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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**

**Updated analysis of the offer by the Government of Switzerland
to host the permanent secretariat of the Minamata Convention
on Mercury in Geneva, based on clarifications received on
27 June 2017**

Note by the secretariat

1. At its sixth session, held in Bangkok from 3 to 7 November 2014, the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury requested the interim secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury to invite offers by Governments interested in hosting the permanent secretariat of the Convention and to compile and analyse any such offers for consideration by the committee at its seventh session.
2. Accordingly, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), on 5 December 2014, sent a letter to all Governments inviting the submission of offers to physically host the permanent secretariat of the Convention. The letter included, as an attachment, the categories of information that might form part of a proposal from a Government interested in physically hosting the permanent secretariat.
3. One offer to physically host the secretariat of the Minamata Convention was received by the stated deadline. That offer was from the Government of Switzerland, which has offered to host the permanent secretariat in Geneva. The offer by the Government of Switzerland ((UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/INF/5) and an analysis of that offer prepared by the interim secretariat (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/16) were presented to the committee at its seventh session, which took place at the Dead Sea in Jordan from 10 to 15 March 2017.
4. The committee at its seventh session considered the offer by the Government of Switzerland and the analysis of the offer by the interim secretariat, following which the committee requested the Government of Switzerland to consider clarifying the conditionality of its proposal for further consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its first meeting.

* UNEP/MC/COP.1/1.

5. The Government of Switzerland accordingly submitted a document clarifying and in some cases extending its offer to host the permanent secretariat, which was received by the interim secretariat on 27 June 2017. The document (UNEP/MC/COP.1/INF/8) and the original offer (UNEP/MC/COP.1/INF/7) are presented for the information of the Conference of the Parties at its first meeting.

6. In the paragraphs below the interim secretariat further analyses the offer by the Government of Switzerland in the light of the information provided in the clarification document.

Option 1 (a): Merger into the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm convention utilizing its current structure

7. The clarification document reiterates the Government of Switzerland's support for the merger of the permanent secretariat of the Minamata Convention into the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions utilizing the current structure of the latter. If that option is adopted the Government of Switzerland will make an annual host country contribution to the Minamata Convention of 2.5 million Swiss francs.

8. With regard to this merged secretariat option, Switzerland clarified that its annual host country contribution would consist of two portions, the first of which would amount to two million Swiss francs, the use of which would be unrestricted; this portion of the annual contribution could, for example, be used to defray the costs of meetings, regardless of where they are held. Switzerland also clarified that this unearmarked portion of its annual contribution would include Switzerland's assessed contribution as a Party to the Convention. (At the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties, as part of the finalization on the financial rules, it is to be decided how a host country contribution is to be divided between the general trust fund of the Minamata Convention that is to be set up to support core activities, and the special trust fund that is to be funded through voluntary contributions to support additional activities).

9. The second portion of Switzerland's annual contribution if a fully merged secretariat option were adopted would consist of 500,000 Swiss francs earmarked for a position to support the integration of the secretariat and for joint activities of the Minamata, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions.

10. Finally, in the fully merged secretariat option Switzerland would also offer an initial payment of 100,000 Swiss francs for office infrastructure and the consolidation of the secretariat.

Option 1 (b): Merger into the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions by creating, in the interim, a fourth branch

11. The clarification document submitted by the Government of Switzerland also addresses the possibility of merging the secretariat by creating, temporarily, a fourth branch of the secretariat. Switzerland's original offer to host the permanent secretariat did not include consideration of this option.

12. Switzerland indicates that if this option were adopted it would provide an annual unearmarked contribution of two million Swiss francs. As with the option above, it can be inferred that this unearmarked annual contribution is made available without any restriction on how it is used, including without any particular restriction for its use for meetings, wherever they may be held. As above, it can also be inferred that this unearmarked annual contribution of two million Swiss francs includes Switzerland's assessed contribution as a Party to the Convention.

13. This option would also include an initial payment of 100,000 Swiss francs for office infrastructure and the consolidation of the secretariat.

Option 2: Utilizing the interim secretariat

14. With regard to the option of utilizing the interim secretariat as the basis for a permanent secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland's original limited Swiss support for such an option to its assessed contributions as a Party to the Convention. In the clarification document, however, the Government of Switzerland indicates that it would also provide a contribution of 100,000 Swiss francs for office infrastructure and the consolidation of the secretariat.

For all options

15. Lastly, for all options that involve the location of the permanent secretariat in Geneva, the Government of Switzerland has indicated that it would provide rent-free office space and rent-free use of the Geneva International Conference Centre for meeting purposes.

Suggested action by the Conference of the Parties

16. The Conference of the Parties may wish to consider the offer by the Government of Switzerland in its deliberations on the location of the permanent secretariat of the Minamata Convention.
