



Distr.: General
25 November 2019

English only



**United Nations
Environment
Programme**

**Fourth Meeting of the Governing Board
Specific International Programme to support capacity-building and technical assistance
Minamata Convention on Mercury
Washington, 18-20 September 2019**

**Report of the fourth meeting of the Governing Board of the
Specific International Programme to support Capacity-Building
and Technical Assistance**

I. Opening of the meeting (agenda item 1)

1. The fourth meeting of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme to support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance was opened at 9.15 a.m. on Wednesday, 18 September 2019, by the Co-Chairs of the Board, Mr. Sam Adu-Kumi (Ghana) and Mr. Reginald Hernaus (The Netherlands).

Mr. Hernaus welcomed all Board members to the meeting, noting that the Board had a heavy agenda in front of them and had also received a very well-prepared set of appraisals from the Secretariat of the 20 applications received to the Second Round. He also recognising that Mr. Nero Cunha Ferreira (Brazil) could not participate this meeting but was represented by an alternative member nominated by him, namely Mr. Ney Canani (Brazil). Mr. Adu-Kumi also noted and welcomed the observers from the GEF Secretariat and the Special Programme Secretariat to the meeting.

2. Executive Secretary Mrs. Rossana Silva Repetto, added her welcome to all participants, thanked the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for hosting the meeting and all the donors for making this round possible. She thanked the members of the Governing Board for their commitment that lead to the success of the implementation of the Convention and asked for further guidance to continue with the successful operation of the Specific International Programme. She outlined that the Second Round was open from 5 March to 14 June 2019 and that 20 applications were received by the deadline. She drew attention to the fact that applicants have put forth their best efforts to prepare their applications, and that the Secretariat has put its all into the work to review and appraise the applications for consideration by the Board. She emphasized her gratitude to the fact that contribution to the Second Round had been received from Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Island and the United States of America. She concluded that the Secretariat was enthusiastic to support the work of the Board and the operations of the Programme.

3. The full list of participants is attached as Annex I.

II. Organizational matters (agenda item 2)

a. Adoption of the agenda

4. The Board adopted the provisional agenda (UNEP/MC/SIP.GB.4.1) and took note of the provisional annotated agenda as contained in document UNEP/MC/SIP.GB.4.1/Add.1.

b. Organization of work

5. The Board agreed to work from 9.15 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursday and from 9.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday, with the possibility of amending the schedule as agreed to suit the arrangements of the Board. The meeting would be conducted in English.

c. Request for disclosure of any possible personal and/or financial conflict of interest

6. The Co-Chair recalled Rule 23 of the Rules of Procedure for the Governing Board, which states that in cases where a member of the Governing Board is from the same country that has submitted a project to the Board for its consideration, that member shall be excused from participating during the deliberations of and decision-making by the Board in relation to the project in question. He further recalled that the Rule also states that members and possible observers at the meeting have an obligation to promptly disclose to the Board, at the commencement of the meeting, if that person may have a personal and/or financial interest in any aspect of the project presented for decision and approval by the Board.

7. The Board Members from Ghana and Sri Lanka notified that their Governments had submitted applications. The Board affirmed that while the Board Members may listen to the discussion of their Government's projects, they may not take the floor to deliberate on them or participate in the decision-making on these projects.

III. Approval of the report of the Third Meeting of the Governing Board (agenda item 3)

8. The Secretariat presented document UNEP/MC/SIP.GB.4/2, which the Board considered and approved electronically in July 2019. In the absence of comments to the report, the Board proceeded with its formal adoption.

9. The report will be made available on the website of the Minamata Convention.

IV. Information Sharing Session on financing support to the Minamata Convention (agenda item 5)

a. Global Environment Facility

10. The Co-Chairs invited the representatives of the GEF to share information on the support GEF provides on mercury, to ensure a complimentary approach to financing support to the Minamata Convention.

