching alarming levels. Mercury levels in certain types of fish (e.g. bluefin tuna, swordfish) have become so high that some Governments advise against consumption or have introduced import bans. UNDP helps countries decrease the use and release of mercury from various land-based activities, prevent mercury from entering water sources, and reduce the build-up of mercury in the food chain.



SDG Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth

Exposure to mercury can occur through the inhalation of mercury vapors. Such exposure is most likely to happen in the workplace. Among the most dangerous professions and livelihoods in terms of mercury exposure are artisanal and small-scale gold mining, waste handling and recycling, mercury refining, and health and dental care. Phasing-out the production and use of products and processes which use mercury is the main way to reduce worker exposure. We assist governments and various sectors introduce mercury-free products and processes, while also supporting the development of workplace safety standards and procedures, introducing personal protective measures, and addressing the underlying socio-economic causes that led to the use of mercury and products containing mercury.



SDG Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Sustainable consumption and production aims at “doing more with less,” increasing net welfare gains from economic activities by reducing resource use, degradation and pollution, while increasing the quality of life. An important aspect of our work is the reduction of mercury pollution and mercury-containing wastes by introducing alternative products, processes and technologies that are mercury-free, cost-effective and in line with best

available technology guidelines. Such interventions are aligned with those that increase resource efficiency, use clean and renewable energy, and reduce waste generation, all of which have important mercury reduction co-benefits.



SDG Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Over three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods, which are being threatened by marine pollution reaching alarming levels. Mercury levels in certain types of fish (e.g. bluefin tuna, swordfish) have become so high that some Governments advise against consumption or have introduced import bans. UNDP helps countries decrease the use and release of mercury from various land-based activities, prevent

mercury from entering water sources, and reduce the build-up of mercury in the food chain.

Annex III

UNIDO input for the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury

UNIDO's approach

UNIDO is a specialized agency of the United Nations with the mandate of promoting and accelerating inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID) in developing countries and economies in transition. UNIDO's mission contributes strongly to Sustainable Development Goal 9 which calls to "Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation", but is also instrumental to the achievement of all the other goals.

The Mercury Programme at UNIDO benefits from the Organization's extensive experience in assisting developing countries to comply with multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. In the last years, UNIDO has developed a substantial project portfolio in order to assist countries to fulfill their obligations under the Minamata Convention. UNIDO's experience in mercury started with the artisanal and small scale gold mining (ASGM) sector more than 20 years ago. In the recent years, the programme expanded to other industrial areas including mercury waste management and mercury in processes (chlor alkali and vinyl chloride monomer production sectors). In addition, UNIDO has a strong international network of partners consisting of private sector entities, academia, research institutions, other UN and donor agencies, NGOs and governments. Moreover, UNIDO has field representation in more than 47 countries. Together with its partners, UNIDO's Mercury Programme is leading and facilitating the introduction of mercury free technologies and policy reform to minimize the use and discharges of mercury. It promotes Best Available Technologies (BAT) and Best Environmental Practices (BEP) through awareness raising, capacity building, legislation strengthening and technology transfer.



Projects

In accordance with UNIDO's commitment to support governments in fulfilling their legal obligations under the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Organization has initiated, since the end of the GEF-5 replenishment period, Minamata Initial Assessments (MIA) projects and National Action Plans (NAP) projects on mercury in the ASGM sector. In addition, the Mercury Programme portfolio includes large scale projects on ASGM, vinyl chloride monomer production, mercury contamination in freshwater and marine aquatic environments, and mercury waste management. More details on the projects completed and currently under implementation by UNIDO can be found under www.unido.org/mercury

A. Minamata Initial Assessments (MIA) and other support for ratification and early implementation

- Since COP2, 13 out of 24 UNIDO implemented MIA countries are now completed: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Guinea, Mali, Mongolia, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Togo, and Vietnam. The final MIA report are now posted on the Minamata Convention Secretariat website. The goal of the MIA enabling activities is to complete pre- or post-ratification activities to enable policy and decision making and to prioritize areas for future interventions through a national mercury inventory. Since COP2, Rwanda MIA has been approved by the GEF Secretariat.

