

## Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme

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Jacob Duer  
The Principal Coordinator  
Interim Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury  
Chemicals and Waste Branch, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics  
United Nations Environment Programme

Date:  
11 October, 2016

Dear Jacob Duer,

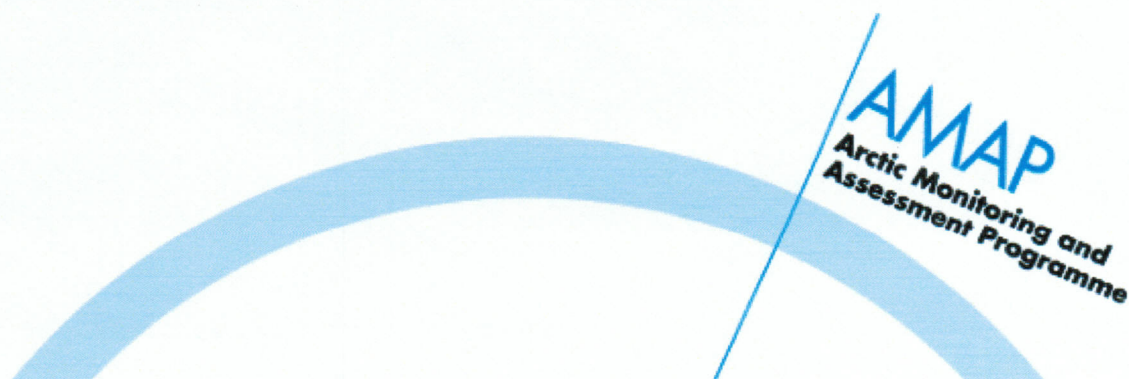
In response to your letter of 22 April 2016 requesting submission of information “[...] in response to the requests from the seventh session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury (INC7)”, the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) would like to offer the following information in connection with the item concerning Article 22 - Effectiveness Evaluation:

The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) have, for more than 25 years, been responsible for the coordination of a harmonized regional monitoring programme for the Arctic area. This programme is built largely on ongoing national monitoring (and research) programmes of the eight Arctic countries, with additional contributions from monitoring activities conducted by non-Arctic countries. The AMAP programme is also well coordinated with other regional and global initiatives, some of which have monitoring activities that (partially) overlap with those of AMAP. AMAP was established in 1991; and is a Working Group of the Arctic Council.

AMAP’s monitoring addresses pollution and climate change issues, and is defined according to 5 sub-programmes dealing with the atmosphere, terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments, and human biomonitoring; mercury monitoring is included in all of these sub-programmes.

The primary objective of AMAP’s coordinated monitoring work is to support assessments of Arctic pollution (and climate) issues; in the AMAP system monitoring and assessment are two integrated activities. AMAP assessments are conducted by nominated scientists working in the capacity of independent experts; the assessments are subject to rigorous peer review. Parts of the assessment work specifically target the needs of other organizations such as UNEP, UN ECE, IPCC, etc., in accordance with direction from the Arctic Council that AMAP support these external (global) processes. Thus, AMAP has contributed data and information in support of ‘Effectiveness evaluation’ processes associated with the Stockholm Convention on POPs and the Heavy Metals and POPs Protocols to the UN ECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution.

At their most recent meeting, in Iqaluit, Canada in 2015, Arctic Council Ministers expressed their support for the continued work to address mercury pollution, noting the particular vulnerability of Arctic ecosystems and observed health effects in Arctic communities. They also encouraged





governments to ratify the Minamata Convention and ensure its entry into force as soon as possible. On the basis of this mandate from the Arctic Council Ministers, AMAP would be very interested to contribute to the Convention and its Effectiveness Evaluations discussions by providing our experience with respect to the following:

- Coordinating mercury monitoring activities at the regional level, and in particular in engaging with national agencies responsible for national monitoring systems (which we view as the cornerstone of a successful regional/global sustainable monitoring system);
- Addressing quality assurance issues, for all components of monitoring activities (from sampling through to organizing data management, in order to ensure comparable and accessible data;
- Assessing data, including the needs for long-term monitoring datasets for reliable (temporal) trend determination;
- Arranging and conducting assessment work, and communicating assessment results; and the strengths of having strong, well-established, regionally-focussed forum/network to facilitate this type of work;
- Supporting global processes such as the Effectiveness Evaluations associated with the Stockholm Convention on POPs and LRTAP Convention;
- Collaboration between national, regional and global organizations in developing cost-effective monitoring systems.

Results of past AMAP mercury assessments, and also human health assessments that document mercury human biomonitoring results can be found in AMAP publications available from the AMAP website ([www.amap.no](http://www.amap.no)). These publications include summary compilations of (potential baseline) data. AMAP data are also archived in, and publicly accessible from AMAP-affiliated thematic data centres (e.g., air monitoring data in the EBAS databases maintained by the Norwegian Institute for Air Research ([ebas.nilu.no](http://ebas.nilu.no)); and marine monitoring data in databases maintained at ICES ([www.ices.dk](http://www.ices.dk))). These data-centres also manage data for other regional monitoring programmes that are relevant to the UNEP activity.

AMAP maintains a network of experts with experience in different aspects of its (mercury-related) work, and would be happy to identify relevant experts for specific work items under the development of the Minamata Convention Effectiveness Evaluation work. As you may be aware, AMAP has recently submitted an application to join the UNEP mercury partnership and is engaged at both Secretariat and expert levels in ongoing work relating to the development of a roadmap for a global mercury monitoring system. Requests for experts to be involved in the UNEP work can be addressed to AMAP through the AMAP Secretariat ([amap@amap.no](mailto:amap@amap.no)).

We look forward to future cooperation on this important issue.

Yours faithfully,



Martin Forsius  
AMAP WG Chair