11. The representative of the GEF presented the overview of GEF, including the support provided to the Minamata Convention and the status of the seventh replenishment of its trust fund. To date, GEF has provide support to enable a total of 111 countries to develop their Minamata Initial assessments and 35 countries to prepare their ASGM National Action Plans. A total of 4.1 billion USD was pledged by donors for the seventh replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund. Of those a total of 599 million USD was indicatively allocated to the chemicals and waste focal area, and of that amount, 206 million USD was allocated to the implementation of the Minamata Convention.

12. Another representative of the GEF presented the Chemicals and Wastes Programme of GEF-7, including the Industrial Chemicals Programme, Agricultural Chemicals Programme, LDC/SIDS programme and the Enabling Activities. Programmes are verified by criteria such as cost effectiveness, sustainability, innovation, private sector engagement, networking with local resources, synergy with the Impact Programmes and other focal area strategies, and whether the issue is prioritized under the provisions of MEAs including Minamata Convention. One of the expected outcomes of the Programme is the reduction, disposal/destruction, phase out, elimination and avoidance of 100,000 tons of chemicals of global concern and their waste.

b. Special Programme

13. The Co-Chairs invited the representative of the Special Programme to share information on the support the Special Programme provides to the chemicals and waste cluster and to mercury specifically, noting that this session allows for consideration of the integrated approach.

14. The representative of the Special Programme presented the overview of the Programme and the status of the projects implemented in the previous rounds. Projects approved in the previous rounds were Benin and Tanzania for the First Round; Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda for the Second Round; Angola, Eswatini, Ethiopia, South Africa and Tunisia for the Third Round. The Fourth Round of applications is planned to open in November 2019.

c. Reflections

15. The Secretariat appreciated the close collaboration of the GEF Secretariat and the Special Programme Secretariat in the review of the projects to the Second Round to ensure the complementarity of effort and to avoid any duplication of funding efforts at the national level. As part of the Cross-Secretariat Task Team, the information shared by the GEF Secretariat and the Special Programme Secretariat (the Secretariat of the Global Mercury Partnership also forms part of the Task Force) is critical to have a better understanding of the funding landscape and to review the project applications to the Specific International Programme in that context.

16. The Secretariat called attention to the special role of the Special Programme for Minamata Parties and the chemicals and waste cluster as a whole, that is to support countries to strengthen their overall institutional capacity on chemicals and waste.

17. The representative of the GEF underlined that while the demarcation between the GEF and the Special Programme is clear, the difference between the projects that can be funded by the GEF and the projects that can be funded by the Specific International Programme is not always so clear cut. The Secretariat added that in some cases projects could be funded according to both the mandate of the GEF and the mandate of the Specific International Programme, but it seemed that some projects could qualify as an add-on to a larger GEF project, or a pre-step to a bigger GEF-project. The Co-Chairs noted the need to further clarify when to apply to GEF and when to apply to the Specific International Programme, noting that the differentiation could be made in terms of avoiding duplication of funding, in terms of sequencing in programming logic, and in terms of the recognition of difference in the scale of funding available in the two components of the Financial Mechanism. He also noted the need to clarify the relationship as needed with projects eligible under the Special Programme.

V. Report from the Secretariat on the operations of the Specific International Programme (agenda item 4)

a. Status of the Specific Trust Fund

18. The Secretariat introduced document UNEP/MC/SIP.GB.4/3 on the update on the operations of the Programme, including the status of the Specific Trust Fund, status of implementation of the five projects approved in the First Round, and the services provided by the Secretariat in support of the Programme. As at 31 July 2019, pledges to the Second Round amounted to 2,414,413 USD from Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Of those, as at September 2019, 2.3 million USD were received.

19. The Secretariat recalled that the five projects approved at the First Round were from Argentina, Armenia, Benin, Iran and Lesotho. As of 16 August 2019, four legal documents have been signed and disbursement of funds has begun to those projects. One legal agreement is in the process of being signed.

b. Operations and budget of the Specific International Programme

20. Continuing with the document UNEP/MC/SIP.GB.4/3, the Secretariat noted that the Conference of the Parties at its first meeting approved one position for capacity-building and technical assistance activities of the Secretariat and the activities of the Programme, to be covered by the General Trust Fund. Following the full operationalisation of the Programme in 2018 and the Second Round period, the Secretariat noted a lesson had been learnt is that additional staff capacity

is urgently required in the Secretariat to soundly provide the many services required for the full operation of this Programme.

