

## REPORT OF THE FOURTH MEETING

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

Wednesday, 3 March 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), Karmen Krajnc (Slovenia, 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), Roger Baro (Burkina Faso, for Africa), Claudia Dumitru (Chair of the Implementation and Compliance Committee, Ex officio member), Monika Stankiewicz (Executive Secretary) and members of the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

#### 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 fourth 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. Updates from the Secretariat

- a. **Work of technical expert groups, draft monitoring guidance, proposed effectiveness evaluation indicators, guidance on reporting, other submissions**
- b. The Secretariat presented the continued efforts made by the three **intersessional expert groups**:
  - The **ad hoc group of experts on the review of Annexes A and B** is putting together information on alternatives to products and processes using mercury. The group convened 10 thematic group calls, had its 8<sup>th</sup> online meeting on 2 March 2021, which will resume on 3 March 2021, and is working on a report to be finalized by 30 April. All the information submitted by Parties and stakeholders is available on the Convention [website](#).
  - The **group of technical experts on mercury releases** will have its 8<sup>th</sup> online meeting on 7 March. Draft general guidance on the methodology for preparing inventories of releases is already on the web. The group is working on categories of point sources and a road map for the development of guidance on best available techniques and best environmental practices, in view of preparing a report by the beginning of July.
  - The **group of technical experts on mercury waste** will have its 7<sup>th</sup> online meeting on 17 March. The group undertook technical analysis of threshold options, and agreed on a narrative to select total concentration. The group continues to work on technical details of that analysis, consideration of a proposed 25 mg/kg total concentration thresholds for waste contaminated with mercury, and thresholds for tailings from industrial scale non-ferrous metal mining. The group agreed that no threshold is needed for tailings from artisanal and small-scale gold mining



and that such tailings should be managed under Article 7. Secretariat is working with a consultant and the Global Mercury Partnership on a guidance on ASGM tailings management. The group is working to develop a report by the beginning of July.

- Secretariat presented an updated roadmap of **Guidance on monitoring for effectiveness evaluation**. On 25 February 2021, a zero draft of the guidance was sent to experts contributing to the guidance, and posted on the website. Additional round of thematic online meetings of those experts will be convened on 16 March 14h-15h30 for Chapter 7 (Human biomonitoring), 17 March 8h30-10h for early time zones (all chapters), 19 March 14h-15h30 for Chapter 6 (Biota monitoring), 23 March 14h-15h30 for Chapter 5 (Air monitoring), and 25 March 14h-15h30 for Chapters 3, 4 and 8 (Generic chapters, cross-media analysis and modelling). Comments from Parties and stakeholders will be invited between 31 March and 15 April 2021, and the draft guidance will be finalized by the beginning of July.
- Secretariat informed the Bureau on the progress made on Parties' considerations of the proposed **indicators for the effectiveness evaluation**. This includes submissions of initial views received (ten Parties). The Secretariat also briefed on the exchange sessions to present and reflect on the initial views received in February and March 2021. Parties are now invited to submit views by 31 March 2021, upon which the Secretariat will produce the COP-4 document to compile the views for the COP's deliberations.
- In regards **the draft guidance on reporting** that the Secretariat was requested by COP-3 to prepare for use by Parties in their preparation of national reports, Secretariat briefed that the draft guidance has been completed and is being readied to share with Parties as per the stipulations of the decision, and also for COP-4 so as to be helpful in the upcoming full reporting due in December 2021.
- Furthermore, the Secretariat informed the Bureau of the fifth meeting of the Board of the **Specific International Programme** (25 November 2020) and its decision to launch the Third Round of Applications which opened on 15 December 2020. The deadline for submission of applications is 18 March 2021. The Secretariat also thanked the generous donors to the Specific International Programme (almost USD2 million) to enable the launch of the next round. Lastly, brief information was provided on the good progress of the implementation of first two rounds (15 projects).
- The President provided her evaluation of the progress in individual work streams towards preparation of reports to COP-4, including the work on the use of customs codes for identifying mercury-added products, thus providing further guidance to the intersessional work. Bureau members appreciated progress so far and welcomed the continuation of the intersessional work online on the implementation of Minamata Convention.
- Upon invitation by the President, a member of the Bureau informed the Bureau of the background on a process initiated by Canada and Norway to identify and develop options to advance the work on the effectiveness evaluation of the Convention. The two countries put effort to initiate informal consultations with regions and interested Parties in this regard. A series of options papers on institutional arrangements, on data sources, analysis and review, on data gaps, and on monitoring media specific to ASGM, are in preparation based on these consultations. The President informed the Bureau members that together with Mr. W.T.B. Dissanayake she facilitated the briefing by Canada and Norway in her region and she invited the other Bureau members to engage their regions as well. She invited the Bureau member to share the options papers through the Bureau.
- At the conclusion of the session, one Bureau member asked the Secretariat to clarify if the Secretariat will prepare a new list of indicators for COP-4. The Secretariat clarified that the Secretariat was not requested in MC-3/10 to produce a new list, but that based on the request by Parties, the Secretariat has produced a compilation document for the Exchange Session on 4 March 2021 to assist Parties to see all the views and comments, and will continue to work on this compilation document, also based on the submissions of 31 March 2021, for submission as a COP-4 document. In addition, all original submissions are being made available on the online work space.