With the support of Switzerland, UNIDO implements a global programme on promoting ratification and early implementation of the Minamata Convention since 2016. This programme offers needs based assistance to countries and (sub) regions. Up to now eight countries (Armenia, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Malawi, Philippines, Tunisia and Vietnam) and two Sub regions (Caribbean and ECOWAS) participate in this program. The thematic areas range from awareness rising on the ratification dossier, to the domestication of international chemicals waste management Conventions and extends to sustainable management of mercury containing products and wastes. In addition, four specific regional events were organized.

B. Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM)

- UNIDO assists governments in the development of the National Action Plans (NAP) by providing the basic and essential information to enable policy and strategic decision making and by assisting the development of strategies and road maps within countries. The projects strengthen the countries' national capacity to fulfill obligations under the Minamata Convention and promote effective implementation of its provisions. Since COP2, 2 out of 9 UNIDO-implemented NAP projects are now completed: Gabon and Peru. The final NAP reports will be submitted to the Minamata Secretariat before COP3. Since COP2, Angola and Rwanda NAPs have been approved by the GEF Secretariat.

- The GEF Global Opportunities for Long Term Development of the ASGM sector (GOLD) project focuses on policy strengthening to support formalization of the sector, facilitating access to financing for miners, capacity building of national specialists on mercury-free technologies and formalization, awareness raising and knowledge management in the ASGM sector was officially launched in early 2019. To promote a sustainable business model as a basis for accessing international gold markets for miners, UNIDO has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Argor-Heraeus S.A., one of the world's largest refiners of precious metals working together to achieve a sustainable adoption of mercury-free technologies in artisanal and small scale gold mining. UNIDO is implementing one GEF GOLD child project in Burkina Faso, and in collaboration with UN Environment in Mongolia and the Philippines. In addition, UNIDO is also one of the executing partners in the global child project, to disseminate best practices and experiences on key ASGM topics.

- In addition to GEF supported projects, UNIDO is also actively seeking other bilateral and multilateral funding to continue previous efforts and momentum built in several ASGM active countries. Potential donors include the European Commission, Switzerland and Japan.

C. Waste management

- UNIDO offers assistance to countries in the establishment of regulatory framework and national guidelines for environmentally sound management of mercury containing waste as well. Projects focusing on waste management support the development of capacities for the implementation of remediation and stabilization techniques in mercury hot-spot areas through demonstration activities at the pilot scale. This was done in Mongolia in the framework of a successfully completed GEF-5 funded project. UNIDO and Nomura Kohsan Co. Ltd. signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2014 to prevent mercury containing wastes entering the environment and ensuring Best Environmental Practices and Best Available Techniques are applied to extract mercury from wastes, and identifying long-term solutions for the storage of mercury.
- In Tunisia, UNIDO is implementing the project entitled "Improve Mercury Management in Tunisia" to review and validate the remediation plan for a former chlor-alkali plant in Kasserine. The goal of the initiative is to reduce negative impacts of mercury contamination to human health and the environment by (a) strengthening the national capacity to manage mercury containing waste and comply with the

Minamata Convention; and (b) improving the remediation plan of the company SNCPA through the collection of complementary information during the project. The project started in June 2015 and will be completed in 2019.

- With the support of Swiss and Japanese government, UNIDO organized an expert group meeting on sustainable management of mercury waste in September 2018 in Vienna. More than 70 people actively participated in the meeting to discuss interim disposal, treatment, and final disposal of mercury wastes. Country delegates from Latin America, Africa and Asia were present as well as a variety of private sector representatives to share experiences and challenges in managing the sector. Meeting results were shared during COP2 in a formal publication from UNIDO. As a result of the expert group meeting, UNIDO is working with interested countries (i.e. the Philippines) to develop mercury waste management projects.

D. Non-Ferrous Metal Smelting

- Since September 2012, national and local capacity is being strengthened in China, enabling the country to effectively manage and reduce mercury emissions from zinc smelting operations in neighboring communities. BAT and BEP for cleaner zinc production have been demonstrated at two pilot sites. The project also established a coordination and monitoring system, and proposed policy reform for mercury management in the zinc smelting sector. The initiative is funded by the GEF and co-financed by the Foreign Economic Cooperation Office (FECO) of Ministry of Environment; Zhuzhou, Shuikoushan and Shangluo (zinc enterprises); Hunan, Shaanxi, and Guizhou provinces; Sino-Norwegian projects; and UNIDO. The project concluded successfully at the end of 2015.

