



Distr.: General  
26 August 2014  
Original: English



**United Nations  
Environment  
Programme**

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**Intergovernmental negotiating committee  
to prepare a global legally binding instrument  
on mercury  
Sixth session**

Bangkok, 3 to 7 November 2014  
Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda\*

**Report on activities of the interim secretariat during the  
period before entry into force of the Convention: activities at  
the regional and country levels to support implementation**

**Support for ratification and early implementation of the  
Minamata Convention and for the work of the interim secretariat  
of the Convention**

**Note by the secretariat**

**I. Introduction**

1. In paragraph 13 of section V of its resolution on arrangements in the interim period before entry into force of the Convention (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/CONF/4, annex I), the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to facilitate activities at the regional and country levels to support implementation during the interim period in an effective and efficient manner. In paragraph 11 of the same resolution, the Conference of Plenipotentiaries requested the Executive Director to provide interim secretariat services to support the Committee and its activities until the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

2. Detailed reporting on activities undertaken by the interim secretariat may be found in the background note by the secretariat set out in document UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.6/INF/7. For ease of reference, a summary of those activities is provided in the present note.

**II. Summary of activities**

3. Noting the importance of effective communication and awareness-raising material, the interim secretariat has developed a package of materials designed to provide information on key obligations under

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\* UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.6/1.

the Convention. Further work on the Minamata Convention website ([www.mercuryconvention.org](http://www.mercuryconvention.org)) has been undertaken to provide access to such information.

4. Through the generous support of a number of donors, and in cooperation particularly with the regional offices of UNEP, the secretariat of the Basel Convention on the Control of the 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, along with the regional centres of the Basel and Stockholm conventions, the interim secretariat has organized a programme of subregional awareness-raising workshops to assist countries to prepare for ratification and early implementation of the Minamata Convention.
5. The objective of the workshops is to enhance participants' knowledge of the Minamata Convention and the processes for its signature, ratification and early implementation. The workshops are also aimed at providing participants with information on available sources of support and at creating opportunities for exchange and action at the subregional level. The sharing of experiences by Governments, including the country presentations by means of which such experiences are shared, represent an important contribution to the success of the workshops. The workshops have also focused on facilitating the development, by participating Governments, of draft national road maps leading towards the signature, ratification and implementation of the Convention. The road maps are presented to the workshops on the last day. During the workshops held to date, the interim secretariat made presentations on a number of issues, including major obligations under the Convention and the technical modalities for the deposit of instruments of ratification and signature, and participating Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations made presentations on their experiences relating to specific aspects of the Convention.
6. Following the presentations, participants divided up into smaller groups to consider case studies exemplifying possible challenges to future implementation of the Convention. Participants were reminded of the need to develop their own national road maps and encouraged to use the examples presented in the case studies as a basis for consideration of specific national issues. The subregional workshops are expected to continue until early 2015.
7. The programme of subregional workshops is supported by the UNEP regional offices, which have provided input to the discussions and led efforts to strengthen communication between participating countries as a follow-up to the workshops. The UNEP team responsible for implementing activities relating to the Global Environment Facility is also actively participating in the workshops. In addition, the workshops are strongly supported by other agencies, including, in particular, the secretariat of the Global Environment Facility, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the World Health Organization. Civil society organizations active in the area of mercury are also taking an active part in the workshops. The agencies and civil society organizations make presentations on their work, including the support that they can provide to Governments as they work to sign, ratify and implement the Convention.
8. As a follow-up to the workshops, the interim secretariat has organized pilot projects at the national level to promote activities intended to lead towards signature and ratification of the Convention. Key activities undertaken include the development of an inventory of mercury uses, emissions and releases. Pilot projects are under way in a number of countries and will continue through 2015.
9. Following the initial round of subregional workshops, the interim secretariat is planning, in cooperation with the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, additional follow-up workshops to be held on a regional basis back to back with regional meetings to prepare for the meetings of the conferences of the parties to the conventions scheduled for May 2015. These workshops, which are scheduled to take place in March and April 2015, will provide an opportunity for countries to report on progress on the activities set out in their road maps and for the interim secretariat to disseminate additional information and guidance on key issues of concern within each region. Additional activities in support of the implementation of the Convention will also be undertaken in 2015, in response to expressed needs and depending on the availability of funding.
10. In addition to activities to support ratification and early implementation, the interim secretariat has also undertaken the organization of the sixth session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee and of the first two meetings of the group of technical experts to prepare the guidance called for under article 8 of the Convention.

11. The work of the interim secretariat has been supported by technical contributions from the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership, which provided substantive input in the organization of the subregional workshops, in particular in relation to activities currently under way in participating countries. The Partnership has also provided technical inputs to documents for both the sixth session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee and for the group of technical experts.

12. As noted above, all these activities have been supported by generous voluntary contributions from a number of donors. Those donors include Canada, China, Denmark, France, the European Union, Finland, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland and the United States of America.

13. The committee may wish to note the activities of the interim secretariat to date and encourage Governments and others in a position to do so to contribute to the activities currently under way. The committee may also wish to provide guidance to the interim secretariat on further work that may be needed and any other issues of concern.

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