

## DRAFT REPORT OF THE FIFTH MEETING

### BUREAU OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY

*Wednesday, 14 April 2021, by teleconference*

#### Participants

Present: Rosa Vivien Ratnawati (Indonesia, for Asia Pacific, and President), W.T.B Dissanayake (Sri Lanka, for Asia Pacific), Oarabile Serumola (Botswana, for Africa), Roger Baro (Burkina Faso, for Africa), Karmen Krajnc (Slovenia, for Central and Eastern Europe), Anahit Aleksandryan (Armenia, for Central and Eastern Europe), Angela Patricia Rivera Galvis (Colombia, for Latin America and the Caribbean), Bethune Morgan (Jamaica, for Latin America and the Caribbean), Marie-Claire Lhenry (France, for the Western European and Others), Alison Dickson (Canada, for the Western European and Others), Monika Stankiewicz (Executive Secretary) and members of the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

Claudia Dumitru (Chair of the Implementation and Compliance Committee, Ex officio member) could not participate.

#### 1. Opening of the meeting

- Ms. Rosa Vivien Ratnawati, the President of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention (COP-4), welcomed the members of the Bureau to the meeting and thanked them for joining its fifth online meeting;
- Ms. Monika Stankiewicz, the Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, added her warm welcome to the members of the Bureau.
- The agenda of the meeting was adopted without change.

#### 2. Matters related to COP-4

- The President recalled that during Bureau meeting held on 3 March 2021, the Secretariat presented the Note on options for organizing COP-4 in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The proposed first option would be to convene COP-4 in two parts, a first part to be smaller-scale and conducted online in 2021 and a second part to be held in the first quarter of 2022 in person. The proposed second option would be organize a virtual COP-4 in 2021. Based on the discussions in the meeting, Bureau members were invited to consult with their regions on the options and the Secretariat to circulate the Note to all Parties, and assist the Bureau members to arrange online regional consultations on the options for COP-4. The President thanked all Bureau members for their initiative and organization of meetings in the short time available.
- Further, the President presented the outcome of the Asia-Pacific regional consultations - which was to fully support option 1 – and invited other regions to present the outcomes of their consultations.
- A Bureau member from the **Africa region** informed the Bureau that the region also fully supported option 1. Another Bureau member from the region added that internet connectivity was a concern for the region and asked the Secretariat for support to address the region's specific needs with the aim of ensuring effective participation of all Parties in the virtual segment and find possible solutions in particular for the African region.



- A Bureau member from the **CEE region** reported the unanimous decision of the region in favor of option 1, with the understanding that only essential and time sensitive topics would be included in the agenda for the virtual segment of COP-4.
- A Bureau member from the **GRULAC region** informed Bureau that the only option that did not receive any objections during their consultations was option 1 and noted the region's preference for scheduling the decision-making on substantive matters for the in-person segment. Another Bureau member from the GRULAC region highlighted the region's need for clarity with respect to the expected outcome of the proposed agenda items for the online segment.
- A Bureau member from the WEOG reported the **region's** preference for option 1, but noted the concern of some countries regarding the budgetary implications of such option.
  - The Bureau member of the **JUSSCANNZ region** noted the region was in favor of option 1, and noted the importance of addressing some time-sensitive topics in the online segment to avoid delays in intersessional work. She also pointed out that the in-person segment should not overlap with other international fora/meetings, such as UNEA. She continued stressing the importance to monitor the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and global vaccination rates and reconsider the dates for the in-person segment by October 2021, prior to the online segment of COP-4.
  - She requested a contingency plan was developed in case the in-person segment cannot take place as envisaged during the first quarter of 2022.
  - It was proposed that the Secretariat, in collaboration with the President and Bureau members, develop a list of criteria for proceeding with the in-person segment that will be communicated to Parties in advance. It was also suggested that information on security, health and applicable quarantine measures should be circulated to all participants in due time before the in-person segment.
  - The Bureau member further stressed the importance of addressing Internet connectivity problems, and encouraged the Secretariat to take special consideration of these problems in its planning for the meeting.
  - It was suggested that the Secretariat was to explore with other MEAs, SAICM and UNEP effective ways of conducting online meetings, also in particular with respect to the issue of connectivity of developing countries.
  - The region appreciated the Secretariat's initiative to hold online sessions to open the discussion on the Programme of Work and Budget before the online segment of the COP. Finally, the Bureau member asked whether there was an unspent financial balance left from the intersessional work planned for 2020-2021 biennium and whether it would be possible to use this balance to meet the additional costs related to the organization of COP-4 in two parts.
- The Secretariat expressed its commitment to undertake efforts towards effective participation in online meetings, and referred to UNEP policy on the possibility of reimbursing the connectivity costs for online meetings, which will be shared with Parties again if needed. Also, the Secretariat facilitated a successful meeting with the participation of numerous MEAs and chemicals and waste actors on sharing best-practices in organising online international fora, which could be utilized for further exchanges.
- The President, as representative of the host country, noted that Indonesia was flexible in defining the dates for the in-person meeting, especially considering the uncertainties around the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, due to Indonesia's G20 presidency in 2022 and numerous international meetings planned in this context in the remaining three quarters of 2022, the President stressed the importance of securing a venue, budget and personnel against identified dates in 2022. The President also noted that the Indonesian Government decided that, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, only a few places in Indonesia, including Bali, would be granted a special permission to hold large-scale events, including international meetings, from the beginning of 2022.
- The President proposed to agree on the dates for the in-person segment of COP-4 to be in the first quarter of 2022 with the possibility to revise the proposed dates at a later stage, if Bureau members consider it necessary.



