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**Conference of the Parties to the  
Minamata Convention on Mercury  
Fourth meeting**  
Online, 1–5 November 2021\*  
Item 4 (e) (ii) of the provisional agenda\*\*  
**Matters for consideration or action by the  
Conference of the Parties: financial resources and  
mechanism: Specific International Programme to  
Support Capacity-Building and Technical  
Assistance**

## **Overall report on the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance**

### **Addendum**

### **Governing Board of the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance**

#### **Note by the secretariat**

1. The annexes to the present note set out information relevant to the work of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.
2. Annex I contains the report of the fifth meeting of the Governing Board, which took place online on 24 and 25 November 2020, to consider, among other matters, a decision regarding the launch of the third round of applications to the Programme.
3. Annex II contains the report of the sixth meeting of the Governing Board, which took place online from 9 to 13 August 2021, where, among other matters, the Governing Board considered the 24 applications submitted in the third round and approved 9 of them, for funding amounting to \$2.2 million.

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\* The resumed fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury is to convene in person in Bali, Indonesia, and is tentatively scheduled for the first quarter of 2022.

\*\* UNEP/MC/COP.4/1.

## Annex I

### **Report of the fifth meeting of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance (held online on 24 and 25 November 2020)**

#### **I. Opening of the meeting (agenda item 1)**

1. The fifth meeting of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance of the Minamata Convention on Mercury was opened at 1 p.m. (Geneva time) on Tuesday, 24 November 2020, by Mr. Sam Adu-Kumi (Ghana), Co-Chair of the founding Governing Board. The Co-Chair congratulated the new members of the Governing Board and wished all members well for their terms, which ran through the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention.
2. A welcoming message was delivered by Ms. Monika Stankiewicz, Executive Secretary of the secretariat of the Minamata Convention, on behalf of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). She extended her welcome and recalled the important role of the Specific International Programme in the implementation of the Convention as part of the financial mechanism of the Convention, as provided for in article 13.
3. As the current meeting of the Board was the first since the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention, at which the new members had been confirmed, the Co-Chair invited all the members of the Governing Board, the observers and the secretariat to briefly introduce themselves.
4. The full list of participants is set out in appendix I to the present report.

#### **II. Organizational matters (agenda item 2)**

##### **A. Adoption of the agenda**

5. The representative of the secretariat presented the provisional agenda (UNEP/MC/SIP.GB.5.1). The Board adopted the provisional agenda and took note of the provisional annotated agenda as set out in document UNEP/MC/SIP.GB.5.1/Add.1, including the proposed schedule of work for the two days of the meeting.

##### **B. Election of the Co-Chairs**

6. The representative of the secretariat reviewed the procedure for election of Co-Chairs. She noted that the rules of procedure for the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme stipulated, in paragraph 1 of rule 9, that the Board would have two Co-Chairs, elected from among the members of the Board, reflecting the composition of the Board and the purpose of the Programme.
7. As per paragraph 3 of the same rule, the term of the Co-Chairs elected at the first meeting of the Board continued until the election of the new Co-Chairs at the commencement of a meeting to be held after the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention. Thereafter, the election of Co-Chairs would take place at the first meeting of each new term of the Board. The term of the incoming Governing Board members had started in November 2019 at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties and would conclude at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
8. The members of the Governing Board were invited to elect the Co-Chairs from among their members. The Board members elected Mr. Reginald Hernaus (the Netherlands) and Mr. Prasert Tapaneyangkul (Thailand) as the Co-Chairs of the Governing Board of Specific International Programme for the current term.
9. The elected Co-Chairs expressed their thanks to the outgoing Co-Chair and to the Board for entrusting them with the role.

### **C. Request for disclosure of any possible personal and/or financial conflict of interest**

10. The Co-Chair recalled rule 23 of the rules of procedure for the Governing Board, which stated that in cases where a member of the Governing Board was from a country that had submitted a project to the Board for its consideration, that member should be excused from participating during the deliberations of and decision-making by the Board in relation to the project in question. The rule also stated that members and possible observers at the meeting had an obligation to promptly disclose to the Board, at the commencement of the meeting, any potential personal and/or financial interest in any aspect of a project presented for decision and approval by the Board.

11. The Co-Chair further noted that no project application was under discussion at the meeting, and that the matter had been raised solely because it had been decided that it would be a standing agenda item at all Board meeting.

## **III. Operations of the Specific International Programme (agenda item 3)**

### **A. Activities of the Programme and status of implementation of the first and second rounds of projects**

12. The representative of the secretariat provided an overview of the work of the Programme, including a summary of the implementation status of the projects approved in the first and second rounds. She noted good progress being reported by the project managers on projects from the first round once the legal agreements were in place. She also reported that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) situation had given rise to communication lags with some second round project managers for the conclusion of the legal and disbursement arrangements but that overall there was fairly good progress on second round projects as well. The overall project status as at 31 October 2020 is set out in appendix II to the present report.

13. The Board underlined the importance of speedy conclusion of the legal arrangements of all approved projects as a matter of principle. The conclusion of a legal agreement marked the formal commencement of a project and was required before the secretariat could initiate payment of the first instalment of the project grant. The Board requested the secretariat to communicate that information clearly to all remaining second round project managers and to include text in the application guidelines for the third round on the need to make arrangements at the national level for rapid conclusion of the legal arrangements to ensure proper implementation of all approved projects.

14. In conclusion, the Board welcomed the efforts of the project managers on the approved projects and the efforts by the secretariat to support the implementation of the first and second round projects, recognizing that the COVID-19 context had brought with it limitations that might require flexibility.

### **B. Status of the Specific Trust Fund**

15. The representative of the secretariat provided an update on the contributions and pledges received and the expenditures of the Specific Trust Fund as at 15 November 2020. She noted that contributions and pledges to the third round had amounted to \$1,136,620 as at 31 October 2020.

16. While noting with appreciation the work of the secretariat in supporting the Board and the Programme and in managing the first and second round projects, a Board member expressed concern about the additional workload associated with the launch and management of the third round of applications, the additional projects the round would yield and the ongoing monitoring work required on ongoing projects, given the limited number of staff formally assigned to the Programme within the secretariat.

## **IV. Considerations for the launch of the third round of applications (agenda item 4)**

17. The Co-Chair asked the secretariat to introduce the agenda item.

## **A. Lessons learned following two rounds of applications**

18. The representative of the secretariat summarized the lessons learned from the first two rounds of applications, including from the comments and reflections of the founding Governing Board members at their last meeting. She also summarized the lessons learned from supporting the implementation of the projects approved thus far, as follows:

(a) Project applicants found developing project logical framework matrices and budgets challenging. Introducing additional information and examples in the revised application guidelines for the third round would help countries submit better-structured project applications.

(b) A number of parties face similar or shared challenges and some issues were transnational in nature; therefore, submissions of projects with a regional dimension might be valuable.

(c) Rather than conditionally approving projects pending changes of a technical nature by the applicant, the secretariat recommended adding additional time to the review process for the third round to allow for initial comments to be sent to the applicant, along with an invitation to re-submit their revised application for the Board's consideration (see third-round timeline in appendix III to the present report).

(d) It should be made clear to potential applicants that they might have a higher chance of success if they submitted applications for targeted and specific interventions and areas of work regarded as the highest priority by their Government rather than comprehensive projects designed to access the maximum funding available per project.