E. Vinyl Chloride Monomer Production

- In order to reduce risks to human health and the environment related to the use of mercury in the industrial production of vinyl chloride monomers (VCM) in China, UNIDO is currently implementing a large scale project, in collaboration with the Ministry of Ecology and Environment and its Foreign Environmental Cooperation Office, and funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). China is the only country in the world that uses calcium carbide-based VCM production to produce polyvinyl chloride (PVC). The VCM/PVC sector consumes more than half of the total mercury supply in the country, accounting for 30% of world's total mercury consumption.
- Through the planned activities, the VCM Project will reduce production costs of these enterprises and promote sustainable development of the PVC industry. Low mercury-containing catalysts will be used to produce 17.5 million t VCM and mercury consumption will be 857.5 t, accounting for mercury consumption per unit product of 49 g/t. This will achieve about 50% reduction of mercury use per unit of production by the year 2020 (reference year 2010). Mercury consumption will be reduced by 360.5 t compared to 2014.
- With high-mercury technology, 33.12 g mercuric chloride/t VCM would be released into hydrochloric acid and alkali liquid compared to 3.6 g mercuric chloride/t for low-mercury technology. Thus, release of mercury into waste liquid with low-mercury technology is only 10% of that in conventional high-mercury technology. The release of mercury into waste gas with low-mercury technology is also 10% of that in conventional high-mercury technology.

F. Mercury Trade

- The adoption of the Minamata Convention has profound implications for West Africa. All member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are signatories, and most of them have ratified the convention. Furthermore, as the region is home to some of the richest gold-ore deposits in the world, ASGM is conducted in nearly every ECOWAS member state, and gold is a major regional export. Mercury plays a key role in the sector, as it is used by the majority of the region's estimated 2 to 3 million artisanal miners to extract gold from ore. Informal and illicit flows

of gold perpetuate the use and spread of mercury in the region. Often, mercury is supplied to upstream partners as a way of securing gold flows.

- Recognizing the need for a greater understanding of mercury and gold trade flows, regulation and taxation, the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) commissioned this study of mercury and gold trade flows and regulatory frameworks. To curb mercury use in the ECOWAS region, greater cooperation and harmonization of regulatory frameworks and coordination between relevant government bodies are necessary, both at the regional and domestic levels. Because of the region's porous borders, facilitating the transnational movement of people and goods, a coordinated, regional approach is needed. This is highlighted by the fact that disparities in royalty rates are an incentive for gold smuggling.
- It is promising that there has been some regional action, including the adoption of ECOWAS Vision 2020 and efforts to standardize tax regimes and internal tariffs. By building on these efforts, together with the momentum generated by the adoption of the Minamata Convention, ECOWAS member states will be better positioned to effect a coordinated implementation of the convention in the ECOWAS region.

G. Air emissions

- The Minamata Convention (MC) on Mercury came into effect on August 16, 2017 for parties of the Convention including China with the objective to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. The Parties agreed in Article 8 to control and reduce emission of mercury and mercury compounds to the atmosphere through measures to control emission from the point sources falling within the five source categories listed in the Annex D, in particular, cement clinker production facilities.
- According to the UNEP Global Mercury Assessment 2018, the global anthropogenic mercury emissions has been estimated total of 2220 metric tons per year. The cement production (11%) is the fourth source of anthropogenic mercury emission after small-scale gold mining (38%), stationary combustion of coal (21%), and non-ferrous metal production (15%). The major pathway for mercury releases from the cement industry is via emissions to the atmosphere, in which mercury that is present in the raw materials (e.g., limestone), in the fuel (e.g., coal) and/or in the alternative raw materials and fuels is released in the combustion process. It has been estimated that the cement production contributes approx. about 233 metric tons, in a relatively wide range from 79.5 to 431.6 t/year.
- According the preliminary output of the Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA) of China, cement clinker production has replaced coal-fired power plants as the first largest source of atmospheric mercury in China since 2014 and emitted about 30-40% of the total atmospheric mercury. According to the requirements of MC, as one of the parties China government will prepare and submit the national strategy and action plan to reduce mercury emission from cement clinker production in China to the Conference of the Parties by the end of 2021.
- UNIDO in cooperation with the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China and its Foreign Environmental Cooperation Office (FECO), has prepared a project proposal on "control and reduction of mercury emissions from cement industry in China". The major global environmental benefits of this project are the reduction of at least 5 tons of mercury emissions to the atmosphere from cement industry in China. This project will be the first initiative to demonstrate the control and reduction of mercury emissions from cement production in China by introducing BAT/BEPs to the cement sector and awareness raising among the general public. The experiences, knowledge and lessons learned will provide the basis for the replication of these environmentally sound techniques nationwide.