21. Several the Board members agreed that due to the increase in the number of applications that will be received and projects that will need to be managed, the Secretariat does not have sufficient capacity to soundly provide the many services required by the Programme. The Secretariat commented that in the Executive Secretary's scenario on the budget for the 2020-2021 biennium to be considered at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties, a proposal to add a new P-4 Programme Officer to provide support to the Specific International Programme is therefore included. The proposed officer is expected to provide secretariat services to the Board, to manage the application and appraisal process to the Programme, to manage the administrative and substantive implementation of approved projects, to provide the substantive part of donor reports, and to oversee evaluation, monitoring and auditing requirements for the Programme.

V. Consideration of applications to the Second Round, followed by decision making (agenda item 6)

22. The Co-Chair opened this agenda item noting that it was very encouraging to receive an increased number of applications compared with the First Round. He also thanked the Secretariat for the appraisals prepared and invited the Secretariat to present the projects.

23. Referencing document UNEP/MC/SIP.GB.4/4 the Secretariat first gave an overview of the applications submitted in the Second Round which opened on 5 March 2019 and accepted submissions until 14 June 2019. In total 20 applications were received by the deadline. Applications from Guyana and Madagascar were received after the mandatory deadline and were set aside, and no further review or assessment was made. Regarding the 20 applications received by the deadline, 10 were from Africa, five from the Asia-Pacific region, four from Latin America and the Caribbean and one from Central and Eastern Europe. Of these, six applications were received from Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and two from Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

24. The Secretariat further outlined that the 20 applications were appraised in detail by the Secretariat against the criteria set by the Board. Within the 17 components of the project criteria that are required to be met in the application, five main components were selected and detailed in the appraisals. The Secretariat was also able to count on the review and insights from the representatives of the GEF Secretariat, the Special Programme Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Global Mercury Partnership as part of the Cross-Secretariat Task Team, on the basis of which, the Secretariat prepared the appraisals for the consideration of the Governing Board. The complete appraisal package for the 20 applications was shared with the Board members through an online link a month ahead of the meeting of the Board.

25. Following the comments from the Secretariat, the Governing Board proceeded to review each application in the alphabetical order of the applicant Governments.

26. As agreed at the beginning of the meeting, during the time of consideration and decision-making on the projects submitted by Ghana and Sri Lanka, the respective Board members remained in the room but did not take the floor to participate.

27. Following a detailed discussion on each of the 20 applications, the Governing Board approved ten projects, amounting to close to two million USD. The projects that were approved pending finalisation of project documents as per Governing Board recommendations, were:

Country	Project Title	Amount USD
Antigua and Barbuda	Facilitating capacity-building with technical assistance and technology transfer for managing mercury in the Caribbean	210,000
Ecuador	Project to strengthen capacities in the implementation of the Minamata Convention in Ecuador	250,000
Ghana	Strengthening Ghana's Health Sector for the implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury	250,000

Country	Project Title	Amount USD
Indonesia	Improving Health Risk Control of Mercury Exposure in Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) and Surrounding Areas by Developing the “Participatory Approach” Model	140,340
Iran	Capacity Building for Effective Implementation of Minamata Convention Focusing on Mercury Inventory	149,400
Moldova	Support to post-ratification of the Minamata Convention to the Republic of Moldova by building phase down capacities and reducing risks associated with mercury	219,765
Nigeria	Capacity strengthening for the implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury in Nigeria	250,000
Peru	Strengthening capacities to control emissions and releases of mercury in Peru	126,000
Sri Lanka	Strengthening National Capacity for Phasing Out Mercury Added Products and Environmentally Sound Mercury Containing Waste Management in Sri Lanka	178,659
Zambia	To strengthen the Institutional Capacity for Zambia to implement the obligations of the Minamata Convention by reducing the presence of mercury in vulnerable populations as provided for under Articles 16 and 18	200,000