19. The Board took note of the secretariat's suggestions. One Board member noted that regional cooperation might not be possible in all projects as geopolitical factors could hinder regional collaboration.

## **B. Application forms and guidelines for the third round**

20. The Co-Chair then invited the secretariat to report on the experiences and lessons learned from the second round that could be applied to the application guidelines for the third round. The representative of the secretariat suggested that:

(a) The term "project delivery organization" be removed from the application form, as Specific International Programme projects did not use implementing agencies; partners involved in implementation could instead be listed as project partners;

(b) Further clarity be provided on who would be responsible for the terminal evaluation of the project, which was managed by the secretariat for all projects over \$150,000;

(c) The upper limit for requesting funds for personnel and contractual costs be removed for the time being (in the light of COVID-19) while keeping the cap on the equipment budget category;

(d) The budget line called "administrative fee" be removed, as no specific additional administrative fee applied to projects under the Programme;

(e) Flexibility be exercised in terms of requiring more detailed application information (e.g. job descriptions, terms of reference for consultants);

(f) Applicants be requested to identify a "project focal point" or "project correspondence focal point" with whom the secretariat could be in direct contact on a regular basis.

21. The Board members agreed to the above suggestions. One Board member also underlined the value of adding a model project to the application guidelines for illustrative purposes.

## **C. Proposed timeline for the launch of the third round and appraisal of third round applications**

22. The representative of the secretariat outlined the proposed timeline and organization of work for the launch of the third round of applications. The proposed timeline provided for a two-step approach to application review, with targeted feedback by the secretariat to applicant Governments by the end of April 2021 and the opportunity extended to applicants to revise and better align their applications to the guidelines by the end of May 2021 based on that feedback. The rationale for the proposal was to minimize the need for the Board to resort to approving projects conditional on

revisions and alignment with the guidelines. The proposal was based on lessons learned in other grant-making mechanisms.

23. The Board considered the proposed timeline in detail, noting that the report on the outcome of the third round was to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties for consideration at its fourth meeting. The proposed timeline provided for the secretariat to launch the third round by 15 December 2020 and for applicants to have three months to prepare and submit their applications by the mandatory deadline of 18 March 2021.

24. The Board noted that some applicants might find it difficult to adhere to the 18 March 2021 deadline given the special and difficult circumstances in many countries owing to COVID-19. The Board elected to keep the proposed deadline for 18 March 2021 for the time being but also instructed the secretariat to prepare a contingency plan that, in case of requests for extensions, would still allow for full consideration of projects and reporting to the Conference of the Parties in time for its fourth meeting.

25. The Board requested the secretariat to monitor the situation closely and to inform the Board of any extension requests received. Based on the situation seen closer to the mandatory deadline and in the event of requests for extensions, the Board might consider reconvening specifically to consider extending the deadline for all or some applicants and activating the contingency plan prepared by the secretariat.

26. Based on the above considerations, the Board agreed to the launch of the third round of applications by 15 December 2020 and approved the timeline for the third round (see appendix III).

## **V. Items for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting (agenda item 5)**

### **A. Review of the financial mechanism of the Minamata Convention on Mercury: Specific International Programme considerations as per decision MC-3/7, paragraph 2, on the terms of reference for the second review**

27. The Executive Secretary said that, at its third meeting, the Conference of the Parties, in decision MC-3/7, had requested the secretariat to prepare draft terms of reference for the second review of the financial mechanism for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting. She invited the Board's comments in that regard in terms of the Programme, as the latter was one component of the financial mechanism.

28. Responding to a request for clarification, a representative of the secretariat noted that the first review of the financial mechanism of the Minamata Convention had been completed at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties but had not been based on formal terms of reference. The Co-Chair added that, as the Convention and the Programme were in the early stages of implementation, there might not have been a need for comprehensive terms of reference for the review at that time.

29. In conclusion, the Board noted that the second review of the financial mechanism could include ongoing projects from the first and second rounds, as very few projects had been completed to date. The secretariat was requested to assist in collating relevant information from the ongoing projects and to consider the "in progress" status projects in drafting the terms of reference, as well as to reflect on the periodicity implications of the review in the light of the rounds and the end date set for the Programme. Furthermore, with reference to paragraph 11 of article 13 of the Convention, the Board recalled that the review was to include reflection on the level of funding, the guidance provided by the Conference of the Parties, the effectiveness of the Programme and its ability to address the changing needs of developing country parties and parties with economies in transition, and suggestions on where action was necessary to improve the effectiveness of the Programme and the financial mechanism.

### **B. The Executive Director's report to assess the possible options for enhancing the Specific International Programme and its operations: contributions of the Governing Board**

30. On behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP, the representative of the secretariat invited the Governing Board to provide initial views and perspectives to identify elements for a report to assess the possible options for enhancing the Specific International Programme and its operations. The aim of

the options would be to ensure that the Programme was capable of delivering on its mandate and that sound administrative procedures and project management practices were applied, thereby enhancing the Programme's effectiveness in supporting eligible parties in implementing the Minamata Convention.

31. One Board member noted that it was difficult to assess the options for enhancement as the projects under the Programme were still in the initial stages of implementation and results had yet to be reported. The observation was echoed by a second Board member, who requested further time to consider the issue.

32. Another Board member said that there were also other considerations among some donor parties that might need to be considered in that regard.

## **VI. Date and venue of the next meeting (agenda item 6)**

33. The representative of the secretariat drew attention to the timeline for the third round, according to which project appraisals would be ready in July 2021, the Board would meet in August 2021 and documents for the Conference of the Parties needed to be distributed in September.

34. The Board agreed to meet in August 2021, requesting the secretariat to set the specific dates with the Co-Chairs closer to the time.

35. It was noted that the Board might need to meet earlier in case the mandatory application deadline of 18 March 2021 proved difficult for parties to adhere to in the context of COVID-19, to decide whether to activate the contingency plan prepared by the secretariat.