Minamata beyond COP3

Most of the identified issues relating to mercury are industrial by nature, which reinforces the increasing and significant role that UNIDO has and will have in the coming years in assisting countries to reduce, and where feasible, eliminate the use of mercury, as well as its emissions and releases to the environment as a whole. UNIDO will continue to support governments and engage the private sector in fulfilling their legal obligations under the Minamata Convention.

The Minamata Convention Initial Assessment that results from the enabling activities currently implemented by UNIDO will provide a basis for prioritization and development of sectoral intervention plans to be supported by future projects. In the context of the National Action Plan enabling activities, a road map for the reduction of mercury in the ASGM sector, including needed interventions and potential funding sources, will serve as the basis for the development of impactful projects supporting the implementation of these National Action Plans. UNIDO wants to strategically focus on developing the entrepreneurs and small scale industries active in ASGM towards improving their business models through formalization and support their access to international markets by (i) eliminating the use of mercury, (ii) the improving working conditions and (iii) eliminating the worst forms of child labor. UNIDO's Mercury Programme seeks to find a more integrated approach in the future through the implementation of thematic programmes where advantage can be taken from the occurring synergies. Based on its experience and expertise, working with a team of currently 9 people, the UNIDO Mercury Programme has a comparative advantage under the framework of the Minamata Convention.

In conclusion, focus will be placed on setting national objectives and targets, complementing existing programmes, exploring innovative market-based approaches, promoting policy reform, enhancing awareness, and promoting intervention on the ground to secure mercury emission reduction globally through technology transfer.

Contact:

Mr. Smail ALHILALI,
Chief, Emerging Compliance Regimes Division,
Department of Environment, UNIDO

s.alhilali@unido.org

mercury@unido.org

www.unido.org/mercury

Annex IV

United Nations Institute for Training and Research activities on mercury since COP2

Geneva, 1 July 2019

Subject: UNITAR activities on mercury – since COP2 (November 2018)

As per the agreement from the IOMC Mercury Group, please find below a summary of progress since COP2 of the Minamata Convention.

UNITAR has supported countries in the development of their Minamata Initial Assessment reports and National Action Plans, working with GEF implementing agencies. These are: MIAs in Sudan (UNIDO); MIAs in Bangladesh, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Mozambique (UNDP); and joint MIAs and NAPs in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea and Sierra Leone (UN Environment). This is in addition to more specific support (e.g. inventories and overall review) to some MIAs implemented by UN Environment.

In addition, UNITAR initiated a project to support ratification and early implementation activities in Cameroon and Angola, funded by the Government of Switzerland.

UNITAR hosts the UN Environment-UNITAR Mercury Platform: <http://mercury.unitar.org/site/home>. This platform serves to provide information on supported projects and provide access to experts and awareness-raising materials. This is updated throughout the year. In addition, UNITAR continues to host and make available the online MercuryLearn training course on the UN Environment toolkit for inventories. The self-guided course is available on the UNITAR website (<http://mercurylearn.unitar.org/>), and can be taken at any time, and is available in English and Spanish.