28. The Co-Chairs then invited the Board to advise on any information additional to the approved projects that it wishes the Secretariat to include in documentation to conclude on the Second Round of applications to the Programme. The following observations were collected on the applications, and on the process of review, appraisal and decision-making for the Second Round:

- (i) Many Board members echoed the comments by the Co-Chairs about the many good applications received and commended the applicant Governments for their efforts to present good project proposals.
- (ii) In reviewing the applications, on various occasions Board members wondered if the budget caps, and stipulations on personnel and contractual arrangements in the Guidelines best suited the aims of the Specific International Programme. More clarity on how to prepare the budget part of the applications, was deemed to be helpful to future applicants.
- (iii) The Board welcomed the submission of a regional project and hoped to be able to support more projects with regional dimensions where that made implementation sense in future rounds.
- (iv) The Board underlined that the Specific International Programme should not fund items that are already funded by the GEF (through a Minamata Initial Assessment, or a National Action Plan, or other enabling activities projects) or by the Special Programme.
- (v) The Board reflected that it was very happy to have been able to support projects from each of the regions for the First and Second Round, but that this is not to imply a practice of binding regional balance for decision-making in future rounds. This comment was also made based on the recognition that there may be cases in future rounds where only a limited number of projects are submitted from a given region.
- (vi) Several Board members noted that given the early stage of implementation of the Minamata Convention, it was not surprising that many applications included requests to support monitoring and data collection.
- (vii) While it is understood that the Specific International Programme is established to support obligations (so-called “shall” provisions” under the Convention),

some Board members felt that some provision could be made for “may” clauses, such as for requests to support national implementation plans, or monitoring and data collection, as these measures and activities are often needed in the early implementation stages at the national level. Having said that, consideration of funding such activities should also take into account that countries with MIAs could draw on the outcomes of these assessments for national implementation plans, and also that in many cases MIAs included funding for inventories.

- (viii) The Board also recognised there may be future cases when there may need to be a change to an approved project due to a specific and valid reason. In the Special Programme changes of no more than 10% can be made to a budget category, pending approval by the Co-Chairs of the Special Programme Executive Board. For the Global Environment Facility changes up to 20% can be made within certain. It was noted that should it be necessary to modify an approved project, the Secretariat would bring the matter to the Governing Board.
- (ix) The Board noted that the Special Programme includes an additional step in the application review process, namely for a technical reading of the application and technical comments back to the applicant with the invitation to re-submit the application pending the changes. The Board expressed interest in this modality to ensure more projects can be approved, as opposed to conditionally approved pending corrections and finalisations. Only approved and final projects can be attached to legal agreement that the United Nations Environment Programme signs with the successful applicant Government for fund dispersal. A Board member noted that the staff component of the Special Programme is significantly larger to enable more attention at the application time to applicant Governments.
- (x) The Board also reflected on the fact that while many applicants put forward comprehensive applications for the highest amount available, the Specific International Programme also received applications for specific interventions that a country places high priority on, and that this approach should be encouraged as it may allow more countries to benefit from the resources available for specific endeavours.
- (xi) On the issue of supporting documents necessary for the application to be deemed complete, a Board member commented that it was important to have evidence of national ownership of the project application through the national focal point of that country. Board members though also commented that while it is important that all required supporting documents are included in timely application submissions, it is important to maintain a sound checklist of core supporting documentation required so that the process remains streamlined, and does not open itself to any criticism that a technically sound project may be considered incomplete due to a negligible administrative formality.
- (xii) On submissions, the Board members affirmed the importance of receiving all applications in electronic format, for the Secretariat to acknowledge all applications received timeously so that applicants can be sure their submissions were received, and for the Secretariat to keep record of all submissions in electronic format for archival purposes. The submission of paper copies of submissions is no longer necessary.
- (xiii) On decision-making, the Board underlined the importance of reaching consensus on the approval of projects.
- (xiv) Further the Board deliberated on what to do with complete and eligible projects that were not approved in this round and decided that such applicants can be invited to submit their applications to the next round noting that applicants may wish to update their applications. It was also noted that this will also allow more applicant Governments the chance to have equal access to the funding available in the next round.
- (xv) Lastly, the Board also looked at its provisions to safeguard for any potential conflict of interest if a Board member comes from an applicant country. In the

First Round the respective Board members left the room during the discussions of and decisions on their countries' projects. For the Second Round the respective Board members remained for the discussions and decision-making but did not participate in the deliberations. The Board wondered how to provide for the possibility of needing to consider applications from the countries of Board members from the same region, considering the issue of quorum for decision making. And related to that, how to manage a situation where more applications are potentially received from the same countries as Board members.