## **VII. Any other business (agenda item 7)**

36. There was no other business.

## **VIII. Closure of the meeting (agenda item 8)**

37. The meeting was declared closed at 4 p.m. (Geneva time) on Wednesday, 25 November 2020.

## Appendix I

### List of participants

<b>Governing Board (2020–2021)</b>	
<p><b>AFRICA</b> <b>NIGERIA</b> Mr. Olubunmi Olusanya Deputy Director Rotterdam and Minamata Convention / Pollution Control and Environmental Health Federal Ministry of Environment 14 Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama 900271 Abuja Nigeria Tel: +234 802 304 0724 Email: olusanyaoc@yahoo.co.uk</p> <p><b>ASIA AND THE PACIFIC</b> <b>THAILAND (Co-Chair)</b> Mr. Prasert Tapaneeyangkul Chair, Subcommittee on the Basel Convention National Environment Board 92 Soi Phahon Yothin 7, Phahon Yothin Road Sam Sen Nai, Phayathai 10400 Bangkok Thailand Tel: +66 2298 2426 Email: ptap14011@gmail.com</p> <p><b>CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE</b> <b>ESTONIA</b> Mr. Kaupo Heinma Deputy Secretary General Ministry of the Environment Narva mnt 7a 15172 Tallinn Estonia Tel: +372 626 2846 Email: kaupo.heinma@envir.ee</p> <p><b>LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN</b> <b>BRAZIL</b> Mr. Pedro Piacesi de Souza Second Secretary Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva Chemin Louis-Dunant 15 (6th Floor) Geneva Switzerland Tel: +41 22 332 50 00 Email: pedro.piacesi@itamaraty.gov.br</p>	<p><b>AFRICA</b> <b>SENEGAL</b> Ms. Aïta Sarr Seck Conseiller technique / Point Focal Rotterdam et Minamata Direction de l'Environnement et des Établissements Classés Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable Parc forestier et zoologique de Hann Route des Pères Maristes, Dakar Senegal Tel: +221 77 511 4759 Email: aitasec@yahoo.fr</p> <p><b>ASIA AND THE PACIFIC</b> <b>IRAN</b> Mr. Mohsen Naziri Asl Head / Secretary of National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention Department for Chemical and Biological Convention Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tehran Iran (Islamic Republic of) Tel: +982 161 154 336 Email: iranwcw@gmail.com naziri_a@yahoo.com</p> <p><b>CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE</b> <b>ARMENIA</b> Ms. Anahit Aleksandryan Head Hazardous Substances and Waste Policy Division Ministry of Environment Governmental Building 3 Republic Square, 0010 Yerevan Republic of Armenia Tel: +374 11 818 519 Email: anahit.aleksandryan@env.am anahit.aleksandryan@yahoo.com</p> <p><b>LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN</b> <b>SURINAME</b> Ms. Gina Griffith Legal Advisor Office of Environmental Legal Services National Institute for Environment and Development in Suriname (NIMOS) Mr. J. Lachmonstraat 100/ Hoek Bersabalaan Paramaribo Suriname Tel: +597 490 044 Email: ggriiffith@nimos.org</p>

<p><b>WESTERN EUROPE AND OTHERS</b>  <b>NETHERLANDS (Co-Chair)</b>  Mr. Reginald Hernaus  Lead Negotiator Chemicals and Wastes  Department for International Affairs  Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management  Rijnstraat 8  P.O. Box 20901  2500 EX The Hague  Netherlands  Tel: +31 70 456 6485  Email: reggie.hernaus@minienw.nl</p>	<p><b>WESTERN EUROPE AND OTHERS</b>  <b>NORWAY</b>  Mr. Atle Fretheim  Consultant  Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment  Kaptein Gløersensvei 24  1396 Billingstad  Norway  Tel: +47 95068313  Email: ar-freth@online.no</p>
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<b>Observers</b>	
<p><i>Co-Chair of the founding Governing Board (2018–2019)</i>  Mr. Sam Adu-kumi  Director  Chemicals Control and Management Centre  Environmental Protection Agency  Starlet 1991  Accra  Ghana  Tel.: +233 30 266 4697/8  Fax: +233 30 266 2690  Email: adukumisam@yahoo.com  sam.adu-kumi@epa.gov.gh</p>	<p><i>Incoming member from 1 January 2021</i>  <b>BRAZIL</b>  Mr. Helges Bandeira  Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations Office  and other international organizations in Geneva  Chemin Louis-Dunant 15 (6th Floor)  Geneva  Switzerland  Tel: +41 22 332 50 00  Email: helges.bandeira@itamaraty.gov.br</p>

<b>Secretariat</b>	
<p>Ms. Monika Stankiewicz  Executive Secretary  Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury  International Environment House 1  Geneva, Switzerland  Telephone: +41 22 917 8193  Email: monika.stankiewicz@un.org</p> <p>Ms. Marianne Bailey  Programme Management Officer for Capacity-building and  Technical Assistance  Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury  International Environment House 1  Geneva, Switzerland  Tel: +41 22 917 8977  marianne.bailey@un.org</p> <p>Ms. My Linh Doan  Programme Management Assistant  Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury  International Environment House 1  Geneva, Switzerland  Tel.: +41 22 917 8638  linh.doan@un.org</p>	<p>Ms. Claudia ten Have  Senior Policy and Coordination Officer  Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury  International Environment House 1  Geneva, Switzerland  Telephone: +41 22 917 8638  Email: claudia.tenhave@un.org</p> <p>Ms. Lara Ognibene  Legal/Programme Officer  Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury  International Environment House 1  Geneva, Switzerland  Tel.: +41 22 917 8616  lara.ognibene@un.org</p>

## Appendix II

### Overall project status as at 31 October 2020

Table 1  
First round of applications (2018)

<i>Party name</i>	<i>Agreement details</i>	<i>Status</i>
Argentina	Project Cooperation Agreement with National Institute of Industrial Technology in cooperation with Basel Convention Regional Centre for South America	The project is well under way. Two rounds of reporting received. Minor amendment to the budget to shift funds to year two and away from travel requested due to COVID-19-related impacts. Project end date remains June 2021.
Armenia	Small-Scale Funding Agreement with the Hydrometeorology and Monitoring Centre State Non-Commercial Organization of the Ministry of Environment	The project is well under way. Two rounds of reporting received. The project has experienced limited delays in implementation due to COVID-19. The partner requested a six-month no-cost extension to November 2021 (for a new total duration of 30 months) to allow for additional time to finalize the project activities.
Benin	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Living Environment and Sustainable Development	Initial disbursement was delayed but the project has been in implementation status since February 2020.
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Small-Scale Funding Agreement with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Research Institute of Petroleum Industry	Finalization of legal agreement delayed due to time required to finalize banking details, as well as delays due to COVID-19. Legal agreement signed in May 2020; project activities under way.
Lesotho	Project Cooperation Agreement with Department of Environment of the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture	Project activities commenced in January 2020. The project experienced some delays including due to COVID-19 and is moving forward in implementation. One round of reporting received.

Table 2  
Second round of applications (2019)

<i>Party name</i>	<i>Agreement details</i>	<i>Status</i>
Antigua and Barbuda	Project Cooperation Agreement with Department of Analytical Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs	Legal agreement signed and implementation has begun.
Ecuador	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Environment and Water	Due to communications delays, the secretariat and the Ministry are still discussing needed changes to the project document to respond to Governing Board comments. First redraft sent by Ecuador in October 2020. Legal agreement expected to be finalized by the end of 2020.
Ghana	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Health	Revisions to project document agreed and final edits to the legal agreement being reviewed by both sides prior to signature.
Indonesia	Small-Scale Funding Agreement with Ministry of Health jointly with Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for Southeast Asia	Legal agreement signed and implementation has begun.

<i>Party name</i>	<i>Agreement details</i>	<i>Status</i>
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Small-Scale Funding Agreement with Department of Environment	Legal agreement under review by Department of Environment.
Nigeria	Project Cooperation Agreement with Federal Ministry of Environment	Final version of legal agreement with Ministry for signature.
Peru	Small-Scale Funding Agreement with Ministry of Environment	Final version of legal agreement with Ministry for signature.
Republic of Moldova	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment	Legal agreement signed. The first instalment of funds is still being processed and has faced delays from the UNEP side (due to new UNEP banking form requirements).
Sri Lanka	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment	Project document with National Planning Agency for approval. Legal agreement draft to be sent to Ministry by mid-November.
Zambia	Project Cooperation Agreement with Zambia Environmental Management Agency	Revised draft legal agreement with partner for review and signature.