During 2018 and 2019, UNITAR made an update of the UN Environment toolkit for mercury inventories. Based on a literature study and other data collection from stakeholders, including private companies, default calculation factors were updated for municipal solid waste, some products and industrial gold production, and updated text on the market situation for selected mercury-added products. The update also features some enhancements of the user interface and clarifications in the mercury source category texts based on experience with the Toolkit in countries over the last few years. The published MIA inventories were included in the literature study. The project was funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Danish Environmental Protection Agency.

Furthermore, UNITAR hosts a chemicals and waste platform (funded by the Government of Switzerland: <http://chemicalsandwaste.org/>). This highlights synergies among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm, and Minamata Conventions, seeking to learn lessons from past activities; particularly relevant for the implementation of the newest Convention, Minamata.

Annex V

Input from the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

The Convention on Wetlands was agreed on 2 February 1971 in the city of Ramsar in the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is a global intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise (sustainable) use of wetlands and their resources. The term wetlands includes natural and human-made ecosystems such as lakes, rivers, swamps, marshes, peatlands, mangroves and coral reefs that provide essential services and contribute to people's livelihoods. Wetlands act as a source and purifier of water, they protect us from floods, droughts and other disasters.

Wetlands are one of the most biologically productive ecosystems. They play a major role in the water cycle by receiving, storing and releasing water, regulating flows and supporting life. River channels, floodplains and connected wetlands play significant roles in hydrology. However, land use change and water regulation infrastructure have reduced connectivity in many river systems and their floodplain wetlands. Wetlands regulate nutrient and trace metal cycles and can filter these and other pollutants. They store the biggest part of global soil carbon.

Wetland ecosystem services far exceed those of terrestrial ecosystems. They include critical food supplies such as rice and fish. Wetlands provide fresh water, fibre and fuel. Regulating services provided by wetlands improve climate and hydrological regimes and reduce both pollution and disaster risk. Natural features of wetlands often have cultural and spiritual importance.⁴

In October 2018 at the occasion of COP13, the Ramsar Convention published the *Global Wetland Outlook* on the state of the world's wetlands and their services to people. The outlook stresses that healthy, functioning natural wetlands are critical to human livelihoods and sustainable development. It concludes that current water quality trends are mainly negative, despite the fact that water quality is a key concern for human well-being. Major current threats to water quality include untreated wastewater and industrial waste.

Together with the World Health Organization, Ramsar published in 2012 an easily accessible source of information to help improve the understanding of the often-complex inter-relationships between wetland ecosystems and human health and well-being: *Healthy wetlands, healthy people* (<https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/rtr6-health.pdf>). To this end, Resolution X.23 (<https://www.ramsar.org/document/resolution-xi12-wetlands-and-health-taking-an-ecosystem-approach>) urged Parties with development sectors, including mining, other extractive industries, infrastructure development, water and sanitation, energy, agriculture, transport and others, to take all possible steps to avoid direct or indirect effects of their activities on wetlands that would impact negatively on those ecosystem services of wetlands that support human health and well-being. It encouraged all concerned to dedicate resources to building capacity for more integrated approaches to wetland and water management and health, including the application of local and traditional knowledge, to develop scientifically based responses and to take into account current best practices.

Urban areas block the movement of water, nutrients and animals. Mining damages river structure, increases sedimentation and releases pollutants including cyanide and mercury in gold mining. One estimated kilogramme of mercury is released for every kilogramme of gold mined in the Amazon.⁵

Ramsar Resolution VII.25 on *Measuring environmental quality in wetlands*

(<https://www.ramsar.org/document/resolution-vii25-measuring-environmental-quality-in-wetlands>)

requested the Parties to intensify studies on the presence and significance of toxic substances in the water, sediments and biota of wetlands. It also reiterated that the proper measurement and interpretation of indicative parameters of the quality of the aquatic environment in wetlands require the development and testing of universal protocols for the biological, physical and chemical sampling and analysis of water, sediments and organisms associated with these environments.

⁴ Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. (2018). *Global Wetland Outlook: State of the World's Wetlands and their Services to People*. Gland, Switzerland: Ramsar Convention Secretariat. <https://www.global-wetland-outlook.ramsar.org/>

⁵ Ouboter, P.E., Landburg, G.A., Quik, J.H.M., Mol, J.H.A. & van der Lugt, F. (2012). Mercury levels in pristine and gold mining impacted aquatic systems in Suriname, South America. *Ambio*, 41, 873-882.