## b. Update on UNEP/MEAs meetings

- Secretariat presented the Bureau an updated information on the format of the planned meetings and international fora in 2021 in light of COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, Executive Secretary pointed out that:
  - **Fifth meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly was organized** in a two-step approach, which included an online session in 2021 that would resume as a face-to-face meeting from 28 February to 2 March 2022;
  - the BRS Bureaux were about to conclude on the organization of their COPs originally planned for July 2021 and to be held in Geneva.
  - **SAICM International Conference for Chemicals Management, ICCM5** (2021) has been postponed until further notice.
  - **UNFCCC COP26**, planned for November 2021, is to take place as scheduled.
- Secretariat is monitoring closely the approach of other MEAs towards the organisation of COPs and international meetings.

## c. Update on the schedule and format of intersessional meetings under the Minamata Convention

The Executive Secretary presented the overview of the planned meetings under the Convention as contained in the document submitted to the meeting. In context of continuous uncertainty related with the pandemic, the format of intersessional meetings of 2021 is being adjusted as needed, including the third meeting of the Implementation and Compliance Committee (ICC), proposed to take place virtually on 7-8 June, and the sixth meeting of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme scheduled for August. The scheduled meeting on draft monitoring guidance will not take place, and instead a series of additional round of thematic online meetings are scheduled to take place virtually.

## 3. Matters related to COP-4

- The President informed Bureau members that there was a high possibility that the Indonesian government would not allow large-scale gatherings, including an international conference, by the end of 2021 due to the travel and social distancing restrictions introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The President therefore encouraged Bureau members to consider alternative options for convening COP-4. The President confirmed the availability of Indonesia to host an in-person meeting in Indonesia during the first quarter of 2022. The President informed Bureau members that this period would be better to avoid overlap with other international meetings, including those already planned for the second part of 2022 under Indonesia's presidency of the G20.
- The Secretariat presented a **note on options for convening COP-4 in light of the Covid-19 pandemic**. The note identified two options for the consideration of the Bureau:
  - The **first option** presented by the Secretariat was to organize COP-4 in two parts: A first part which would be conducted online within the period of 1 to 5 November 2021 in order to consider the Convention's programme of work and budget for the biennium 2022-2023, and other essential, time-sensitive and ongoing items of the agendas, and adopt related decisions; and a second part which would be conducted in-person in the first quarter of 2022 in Bali, Indonesia. During the second part of the meeting - which would remain under the Indonesian presidency - the Conference of the Parties would consider/resume consideration of the remaining items of the meeting agenda.
  - The **second option** presented by the Secretariat was to organize COP-4 over the original period of 1 to 5 November 2021 through an online meeting platform. In this scenario, priority could be given to considering a selection of essential, time-sensitive and ongoing regular work items, such as the Convention's programme of work and budget for the biennium 2022-2023, but also identified substantive issues. Any items of the agenda of the meeting, consideration of which was not



completed or even started at the meeting, would be included automatically in the respective agenda of COP-5 in 2023.

- Bureau members welcomed the note and expressed their initial reactions. Two members asked whether under the first option document deadlines, including the requirement to communicate proposals to amend the Convention six months before COP, would be affected. The Secretariat responded that it has been working on the basis of the deadlines agreed in COP-3 decision and included the rules and procedure and the Convention itself and that these remain to be applicable to the Secretariat, subsidiary bodies, expert groups and Parties for the COP-4 scheduled to start 1 November 2021. Another member sought more details on the financial implications of the two options. The Secretariat will further develop the estimate of additional costs, which will be shared in advance of the next meeting of the Bureau.
- Bureau members requested more time to further consult with their respective constituencies on the suggested options for COP-4. To support these regional consultations, the President requested the Secretariat to circulate the note on options for convening COP-4 in light of the Covid-19 pandemic to all Parties and to offer to Bureau members online platform and other assistance for conducting regional consultations. The President invited Bureau members to reach an agreement on the format of COP-4 by the following Bureau meeting where a formal decision would be taken. During such meeting, Bureau members would also be expected to start discussing the agenda for COP-4.
- A Bureau member requested more guidance on which matters (in addition to the Convention's programme of work and budget) could be included in the agenda for COP-4 under the two options. She mentioned that this information would be useful to guide the discussions during the regional consultations on the format for COP-4. The Secretariat responded that issues related to GEF guidance in preparation for its eighth replenishment and guidance on national reporting were examples of time-sensitive issues that could be considered for inclusion in the agenda for the 2021 COP.

#### **4. Status of Contributions to the Minamata Convention**

- The Secretariat presented the current status of contributions to the General Trust Fund, Special Trust Fund and the Specific Trust Fund as updated monthly on the Minamata website and presented in the document submitted to the meeting. As of 31 January 2021, for the General Trust Fund, 23.61% of contributions had been received. For 2020, out of USD 2.48 mio. invoiced for 2020, USD 2.16 had been received from 49 Parties, corresponding to 86.94%. For the Special Trust Fund, USD 1,983,063 had been pledged / received for the 2020/2021 biennium and for the third round of the Specific International Programme, 1,964,494 USD has been pledged/received as of 31 January 2021. The Secretariat also reported that the Executive Secretary had written to 32 Parties with arrears of two years or more to jointly decide to develop a payment schedule.
- Upon the closure of this agenda item, the President asked the Bureau members to encourage Parties to pay their contributions for the General Trust Fund as early as possible. She also made a call for all those in a position to do so to contribute to the Special Trust Fund to support the Secretariat's work on capacity-building and technical assistance, and to contribute to the Specific Trust Fund.

#### **5. Any other business**

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

The President proposed Bureau to hold its next meeting through video conference on 8 April 2021.