## Appendix III

### Timeline for the launch of the third round and appraisal of third round applications

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Main actors</i>	<i>Time frame</i>
“Master Class” on the Specific International Programme for the incoming Governing Board	Secretariat Governing Board	19 November 2020
Governing Board meets to consider the operations of the Specific International Programme, follow up on outcomes of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties and decide on the third round of applications	Governing Board Secretariat	24–25 November 2020
Launch of the third round of applications	Secretariat	By 15 December 2020
Mandatory deadline for third round applications	Eligible parties	18 March 2021
Acknowledgement of receipt of the applications by the secretariat and verification of eligibility and completeness	Secretariat	From beginning of submissions to a week after the deadline
Technical review and appraisal of submitted applications by the secretariat team	Secretariat	From beginning of submissions until mid-April
Technical review and appraisal of submitted applications by the secretariat and the cross-secretariat task team	Secretariat and cross-secretariat task team	By 16 April 2021
Applications with comments and suggestions for improvement sent back to applicants	Secretariat	By 30 April 2021
Deadline for resubmission of applications revised on the basis of comments made by the secretariat and the cross-secretariat task team	Applicants	By 31 May 2021 (one month)
Review of resubmissions by the secretariat	Secretariat	May and June 2021
Review of resubmissions by the secretariat with the cross-secretariat task team	Secretariat and cross-secretariat task team	June 2021
Preparation of draft appraisals for the Governing Board	Secretariat	June–July 2021
Governing Board meets to consider and decide on third round applications to approve for funding based on the funds available at the time of the meeting	Governing Board	August 2021 (three days)
Submission of the report of the Governing Board to the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting	Secretariat	September 2021

## Annex II

### **Report of the sixth meeting of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance (held online from 9 to 13 August 2021)**

#### **I. Opening of the meeting (agenda item 1)**

1. The sixth meeting of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme to support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance of the Minamata Convention on Mercury was opened at 1 p.m. (Central European Summer Time) on Monday, 9 August 2021 by the Co-Chairs of the Governing Board, Mr. Reggie Hernaus (Netherlands) and Mr. Prasert Tapaneeyangkul (Thailand).
2. Speaking on behalf of both Co-Chairs, Mr. Hernaus warmly welcomed all Board members to the meeting, thanking the Board for their understanding and flexibility in the timing and format of the meeting given the continuing global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) situation.
3. The Co-Chair remarked that the meeting would be considering several important issues, including:
  - (a) The 24 applications received for the third round;
  - (b) The annual report of the secretariat on the operations of the Specific International Programme and the status of the Specific Trust Fund;
  - (c) Two programme-related items to be considered by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting, namely the terms of reference for the review of the financial mechanism and the role and strengthening of the Specific International Programme.
4. The Co-Chair then invited the Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention, Ms. Monika Stankiewicz, to deliver a welcoming message, also on behalf of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
5. The Executive Secretary welcomed the participants, saying that it had been a pleasure for the secretariat to prepare and organize the sixth meeting of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme. She highlighted the importance of the Programme in providing parties with much-needed capacity strengthening and in its overall contribution to both the development and the implementation of the Convention. She thanked the donors who had supported the Programme and made the third round possible, acknowledging also that the applicants had expressed great need. She further noted that for sound administration of and support for the Programme, there would need to be a mid-term review of the Programme and a way found to augment the secretariat's capacity, especially during peak workload times and for specific required tasks.
6. The Co-Chair noted that Mr. Atle Fretheim (Norway) had unfortunately been unable to attend the current meeting for health reasons and, on the Board's behalf, expressed the sincere wish for his speedy and full recovery.
7. Noting rule 3, paragraph 4, according to which a Board member, as necessary, could designate an alternative representative for a particular meeting, the Co-Chair, speaking on behalf of the Board, welcomed Mr. Joel Ormala (Norway) to represent Mr. Fretheim at the meeting.
8. The Co-Chair proposed a brief *tour de table* to allow each Board member to reflect on the third round of applications.
9. The list of participants is set out in appendix I to the present report.

#### **II. Organizational matters (agenda item 2)**

##### **A. Adoption of the agenda**

10. The Co-Chair then directed the Board's attention to the provisional agenda for the meeting (UNEP/MC/SIP.GB.6/1) and the schedule of work as outlined in the annotated agenda (UNEP/MC/SIP.GB.6/1/Add.1).

11. The representative of the secretariat presented the provisional agenda and proposed organization of work. She drew attention to agenda item 8 on the adoption of the report and the proposed way forward in that regard.
12. The Co-Chair thanked the representative of the secretariat for the proposal on how the secretariat would prepare the meeting report so as to have it ready to be adopted by the Board and forwarded thereafter as part of the official documentation for the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
13. The Board adopted the agenda as set out in appendix II to the present report.

## **B. Request for disclosure of any possible personal and/or financial conflict of interest**

14. The Co-Chair recalled rule 23 of the rules of procedure for the Governing Board, which stated that in cases where a member of the Board was from a country that had submitted a project to the Board for its consideration, that member should be excused from participating during the deliberations of and decision-making by the Board in relation to the project in question. The rule also stated that members and possible observers at the meeting had an obligation to promptly disclose to the Board, at the commencement of the meeting, any potential personal and/or financial interest in any aspect of a project presented for discussion and approval by the Board.
15. Three members of the Board (from Iran (Islamic Republic of), Senegal and Suriname) indicated that their countries had submitted applications.
16. The Co-Chair thanked the three Board members for their declarations of disclosure, noting that, in accordance with rule 23, paragraph 1, they would be excused from participating during the deliberations of and decision-making by the Board in relation to the projects from their respective countries.
17. Based on the past practices of the Governing Board, which had enabled two successful and transparent rounds of decision-making by the Governing Board, the Co-Chair specified that, for the members from Iran (Islamic Republic of), Senegal and Suriname, being “excused” from participating during the deliberations of and decision-making by the Board would mean, in practice, that:
- (a) The Board member could be present in the room to hear and observe the deliberations on the project but would not be permitted to speak on the application or participate at all in the deliberations affecting the application.
  - (b) The Board Member could request the other Board Member representing the region (or a Board Member from a different region) to speak, if necessary, on the application during the deliberations.
  - (c) At the time of the Board’s decision-making on that project, the Board member would not be permitted to be present in the room.
18. The Co-Chair further specified that the Co-Chairs would seek to arrive at a list of applications for approval for third-round funding in the full spirit of cooperation and transparency, noting that it remained the prerogative of the Co-Chairs at the time of deliberation to decide at any point whether a Board member with a potential conflict of interest would be allowed to be present in the room, in the light of the overall deliberations.

## **III. Operations of the Specific International Programme (agenda item 3)**

### **A. Operations of the Programme, including status of implementation of the first and second round projects**

19. The Co-Chair invited the secretariat to present its annual report on the operations of the Programme, including the status of implementation of the first and second round projects.
20. The representative of the secretariat provided the information contained in the annual report in two parts. First, she updated the Board on the implementation status of Specific International Programme projects and the secretariat support provided in that regard. She recalled that five projects had been approved in the first round, from Argentina, Armenia, Benin, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Lesotho, and ten in the second round, from Antigua and Barbuda, Ecuador, Ghana, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Nigeria, Peru, the Republic of Moldova, Sri Lanka and Zambia. As at

31 July 2021, all legal agreements to support project implementation were in place, but it had taken considerable effort by the secretariat to get all the agreements for the second round projects in place, due to numerous COVID-19-related delays. Reports had been received as required from projects at an advanced stage of implementation, with more reports expected in the coming months. The status of implementation of first- and second-round projects as at 12 July 2021 is set out in appendix III to the present report.

