

Ref.: MC/ES/2020/10

Geneva, 31 March 2020

Subject: COVID-19 – Implications for the work of the Minamata Convention

Dear Madam/Sir,

In these extraordinary circumstances I would like to update you on the functioning of the Secretariat and the planning of work in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Secretariat of the Minamata Convention is closely following the situation concerning COVID-19, and in line with the instructions from the Swiss authorities, United Nations and the United Nations Environment Programme has put in place arrangements to: ensure the safety of staff and delegates and their families, support the global efforts to restrict the spread of the disease, and enable the work of the Secretariat in these new circumstances.

The Secretariat has been fully and effectively telecommuting since Friday, 13 March 2020. All staff are available to assist Parties and stakeholders through their direct telephone lines and emails as usual and look forward to engaging with you as you may need.

The Secretariat reviewed the upcoming intersessional meetings and implementation support activities for the next six months. Building on previous good experiences to work electronically intersessional, we will increasingly arrange meetings electronically and are currently looking into additional means of support such as establishment of online workspaces.

Workshops and other implementation support activities that were planned to be held physically in various locations around the world in the next six months have been postponed until there is more clarity on the evolving situation. To continue to support Parties in the interim, the Secretariat is using this time to work further on implementation support materials that will be made accessible electronically.

We will be communicating the upcoming online meetings and related activities on our website and through the COP-4 Bureau and National Focal Points.

I look forward to engaging with Parties and stakeholders in this joint learning experience to increasingly use virtual space for advancing the work of the Minamata Convention and overall, in following-up the global situation and any implications it may have on the work under the Convention.

I, and the entire team of the Secretariat, would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere hope that you, your families, colleagues and communities will safely get through these difficult times.

Please accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration,



Monika Stankiewicz
Executive Secretary

To: Governments through their official channels of communication to the UN Environment Programme
Cc: National Focal Points for the Minamata Convention on Mercury;
Permanent Missions to the UN Environment Programme and to the UN in Geneva