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**United Nations  
Environment  
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**Intergovernmental negotiating committee  
to prepare a global legally binding instrument  
on mercury  
Seventh session**

Dead Sea, Jordan, 10–15 March 2016

Item 3 (d) of the provisional agenda\*

**Work to prepare for the entry into force of the Minamata  
Convention on Mercury and for the first meeting of the  
Conference of the Parties to the Convention: activities to  
facilitate the rapid entry into force of the Convention and  
its effective implementation upon entry into force**

**Guidance on managing contaminated sites and the proposed  
way forward for developing guidance**

**Note by the secretariat**

1. In paragraph 3 of article 12, the Minamata Convention on Mercury requires that the Conference of the Parties adopt guidance on managing contaminated sites that may include methods and approaches for the following:

- (a) Site identification and characterization;
- (b) Engaging the public;
- (c) Human health and environmental risk assessments;
- (d) Options for managing the risks posed by contaminated sites;
- (e) Evaluation of benefits and costs;
- (f) Validation of outcomes.

2. At its sixth session, the intergovernmental negotiating committee considered document UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.6/19, which presented experience gained in the context of other conventions in the chemicals and waste cluster. In the discussion, the committee considered the benefits of regional cooperation and information sharing. Concerns were raised about the priority of the issue, and it was noted that there already existed a significant body of work on the subject that could be drawn upon for the time being. Others noted the lack of resources in certain countries and considered that the lack of guidance on contaminated sites could be seen as a barrier to ratification. The committee decided to defer further consideration of the item until its seventh session and encouraged countries to continue to make progress on a national and regional basis and to share and disseminate relevant knowledge.

\* UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.7/1.

3. To facilitate the further consideration of the issue, the text of the document as submitted to the Committee at its sixth session is set out in the annex to the present note.
4. The committee may wish to request the secretariat to take further action as identified in UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.6/19.

## Annex

### Guidance on managing contaminated sites and the proposed way forward for developing guidance

#### Note by the secretariat

1. In paragraph 3 of article 12, the Minamata Convention on Mercury requires that the Conference of the Parties adopt guidance on managing contaminated sites that may include methods and approaches for the following:

- (a) Site identification and characterization;
- (b) Engaging the public;
- (c) Human health and environmental risk assessments;
- (d) Options for managing the risks posed by contaminated sites;
- (e) Evaluation of benefits and costs;
- (f) Validation of outcomes.

2. In preparing the present note on guidance on managing contaminated sites and the proposed way forward for developing guidance, experience gained in the context of other conventions in the chemicals and waste cluster has been considered, and relevant experience is set out below.

3. In 2011, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal adopted technical guidelines for the environmentally sound management of wastes consisting of elemental mercury and wastes containing or contaminated with mercury. Those guidelines, which are currently being updated, include a number of options for the treatment of soils and other materials contaminated with mercury, and are directly relevant for guidance on options for managing the risks posed by contaminated sites.<sup>1</sup> The guidelines also include information on engaging the public and the human health risks associated with exposure to mercury, which will be highly relevant in the consideration of guidance on managing contaminated sites.

4. The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants refers, in article 6, to the need to develop appropriate strategies for identifying contaminated sites and for eventual remediation to be performed in an environmentally sound manner. Guidelines on the management of persistent organic pollutant wastes have been developed in cooperation with the Basel Convention, but to date a specific guidance document on the identification and remediation of contaminated sites has not been developed.

5. A range of guidance documents developed by national Governments and civil society exists, which may be useful in developing the guidance on contaminated sites. At this stage, however, the secretariat has not carried out a detailed analysis of such material.

6. In its resolution on arrangements in the interim period (UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/CONF/4, annex I), the Conference of Plenipotentiaries requested the Committee to support, as practicable and consistent with the priorities in the Convention, those activities required or encouraged by the Convention that will facilitate the rapid entry into force of the Convention and its effective implementation upon entry into force, including in particular guidance on the management of contaminated sites.

7. The Committee may wish to request the secretariat to seek input from Governments and other interested stakeholders on any guidance documents or recommendations in relation to contaminated sites, and to request the secretariat to prepare, in consultation with the relevant secretariats in the chemicals and waste cluster and other organizations or bodies, as appropriate, a draft guidance document for consideration by the Committee at its seventh session.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at [www.basel.int/TheConvention/Publications/TechnicalGuidelines/tabid/2362/Default.aspx](http://www.basel.int/TheConvention/Publications/TechnicalGuidelines/tabid/2362/Default.aspx).