21. The representative of the secretariat also drew attention to the overviews of all the first round projects available on the website, and said that the overviews of the second round projects would be uploaded shortly. The overviews provided information on details such as project budget and duration and project management information such as the contact persons at the national level. Furthermore, she informed the Board of the launch of the Focus online newsletter, of which three editions had been published to date. The purpose of the newsletter was to inform parties, stakeholders and particularly donors on the progress of work undertaken under the Programme.

22. The representative of the secretariat then updated the Board on the secretariat functions provided for management of the third round of applications. Referencing the instructions given by the Board at its fifth meeting (see the timeline in appendix III to the report of the fifth meeting), she reported that the secretariat had fully implemented the activities in accordance with the timeline. During the application phase, the secretariat had organized webinars in English, French and Spanish in four separate sessions to accommodate different time zones. Thereafter, the secretariat also made itself available for one-on-one clinics with applicants working on their draft application. Following the receipt of 24 applications, the secretariat did the technical review of applications, involving the cross-secretariat task team (which included staff from the secretariats of the Global Environment Facility, the Global Mercury Partnership and the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening) to prepare comments for the applicants. All applicants had been invited to resubmit their applications. That additional phase had been newly introduced for the third round by the Board, and from the secretariat's perspective had been very useful in terms of having strong applications come forward. In two cases, it had also allowed applicants to be informed of the suitability of their applications for support from the Global Environment Facility.

23. A Board member complimented the secretariat on its work in managing the first and second round projects, its efforts to conclude all the project documents and legal arrangements even amid the challenges associated with COVID-19, the new efforts to share information on the Programme through the newsletter and the overall excellent support to the third round.

## **B. Status of the Specific Trust Fund and support for the secretariat functions**

24. The Co-Chair invited the secretariat to present its annual report on the status and administration of the Specific Trust Fund, as well as the secretariat functions supporting the Programme.

25. The representative of the secretariat recalled that the Specific Trust Fund was open for 10 years to receive contributions to support the Programme, and that the financial resources were to be used for the approved projects, the meetings of the Governing Board and the operations of the Programme. All contributions to the Specific Trust Fund were subject to a 13 per cent charge for programme support costs. The Specific Trust Fund did not cover any portion of the salaries of officers of the secretariat of the Minamata Convention who provide secretariat services for programme operation and administration. In total, \$3,701,909 had been raised for the first and second rounds. Against that, the total projected expenditure was \$3,526,500 and the projected cash balance amounted to \$175,409. Given that the Programme was about to enter its fourth year of operation, the secretariat wished to highlight the need for provision to be made for a mid-term evaluation of the Specific International Programme by the UNEP Evaluation Office, and recommended that the cost of the evaluation be covered by the savings available from the first and second rounds of the Programme. Furthermore, to augment its operational and administrative capacity in the light of the 15 projects already under implementation and the additional projects to be added through the third round, and to access support during periods of peak workload and for other related services required for proper operation and administration of the Programme, the secretariat recommended that the Board allow the secretariat to draw against the savings in case of upcoming pertinent capacity needs and then report thereon.

26. The Board expressed support for the provisions for a mid-term evaluation and agreed with the secretariat's recommendation regarding the use of savings for services to support programme operations and administration, including at times of peak workload, and to report thereon to the

donors, noting also that for now that approach was better than requesting the Conference of the Parties for an additional staff post for the Specific International Programme.

27. Noting that at the current meeting the Board was to approve applications for the third round against the funding envelope available, the Co-Chair then called on the secretariat to update the Board on the contributions and pledges to the third round.

28. The representative of the secretariat reported that, as at 30 June 2021, \$2,248,085 had been received from Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States of America. Since then, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States had made additional pledges. Given that the third round of funding also needed to cover the 13 per cent programme support costs, \$2.2 million could be considered available for programming by the Board.

29. The Co-Chair thanked the donors that had provided funding for the third round, noting that France was a first-time contributor to the Specific Trust Fund and that Norway was the single largest contributor to the Programme to date, including for the third round.

#### **IV. Consideration of eligible and complete applications for the third round of funding under the Specific International Programme for decision by the Governing Board (agenda item 4)**

30. The Co-Chair opened the agenda item, noting the substantial task ahead for the Board at the current meeting, namely to review the 24 applications for third round funding. He requested the secretariat to give an overview of the task ahead in preparation for the in-depth consideration of applications.

31. The representative of the secretariat said that the third round had been launched on 15 December 2020 with the mandatory deadline of 18 March 2021. In total, 24 applications had been received, with 11 from Africa, 8 from Asia and the Pacific, 4 from Latin America and the Caribbean and 1 from Central and Eastern Europe. Three of the 24 applications were from small island developing States and 8 were from least developed countries. Introducing document UNEP/MC/SIP.GB.6/3/Add.1, the representative of the secretariat said that all the applications had been appraised against the criteria established by the Board at its first meeting and set in the appraisal framework adopted for the second round. The appraisal framework was included in the application guidelines for the third round. In preparing the appraisals, the secretariat had also benefited from the input of representatives of the secretariats of the Global Environment Facility, the Global Mercury Partnership and the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening,<sup>1</sup> as part of the cross-secretariat task team. The insights from the Global Environment Facility and the Special Programme had been particularly pertinent in terms of the considerations related to the funding made available under those bodies. The complete appraisal package had been made available to the members of the Governing Board on 9 July 2021. She also noted that the current round had seen the submission of applications that built on past recommendations by the Board.

32. The Co-Chair recalled the elements of the appraisal framework adopted at the Board's third meeting that correspond to the criteria agreed upon by the Board at its first meeting, namely to:

- (a) Check for completeness;
- (b) Check for eligibility;
- (c) Check for coherence;
- (d) Check for prioritization.

33. The Co-Chair also recalled the specific items that the Board had highlighted for applicants to the third round, namely that:

- (a) The Board welcomed applications that contained targeted and specific interventions;
- (b) The Programme was able to support projects to be carried out on a regional basis, in addition to national projects;

<sup>1</sup> The full name of the Special Programme on institutional strengthening is: Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.

(c) The Programme was not to duplicate funding of activities already funded or planned to be funded by the Global Environment Facility or the Special Programme.

34. With that as background, the Board proceeded to deliberate on the 24 applications received.

35. Following thorough discussion of each application, the Governing Board approved nine projects for funding in the third round, amounting to \$2,193,842. The projects that were approved, pending finalization of project documents as per Governing Board recommendations, are listed in table 1.