These are the main tools of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands to protect the good status of wetland ecosystems and their species through cooperation for the prevention of their pollution, including from the adverse effects of mercury. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands remains available to cooperate with the Minamata Convention on any subject of common interest.

Annex VI

International Metals Study Groups' Activities Related to Implementation of Minamata Convention on Mercury

The International Metals Study Groups are set up in 1959 under the UN framework to promote market transparency and provide a forum for stakeholders including governments, industry and NGOs to discuss issues of common concern and interest such as commodity market trends and environment, health and safety issues related to resource extraction and metal production, international trade and usage. The Study Groups are the sole multilateral mechanisms set up by governments dedicated to issues related to the production, usage and trade of lead, zinc, copper and nickel.

The work of the Study Groups is global and covers nearly all the countries that mine, smelt and refine, use and recycle lead, zinc, copper and nickel. The work of the Study Groups includes but not limited to the promotion of transparency in the metals markets via the provision of up-to-date, accurate and continuous information on the supply and demand of the metals and probable future developments, facilitating co-operation between governments and industry via the organization of twice yearly meetings and regular special conferences and seminars, and the undertaking of in-depth research into other issues of interest or concern to members via the completion of special reports and studies.

In past years, the Metals Study Groups' activities related to containing mercury release and implementing Minamata Convention include:

1. Meetings and Seminars

Twice yearly meetings of the Environmental and Economics Committees of the Metals Study Groups in April and October to address the environmental, safety and health issues derived from mining, smelting and refining, trading, using and recycling of lead, zinc, copper and nickel. The most recent seminar "Addressing the Challenge of Lower Ore Grades and Rising Levels of Impurities in Concentrates" invited Minamata Convention on Mercury to present and provided an opportunity for direct triparty communications among non-ferrous metal industry, governments and Minamata Convention on Mercury.

2. Publications

The Metals Study Groups provide member governments, industries and other related stakeholders with the most recent reference related to mercury release points from non-ferrous metal industry and relevant environment and health control. These periodically-updated publications include:

- Lead and Zinc Mine and Smelter Database
- Directory of Copper Mines and Plants
- Environment and Health Controls on Lead
- Environment and Health Controls on Zinc

3. Special Studies:

The Metals Study Groups call for and put forward proposals of Special Studies addressing issues of common concerns and interests to member governments and the industry. Finished studies related to containing contaminants and pollutants emissions including mercury include:

- The Social Acceptance for Mineral and Metal Projects

- Risk Factors in Developing Mineral and Metal Projects
- The By-Products of Lead, Zinc, Copper and Nickel
- Joint Study on Current Responsible Sourcing Initiatives along Minerals and Metals Supply Chains
- Solid Wastes in Base Metal Mining, Smelting and Refining: a Comprehensive Study for the Copper, Lead, Zinc and Nickel Industries

4. Insights on Minamata Convention on Mercury

The Metals Study Groups had developed two issues of Insights focusing on awareness raising and promotion of Best Available Technology and Best Environment Practice to identify and reduce mercury emission originating from non-ferrous metals production. They are:

- The Minamata Convention and Lead and Zinc
- Briefing on the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to Minamata Convention on Mercury

These Insights have been widely disseminated among member governments, industries and other related stakeholders; it is also made available at the website for wider knowledge diffusion.

Annex VII

Activities of the UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution

The UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (Air Convention) was the first international treaty to deal with air pollution on a broad regional basis, tackling, at first, sulphur emissions, and later expanding to cover other pollutants, including heavy metals and among those, mercury. The Convention currently has 51 Parties in the UNECE region. It has 7 pollutant-specific protocols.

Its Protocol on Heavy Metals, which entered into force in 2003, contains stringent controls for the priority heavy metals cadmium, lead and mercury. In addition, the so-called Gothenburg Protocol⁶ is a multi-pollutant, multi-effect protocol and the first legally binding agreement containing obligations to reduce, particulate matter, including black carbon, which can also contain mercury. The Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012, will enter into force on 7 October 2019.