- Further, the Secretariat presented the Note on *Further developed estimate of cost of the options for COP-4*.
  - As a response to a Bureau member's question on DSA for additional days prior to COP-4 for regional consultations, the Secretariat clarified that the presented cost implications do not include the additional costs for DSA for participants that would attend the regional consultations prior to the in-person segment of COP-4. At the same time, it was noted that the budgeted costs for regional meetings should be sufficient to cover both the virtual and the physical parts and that a big part had already been fundraised.
  - A Bureau member from the GRULAC region expressed opinion that one day of additional regional meeting prior to COP-4.2 would not be enough, taking into consideration that the majority of substantive issues will be left for the in-person part. The Secretariat agreed to explore the possibility of holding a series of regional meetings prior to both segments.
  - To a question from a Bureau member from the EU on the available balance to possibly cover the additional costs of option 1, the Secretariat explained that the projected cash balance available at the end of the 2021-2022 biennium would be presented to COP-4.1 as part of the budget documents and that this balance would include any balances from the previous biennium.
  - The President concluded that detailed information on costs and budget assumptions would need to be carefully looked at.
  
- The Secretariat presented the *Note on regional meetings and technical sessions in preparation for COP-4*.
  - In response to question from Bureau members, the Secretariat further clarified the type of support that Secretariat would provide prior and during the online and in-person regional preparatory meetings. Support would include provision of interpretation for the virtual regional preparatory meetings. A Bureau member stressed the importance of organizing in-person regional meetings and questioned the adequacy of one day in preparation for the in-person segment of COP-4.
  - In response to a question on the duration of the regional meetings, the Secretariat offered to prepare a plan containing more details on the format of COP-4 preparatory meetings for the next Bureau meeting.
  
- The Secretariat presented the *Note on matters for consideration and/or action by COP-4, as well as a proposed tentative work timetable for the online segment based on views heard during the regional consultations*.
  - A Bureau member highlighted that her region requested clarity on the expectation and anticipated outcome of the proposed agenda items to be considered in the online segment, and noted that it would be highly appreciated if the Secretariat could make this proposed timetable available as a short document to have a common understanding of the proposed level of discussion at the online segment. She suggested that it would be helpful if the Secretariat would be available for webinar to present the proposed tentative timetable to the region. The Secretariat agreed to make the necessary arrangements as requested.
  - A Bureau member sought clarification on the timelines of COP-4 documents and whether there would be extended deadlines for intersessional and other work. The Secretariat clarified that all documents were being prepared for the opening of COP-4 on 1 November 2021, and thus all mandatory document deadlines were maintained. The Secretariat further noted that this also related to the mandatory deadline for communicating proposed amendments to the Convention. According to the Convention text, any proposed amendment to the Convention was to be communicated to the Parties by the Secretariat at least six months before the meeting at which it was proposed for adoption. The Secretariat was also to communicate the proposed amendment to Signatories and the Depositary. The Secretariat confirmed that the mandatory date by which a proposed amendment to be considered by COP-4 was to be communicated to Parties and the Depositary, was Saturday, 1 May 2021.



- A Bureau member sought clarification on the need to include Effectiveness Evaluation in the agenda for the online segment. The Secretariat clarified that this suggestion was made to allow the Party-led process in support of matters on effectiveness evaluation to be brought formally to the COP. Further, one of the Bureau members provided some information on the work led by Canada and Norway. This included, to identify and develop options to advance the work on the effectiveness evaluation of the Convention. In this regard, a CRP is under consideration to be submitted to COP-4. She also informed that Canada and Norway had met with regions in the past weeks, and also offered to meet with one remaining region to share the options and collect the views on the so-called “options package”.
- The President noted the four matters for consideration by COP-4 at the online segment and requested the Secretariat to prepare a document providing further clarity on how the four matters would be dealt with:
  - a. Programme of Work and Budget for the 2022-2023 biennium;
  - b. Draft reporting guidance;
  - c. GEF-8 replenishment;
  - d. Effectiveness evaluation matters.
- The Bureau decided to convene COP-4 as proposed in option 1, with an online segment from 1-5 November 2021, and an in-person segment in the first quarter of 2022 in Bali, Indonesia, noting that the Secretariat will organize a webinar with the GRULAC region to clarify, by 23 April 2021 at the latest, the expected outcome of the proposed agenda items to be considered in the online segment.
- The President requested the Secretariat to prepare recommendations to identify actions in case the in-person segment might not be organized due to force majeure.

### **3. Any other business**

#### **a. Date of the following Bureau meeting**

The President proposed to schedule the next meeting of the Bureau by video conference during the first two week of June 2021. The Secretariat was requested to reach out to Bureau members in the coming weeks to fix the exact date for the next meeting of the Bureau.

The next meeting of the Bureau will consider further preparation for COP-4 and also take stock of the progress of intersessional work.