Table 1  
**Projects approved for funding in the third round**

<i>Party</i>	<i>Project title</i>	<i>Amount (United States dollars)</i>
Burundi	Capacity-building support for the implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury in Burundi	250 000
Cuba	Improvement of information on inventories of mercury use and the environmental cycle in Cuba to support the implementation of the Minamata Convention.	249 210
Gabon	Facilitating capacity-building with technology assistance and technology transfer for monitoring and managing mercury in Central Africa	249 500
India	Development of an institutional and regulatory framework for implementation of the Minamata Convention in India	240 000
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Improving the capacity-building programme for the replacement of mercury-containing lamps in order to implement the Minamata Convention in the Islamic Republic of Iran	238 000
Jordan	Environmentally sound management of mercury-containing wastes and reducing the use of mercury-containing products in Jordan	250 000
North Macedonia	Strengthening national capacities for Minamata Convention implementation with a focus on development of a strategy for assessing sites contaminated with mercury	248 500
Rwanda	Strengthening the institutional capacities for Rwanda to implement Minamata Convention	220 000
Senegal	Strengthening the legal framework and institutional capacities of ECOWAS countries (Senegal, Togo and Burkina Faso) for the implementation of articles 3 and 4 of the Minamata Convention	248 632

36. Fifteen applications could not be approved for funding in the third round. For those applications, the Board formulated recommendations to be transmitted by the secretariat to each of the applicants for their consideration and to enable them to strengthen their applications for possible submission to the fourth or a subsequent round. Those applications are shown in table 2.

Table 2  
**Applications with recommendations for possible submission to the fourth or a subsequent round**

<i>Party</i>	<i>Project title</i>
Argentina	Strengthening capacities to improve the environmentally sound management of mercury wastes
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Strengthening national capacities for the implementation of article 4 on mercury-added products in the Plurinational State of Bolivia
Botswana	Strengthening national capacity for phasing out mercury-added products and environmentally sound mercury-containing waste management in Botswana
Burkina Faso	Strengthening legal and institutional frameworks for the sound management of mercury-added products in Burkina Faso
Central African Republic	Waste management and abandonment of mercury and mercury-containing products
Chad	Strengthening national capacities for the phasing out of the use of mercury and its compounds
Guinea	Improving the management frameworks for mercury and mercury waste containing mercury, including dental amalgams

<i>Party</i>	<i>Project title</i>
Madagascar	Strengthen the capacity of Madagascar to manage mercury-containing products and mercury-containing waste in Madagascar
Mongolia	<i>No title was provided</i>
Pakistan	Development of a national action plan for the artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector of Pakistan
Qatar	Enhancing Qatar's capabilities to implement the Minamata Convention focusing on developing an inventory of emission, releases, disposal and management of mercury waste (medical and hazardous waste)
Samoa	Strengthening the national institutional capacity for environmentally sound management of mercury in Samoa
Suriname	Increased technical capacity and knowledge of the Environmental Sciences Department of the University of Suriname
United Republic of Tanzania	Strengthening national capacity for sound management of mercury-added products and their waste in Tanzania
Viet Nam	Strengthening national capacity for the management of import and export of mercury and mercury-added products to support the implementation of the Minamata Convention in Viet Nam

37. The Co-Chair then invited the Board members to reflect on the third round, leading to the following recommendations and observations:

(a) The Board expressed its sincere regret at not being able to approve more projects for funding in the third round, noting that the current round had yielded many persuasive and well-articulated applications, placing the Board in the very challenging position of having to select from among a number of worthy applications.

(b) Expressing its sincere appreciation to all the donors to the third round, the Board called on parties to strongly support the fourth round of the Programme. In that regard, the Board also expressed its hope for a broadening of the donor base, and especially invited those in a position to do so that had not yet contributed to the Programme to consider making funding available for that purpose.

(c) Reflecting on the introduction of a two-step approach in the review of the applications for the third round, the Board observed that, while it represented an additional task for the secretariat, the value of the extra step could be seen in the well-articulated applications. Moreover, the Board noted that the two-step approach had enabled the secretariat to identify at least two applications better suited for funding by the Global Environment Facility.<sup>2</sup>

(d) The Board underlined that in the context of a limited funding envelope, selecting which projects to fund from among the many well-articulated applications required a robust decision-making matrix. The Board expressed its appreciation for the appraisal framework used to guide the secretariat in the preparation of the appraisals, as well as the usefulness of the appraisals prepared for the Board's consideration, but noted that it could face the challenge of the number of worthy applications exceeding the funding envelope available again in the future. It therefore recommended further work on the prioritization criteria and/or selection methodology, to assist the Board should the situation arise again in the future.

(e) The Board noted that, notwithstanding the many efforts by the secretariat to support third round applicants,<sup>3</sup> some of the neediest parties still appeared not be in a position to prepare sufficiently convincing project proposals. Language appeared to be a significant barrier in that regard.

(f) The Board was pleased to have been able to approve applications for funding from all United Nations regions in the current round, but noted that in past rounds it had been established that for the Specific International Programme there was no practice of binding regional balance for decision-making.

<sup>2</sup> By the time the Board convened, the two applicants were in direct contact with officials from the Global Environment Facility and from implementing agencies to advance their respective applications to the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund.

<sup>3</sup> The secretariat made the application guidelines available in English, French and Spanish and also hosted webinars and one-on-one clinics in English, French and Spanish. As the Governing Board operates in English, all applications are to be submitted in English.

(g) In terms of eligible parties in United Nations regions, the Board noted that there had been more applications submitted for some regions than for others. It expressed the hope that it could be of support to as many eligible parties as possible and to all United Nations regions, and therefore recommended that for the fourth round the secretariat continue specific regional and language outreach to support a broad applicant base.

(h) Noting that cumulative allocation per se is not a reason to decide against an application in a subsequent application round, the Board recognized that the Programme would seek to support as many eligible parties as possible to support the Convention as fully as possible during the Programme's limited life.

(i) The Board also stressed the importance of parties' completing their Minamata Initial Assessments and, if applicable, their national action plans for artisanal and small-scale gold mining and making their outcomes available to the secretariat, as they provided important information for strengthening the evidence base of need for funding to support specific activities.

38. The Board was pleased that it could support applications for funding in the third round that:

(a) Were targeted and specific to areas demonstrated by the applicant to be of greatest need and of national priority to enable the party to fulfil its obligations under the Convention;

(b) Included two projects designed to build capacity at the regional level for specific areas of common concern;

(c) Were based on well-conceived theories of change and, with that, well-conceived results-based activities;

(d) Clearly articulated how the project was separate from other work already funded or planned to be funded by the Global Environment Facility and/or the Special Programme at the national level;

(e) Were innovative in approach and also of interest for programme support in terms of possible replicability by other parties in future rounds;

(f) Responded to the needs expressed, including the need to support one small island developing State and three least developed countries.

39. The limited funding envelope meant that the Board had been faced with the challenging task of choosing from among a number of well-articulated and worthy applications. Following extensive deliberations and using an iterative approach, the Board had succeeded in reaching consensus on the projects to fund in the third round. In that regard, the Board noted for the record that, at the time, it faced an extraordinary circumstance of needs expressed for Convention implementation, and that the discussion by which consensus had been reached on the decision for the third round did not set a precedent for decision-making in any future round of the Programme.

40. In the light of the consensus reached, both Co-Chairs thanked the Board members for their constructive, patient and flexible approach to enabling the Board to arrive at a decision on the projects to approve for funding in the third round.

41. To conclude, the Co-Chair asked the secretariat to describe the next steps regarding the applications. The representative of the secretariat said that all successful applicants would receive a letter in September describing the next steps required to complete the project documents and conclude the legal agreement to begin implementation, against a timeline to support a timely start of the project. All applicants whose projects had not been approved for funding in the third round would also receive a letter in September with the Board's recommendations for strengthening of their application for possible submission to the fourth or a subsequent round.