The Convention's work builds on sound scientific support provided by its scientific bodies, namely the Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP) and the Working Group on Effects.

Parties to the Convention have the obligation to report annual emission data, including on mercury, particulate matter and a number of other pollutants. The data is checked and used for the scientific work under the Convention and it is publicly available on the internet. This data can be used by the Minamata Convention for its own effectiveness evaluation.

Cooperation between the various subsidiary bodies and experts under the UNECE Air Convention and the Minamata Convention is already ongoing. Specifically, the work carried out by the EMEP Chemical Coordinating Centre and the EMEP Meteorological Synthesizing Centre-East in relation to measurements and modelling of heavy metals, including mercury, needs to be mentioned, as it is of direct relevance to the Minamata Convention. The Centre has been involved in a series of Global Mercury Assessments (2002, 2008, 2012, 2015 and 2018). In addition, the Centre contributed to the work of the Ad hoc Technical Expert Group on Effectiveness Evaluation of the Minamata Convention providing information on approaches used within the Air Convention to assess mercury atmospheric pollution by means of modelling and to support evaluation of the adverse effects on human health and biota.

Moreover, a number of groups under the Working Group on Effects are also monitoring the heavy metal concentrations in various biota (mosses, mercury in freshwater fish and forest soil) and model critical loads exceedances of heavy metals in different ecosystems and they contribute to development of the guidelines on mercury effects' evaluation under the Minamata Convention. Past examples of work on mercury also included a study on the co-benefits of primary particulate matter emission reduction for mercury and black carbon. The work under the Air Convention is also of critical importance to the discussion on the effectiveness evaluation under the Minamata Convention. Large areas in Europe are at risk of mercury critical load exceedances and mercury concentrations in many fish species is above limits advised for human consumption.

In addition to the policy and scientific work carried out under the Air Convention, UNECE is also implementing a capacity-building programme for countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, which is aimed at assisting countries in developing/further improving emission inventory systems; calculating gridded emission data; analysing the legislative framework; and supporting the development of National Action Plans, as needed.

⁶ 1999 Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone and its 2012 amended version

Annex VIII

Input from Group on Earth Observations (GEO)

GOS4M has been designed to support all interested Parties in the implementation of the Minamata Convention, notably Member States, the Minamata Convention Secretariat, UN Environment and other Stakeholders interested in supporting decisions from the Conference of the Parties (COP). This includes capacity development and technical assistance for developing country Parties (Article 15) research, development and monitoring (Article 19) and effectiveness evaluation of the convention (Article 22).

The overarching goal of GOS4M is to provide comparable global monitoring of mercury data and validated modelling frameworks. This will be through the establishment of a federation of existing regional and global monitoring networks that would allow actors to provide global comparable monitoring data for the purpose of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. The availability of comparable mercury monitoring data would foster the validation of numerical and statistical models used to assess the fate of mercury from local to global scales with changing emission regimes and climate, and source-recipient relationships.

Another important goal of GOS4M is to support Nations and all interested Parties in developing their own national or/and regional monitoring programme by providing technical assistance and promoting capacity development initiatives for setting up new monitoring sites in areas where no mercury monitoring facilities and expertise currently exist.

Just prior to the COP3, GEO will have our Plenary in Canberra Australia, this will include a Ministerial Summit where GOS4M is already preparing a video as a demonstrator for this flagship activity. This video (being prepared by the JRC of the European Commission) could also be used during a side event at COP3. <https://www.earthobservations.org/geoweeek19.php>

Annex IX

Update from International Whaling Commission

August 2019

IWC Resolution on the Minamata Convention

In 2016, the International Whaling Commission adopted Resolution 2016-4 – Resolution on the Minamata Convention which seeks, *inter alia*, collaboration with the Conference of the Parties of the Minamata Convention to exchange information, contribute in monitoring mercury levels in cetaceans and advance progress for the protection of cetacean health and related issues.

The Resolution is attached as Annex 1 to this document.

IWC Scientific Committee discussions

The IWC Scientific Committee (SC) has discussed mercury in cetaceans through its Environmental Concerns Standing Working Group.

In 2018, and in response to Resolution 2016-4, the SC considered a review of mercury to cetaceans, available at: <https://archive.iwc.int/?r=8967>, which highlighted continued global exposure and potential effect of mercury on cetaceans. Although cetaceans have a unique detoxifying mechanism which may protect them from the health effects of organic mercury, the resulting mercuric-selenide complexes may cause adverse effects in individual animals experiencing other physiological and metabolic challenges.

Research into identifying the toxic thresholds for mercury in cetaceans is still required.

To support its work on mercury in cetaceans in response to Resolution 2016-4, the SC:

- (1) encouraged the continued provision of information on mercury and cetaceans;
- (2) encouraged researchers presenting such information to report concentrations on both wet and dry weight bases; and
- (3) recommended that Contracting Governments support the continued monitoring of mercury in cetaceans, as this is required in order to assess the medium- and long-term impact of the Minamata Convention.

The full report of the Scientific Committee, including the report of the Environmental Concerns standing working group (annex K to the report), is available here: <https://archive.iwc.int/?r=6940>

The IWC welcomes an update from the Minamata Convention on discussions at its Conference of the Parties and on opportunities for collaboration.

Annex 1 - Resolution 2016-4 Resolution on Minamata Convention

ACKNOWLEDGING that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) have identified the adverse effects of pollution from mercury as a serious problem worldwide for human health and the environment.

WELCOMING the adoption in 2013 of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the objective of which is to protect human health and the environment from the anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds.

AWARE that cetaceans which have a worldwide distribution in marine and freshwater ecosystems, can act as sentinels of ecosystem change and are vulnerable to environmental contaminants such as methylmercury.

AWARE of the “AMAP Assessment of Mercury in the Arctic” (2011) and of the “AMAP Assessment of Human Health in the Arctic” (2015) carried out by expert working groups of the Arctic Council, which drew attention to the adverse effects of persistent contaminants, in particular mercury pollution, on Arctic human populations;

RECOGNISING that the Commission has adopted several Resolutions⁷ expressing concerns on the negative impacts of environmental degradation on cetaceans including in respect to mercury;

RECALLING Resolutions 1996-8, 1998-11, 2000-6, 2001-10 and 2014-2 that foster collaboration between the IWC, and other intergovernmental organisations related to pollution, among others;

ALSO RECALLING the precautionary approach enunciated in the Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (UNEP, June 1992);

⁷ Resolutions 2012-1, 2001-10, 2000-7, 2000-6, 1999-4, 1998-11, 1998-5, 1997-7, 1996-8, 1995-10, 1994-13, 1993-13, 1993-12, 1993-11 and 1981-7

CONSIDERING that the IWC has a continuing role to play in monitoring and providing guidance on scientific research related to levels of mercury in cetaceans;

WELCOMING the results of the POLLUTION 2000+ research programme, endorsed by the IWC at its 65th Annual Meeting;

MINDFUL that the IWC with its specific responsibility in the management and conservation of whale stocks may have an interest in cooperating with other intergovernmental organisations with common concerns.

NOW THEREFORE THE COMMISSION:

WELCOMES the adoption of the Minamata Convention and encourages its effective implementation;

DECIDES to seek collaboration with the Conference of the Parties of the Minamata Convention to exchange information, contribute in monitoring mercury levels in cetaceans and advance progress for the protection of cetacean health and related issues;

INVITES Contracting Governments, as well as relevant intergovernmental organisations, to promote non-lethal scientific research programmes related to monitoring the presence and trends in levels of mercury and mercury compounds observed in cetacean populations as indicators of ocean health and to continue providing available data to the Scientific Committee on this matter;

INVITES ALSO Contracting Governments to co-operate together and with the WHO to assess the impact of mercury and mercury compounds on human health and on the marine environment including the provision of related monitoring data.

REQUESTS the Scientific Committee to provide at IWC67 a summary of the current state of knowledge on the presence of heavy metals, with emphasis on mercury compounds, in cetaceans worldwide, and to identify areas of ocean health and human health concerns, and geographic areas where research should be prioritised in this regard; and

REQUESTS that the Secretariat share this Resolution with the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention and seeks ways to collaborate with its objectives.