## **V. Items for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting (agenda item 5)**

42. The representative of the secretariat provided an overview of the agenda for the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, particularly the schedule of work and the specific agenda items for consideration during the online segment to be convened from 1 to 5 November 2021 and the in-person meeting to be convened in Bali, Indonesia, tentatively in the first quarter of 2022. She explained that all matters on the Specific International Programme were set to be considered only at the in-person meeting, in 2022, but that all documentation for the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties was being prepared with a view to distribution in September 2021.

**A. Review of the financial mechanism of the Minamata Convention on Mercury: Specific International Programme considerations as per decision MC-3/7, paragraph 2, on the terms of reference for the second review**

43. The representative of the secretariat provided an update on the preparation of the proposed terms of reference for the second review of the financial mechanism, of which the Specific International Programme was one component. The comments made by the Board members in that regard at the Board's fifth meeting had been taken into account in the preparation of the relevant document. She pointed out that the terms of reference also made reference to the Special Programme, as the Specific International Programme was to be distinct from the Special Programme.

**B. The Executive Director's report on possible options for enhancing the Specific International Programme and its operations: input of the Governing Board**

44. At the invitation of the Co-Chair, the representative of the secretariat updated the Board on the preparation of the Executive Director's report on enhancing the Specific International Programme and its operations. She highlighted the comments made in that regard at the fifth meeting of the Board and asked whether the Board members wished to share any further comments or reflections for transmission to the Executive Director.

45. A Board member thanked the secretariat for the updates provided. He underscored the importance of mobilizing more resources for the Programme, which was an integral part of the Convention. He noted with some frustration that donors at a recent high-level event on chemicals had pledged large amounts for another fund, in an apparent disconnect from the equally valid need to robustly support the Specific International Programme.

46. Echoing the view that more resources for the Programme were urgently needed, another Board member reiterated that financial resources were integral to the ability of developing countries to meet their obligations under the Convention and to the overall effectiveness of the Convention.

**VI. Date and venue of the next meeting (agenda item 6)**

47. The Co-Chair introduced the standing item on the meeting agenda, namely the date and venue for the next meeting of the Governing Board, and invited the secretariat to provide additional information.

48. The representative of the secretariat recalled that Board meetings were convened to oversee the operations and administration of the Programme (including implementation of projects), launch application rounds and decide on applications for support under the Programme. She added that the term of the current Board members extended to the end of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The new Board members would be confirmed at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the basis of nomination by the United Nations regions. Following the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the secretariat would work with the current Co-Chairs to set and prepare the next meeting. The tasks of the current Co-Chairs concluded at the time of the election of the Co-Chairs of the subsequent Board.

**VII. Other matters (agenda item 7)**

49. The Co-Chair invited the Board to raise other matters for consideration.

50. A Board member proposed that the subsequent Board:

(a) Identify ways to improve Programme accessibility for French-speaking parties wishing to apply to the Programme;

(b) Given the usefulness of the "master class" the secretariat had run for Board members in November 2020, identify ways to utilize the classes and related methods to increase the engagement of potential applicants to the Programme and ensure that the Programme was seen to adequately support all United Nations regions;

(c) Consider requesting the secretariat to work further on specific guidelines on prioritizing and/or ranking high-calibre applications in the context of a limited funding envelope;

(d) Revisit the Board's earlier observations on resource mobilization and elaborate on how the Governing Board could help make the case for robust support for the Programme in the form of both financial and in-kind contributions.

51. The other Board members supported the proposal.

### **VIII. Adoption of the report (agenda item 8)**

52. The Board agreed to adopt the draft report of the meeting on the understanding that it would be finalized by the secretariat in consultation with the Co-Chairs, and requested the secretariat to transmit the outcome of the meeting to the Conference of the Parties for consideration at its fourth meeting. For rapid dissemination of the outcome of the Board's deliberations on the third round of applications, the Co-Chairs' statement was to be posted on the website of the Minamata Convention on the last day of the meeting.

53. The meeting report would also be made available subsequently on the website of the Minamata Convention.

54. A Board member requested that the results of the past rounds also be shared to provide an overview of all projects supported by the Programme thus far. The list of countries with projects supported by the Programme to date is set out in appendix IV to the present report.

### **IX. Closure of the meeting (agenda item 9)**

55. The Co-Chairs thanked the Board members for their hard work over the previous five days and the secretariat for the excellent preparation of and support for the meeting.

56. The Executive Secretary for her part thanked the Co-Chairs and the Governing Board for their hard work. She affirmed the views expressed by the Board on the importance of the Programme for the implementation of the Convention and noted the Programme's ability to achieve much with comparatively little funding. Recognizing the limited time frame of the Programme – 10 years – and the strict timeline for upcoming obligations for all parties, she underlined the call for robust funding for the Programme to help make a crucial difference in the first decade of the Convention's life.

57. The Co-Chair declared the meeting closed at 2.30 p.m. (Central European Summer Time time) on Friday, 13 August 2021.

## Appendix I

### List of participants

<i>Governing Board (2020–2021)</i>	
<p><b>AFRICA</b> <b>NIGERIA</b> Mr. Olubunmi Olusanya Director II Pollution Control and Environmental Health Department Federal Ministry of Environment 14 Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama 900271 Abuja Nigeria Tel: +234 802 304 0724 Email: olusanyao@yahoo.co.uk</p> <p><b>ASIA AND THE PACIFIC</b> <b>THAILAND (Co-Chair)</b> Mr. Prasert Tapaneeyangkul Chair, Subcommittee on the Basel Convention National Environment Board 92 Soi Phahon Yothin 7, Phahon Yothin Road Sam Sen Nai, Phayathai 10400 Bangkok Thailand Tel: +66 2298 2426 Email: ptap14011@gmail.com</p> <p><b>CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE</b> <b>ESTONIA</b> Mr. Kaupo Heinma Deputy Secretary General Ministry of the Environment Narva mnt 7a 15172 Tallinn Estonia Tel: +372 626 2846 Email: kaupo.heinma@envir.ee</p> <p><b>LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN</b> <b>BRAZIL</b> Mr. Helges Bandeira Second Secretary Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva Chemin Louis-Dunant 15 (6th Floor) Geneva Switzerland Tel: +41 22 332 50 00 Email: helges.bandeira@itamaraty.gov.br</p>	<p><b>AFRICA</b> <b>SENEGAL</b> Ms. Aïta Sarr Seck Conseiller technique / Point Focal Rotterdam et Minamata Direction de l'Environnement et des Établissements Classés Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable Parc forestier et zoologique de Hann Route des Pères Maristes, Dakar Senegal Tel: +221 77 511 4759 Email: aitasec@yahoo.fr</p> <p><b>ASIA AND THE PACIFIC</b> <b>IRAN</b> Mr. Mohsen Naziri Asl Head / Secretary of National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention Department for Chemical and Biological Convention Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tehran Iran (Islamic Republic of) Tel: +982 161 154 336 Email: iranwcw@gmail.com naziri_a@yahoo.com</p> <p><b>CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE</b> <b>ARMENIA</b> Ms. Anahit Aleksandryan Head / Hazardous Substances and Waste Policy Division Ministry of Environment Governmental Building 3 Republic Square, 0010 Yerevan Republic of Armenia Tel: +374 11 818 519 Email: anahit.aleksandryan@env.am anahit.aleksandryan@yahoo.com</p> <p><b>LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN</b> <b>SURINAME</b> Ms. Gina Griffith Legal Advisor Office of Environmental Legal Services National Institute for Environment and Development in Suriname (NIMOS) Mr. J. Lachmonstraat 100/ Hoek Bersabalaan Paramaribo Suriname Tel: +597 490 044 Email: ggriffith@nimos.org</p>

<p><b>WESTERN EUROPE AND OTHERS</b>  <b>THE NETHERLANDS</b> (Co-Chair)  Mr. Reginald Hernaus  Lead Negotiator Chemicals and Wastes  Department for International Affairs  Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management  Rijnstraat 8  P.O. Box 20901  2500 EX The Hague  Netherlands  Tel: +31 70 456 6485  Email: reggie.hernaus@minienw.nl</p>	<p><b>WESTERN EUROPE AND OTHERS</b>  <b>NORWAY</b>  Mr. Joel Ormala (<i>alternate for Mr. Atle Fretheim</i>)  Senior Adviser  Minamata National Focal Point of Norway  Department of Chemicals and Waste  Norwegian Environment Agency  Mobile: +47 464 22 499  E-mail: joel.ormala@miljodir.no  <a href="https://www.environmentagency.no/">https://www.environmentagency.no/</a></p>
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<i>Regrets</i>	
<p><b>WESTERN EUROPE AND OTHERS</b>  <b>NORWAY</b>  Mr. Atle Fretheim  Consultant  Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment  Kaptein Gløersensvei 24  1396 Billingstad  Norway  Tel: +47 95068313  Email: ar-freth@online.no</p>	

<i>Secretariat</i>	
<p>Ms. Monika Stankiewicz  Executive Secretary  Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury  International Environment House 1  Geneva, Switzerland  Email: monika.stankiewicz@un.org</p> <p>Ms. Marianne Bailey  Programme Management Officer for Capacity-building and  Technical Assistance  Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury  International Environment House 1  Geneva, Switzerland  marianne.bailey@un.org</p> <p>Mr. Richard Gutierrez  Programme Officer for National Reporting  Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury  International Environment House 1  Geneva, Switzerland  richard.gutierrez@un.org</p>	<p>Ms. Claudia ten Have  Senior Policy and Coordination Officer  Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury  International Environment House 1  Geneva, Switzerland  Email: claudia.tenhave@un.org</p> <p>Ms. My Linh Doan  Programme Management Assistant  Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury  International Environment House 1  Geneva, Switzerland  linh.doan@un.org</p>

## Appendix II

### Agenda

**Agenda item 1:** Opening of the meeting

**Agenda item 2:** Organizational matters

- (a) Adoption of the agenda
- (b) Request for disclosure of any possible personal and/or financial conflict of interest

**Agenda item 3:** Operations of the Specific International Programme

- (a) Operations of the Programme, including status of implementation of the First and Second Round projects
- (b) Status of the Specific Trust Fund
- (c) Support to the Secretariat's functions

**Agenda item 4:** Considerations of eligible and complete applications for the Third Round of funding under the Specific International Programme for decision by the Governing Board

**Agenda item 5:** Items for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting

- (a) Review of the financial mechanism of the Minamata Convention on Mercury: Specific International Programme considerations as per MC-3/7, paragraph 2, on the terms of reference for the second review
- (b) The Executive Director's report to assess the possible options for enhancing the Specific International Programme and its operations: Reflections from the Governing Board

**Agenda item 6:** Date and venue of the next meeting

**Agenda item 7:** Other matters

**Agenda item 8:** Adoption of the report

**Agenda item 9:** Closure of the meeting

## Appendix III

### Status of implementation of first and second round projects as at 12 July 2021

Table 1  
First round of applications (2018)

<i>Party name</i>	<i>Agreement details</i>	<i>Status</i>
Argentina	Project Cooperation Agreement with National Institute of Industrial Technology in cooperation with Basel Convention Regional Centre for South America	The project is well underway. Three rounds of reporting received. Minor amendment to the budget to shift funds to year two and away from travel requested due to COVID-19 -related impacts. The partner requested a six-month no-cost extension to December 2021 (for a new total duration of 30 months).
Armenia	Small-Scale Funding Agreement with the Hydrometeorology and Monitoring Centre State Non-Commercial Organization of the Ministry of Environment	The project is well underway. Four rounds of reporting received. The project has experienced some limited delays in implementation due to COVID-19. The partner requested a six-month no-cost extension to November 2021 (for a new total duration of 30 months) to allow for additional time to finalize the project activities.
Benin	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Living Environment and Sustainable Development	Initial disbursement was delayed but the project has been in implementation status since February 2020, with significant delays throughout 2020 and 2021. One round of reporting received.
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Small-Scale Funding Agreement with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Research Institute of Petroleum Industry	Finalization of legal agreement delayed due to time required to finalize banking details, as well as delays due to COVID-19. Legal agreement signed in May 2020; project activities well underway and nearing completion. One round of reporting received.
Lesotho	Project Cooperation Agreement with Department of Environment of the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture	Project activities commenced in January 2020. The project experienced some delays including due to COVID-19 and is moving forward in implementation. Three rounds of reporting received.

Table 2  
Second round of applications (2019)

<i>Party name</i>	<i>Agreement details</i>	<i>Status</i>
Antigua and Barbuda	Project Cooperation Agreement with Department of Analytical Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs	Legal agreement signed and implementation has begun. One round of reporting received.
Ecuador	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Environment and Water	Following extensive communications delays, first redraft to respond to Governing Board comments was provided by Ecuador in October 2020. The legal agreement was finally signed in July 2021.
Ghana	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Health	Legal agreement signed and implementation has begun, following a delay (due to new UNEP banking form requirements) first instalment was processed.
Indonesia	Small-Scale Funding Agreement with Ministry of Health jointly with Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for Southeast Asia	Legal agreement signed and implementation has begun. One round of reporting received.
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Small-Scale Funding Agreement with Department of Environment	Legal agreement signed and implementation has begun.
Nigeria	Project Cooperation Agreement with Federal Ministry of Environment	Legal agreement signed and implementation has begun.

<i>Party name</i>	<i>Agreement details</i>	<i>Status</i>
Peru	Small-Scale Funding Agreement with Ministry of Environment	Legal agreement signed and implementation has begun.
Republic of Moldova	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment	Legal agreement signed and implementation has begun, following a delay (due to new UNEP banking form requirements) first instalment was processed. One round of reporting received.
Sri Lanka	Project Cooperation Agreement with Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment	Legal agreement signed and implementation has begun.
Zambia	Project Cooperation Agreement with Zambia Environmental Management Agency	Legal agreement signed and implementation has begun.

## Appendix IV

### Overview of parties with projects supported in the three rounds of applications to the Programme to date

<i>First round</i>	<i>Second round</i>	<i>Third round</i>
Argentina	Antigua and Barbuda	Burundi
Armenia	Ecuador	Cuba
Benin	Ghana	Gabon
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Indonesia	India
Lesotho	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
	Nigeria	Jordan
	Peru	North Macedonia
	Republic of Moldova	Rwanda
	Sri Lanka	Senegal
	Zambia	