VII. Date and venue of the next meeting (agenda item 7)

29. The Board agreed that the date and venue of the next meeting shall be decided by the Co-Chairs with the Secretariat according to the Rules of Procedure, once the next members of the Board are confirmed by the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting.

VIII. Any other business (agenda item 8)

30. The Co-Chairs noted the importance to share the outcome of this meeting with the participants of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Secretariat explained that during the plenary session of the meeting, the Co-Chairs would be invited to address the Conference under the agenda item on the financial mechanism to report on the operations of the Specific International Programme, and to update on the outcome of this meeting.

IX. Closure of the meeting (agenda item 9)

31. The Co-Chairs declared the meeting closed at 6 p.m. on Friday 20 September 2019, thanking the members for their hard work over the past three days and their two-years term as the founding members of the Governing Board. The Co-Chairs also thanked the Secretariat for the seamless preparation of the meeting and the thorough appraisal documents on the basis of which the Board could deliberate and make its decisions. The Executive Secretary, for her part, thanked the Co-Chairs and the Governing Board for their excellent work, and the GEF and Special Programme Secretariats for their collaboration, and affirmed that the Secretariat looks forward to implement the Board's decisions and continue to support Parties and the Programme and its projects.

Annex I: List of participants

GOVERNING BOARD

Present	
<p>AFRICA GHANA Mr. Sam Adu-Kumi Director Chemicals Control and Management Centre Environmental Protection Agency Starlet 1991 Accra Ghana Tel.: +233 30 266 4697/8 Fax: +233 30 266 2690 Email: adukumisam@yahoo.com sam.adu-kumi@epa.gov.gh</p> <p>ASIA AND THE PACIFIC SRI LANKA Mr. W.T.B. Dissanayake Additional Secretary (Environment Policy & Planning), Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment, "Sobadam Piyasa", 416/C/1, Robert Gunawardana Mawatha Battaramulla, Sri Lanka. Tel: +94 11 2034127 Fax: +94 11 2879952 Mobile: +94 71 8014998 Email: dissaforest@yahoo.com</p> <p>CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE ESTONIA Mr. Kaupo Heinma Deputy Secretary General, Environmental Management Department Ministry of the Environment Narva mnt 7 10117 Tallinn Estonia Tel.: +372 626 2921 Email: kaupo.heinma@envir.ee</p> <p>LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN ARGENTINA Ms. María Florencia Grimalt Secretario de Embajada Dirección General de Asuntos Ambientales (DIGMA) Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto Esmeralda 1212 1007 Buenos Aires Argentina Tel.: +54 11 4819 7405 Fax: +54 11 4819 7413 Email: ogx@mrecic.gov.ar</p>	<p>AFRICA CHAD Mr. Younous Adoum Abdallah Point Focal de la Convention de Minamata sur le Mercure Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Pêche Direction de la Lutte Contre le Changement Climatique, Pollutions et les Nuisances Quartier Béguinage 447 N'djamena Chad Tel.: +235 6364 8300 Email: abou_idjab08@live.fr</p> <p>ASIA AND THE PACIFIC THAILAND Mr. Prasert Tapaneeyangkul Former Chair, Subcommittees of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, under the National Environment Board Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Phahonyothin Road Bangkok 10400 Thailand Tel.: +66 89 813 6045 Email: ptap14011@gmail.com</p> <p>CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE ARMENIA Ms. Anahit Aleksandryan Head of Division Hazardous Substances and Wastes Policy Division Ministry of Nature Protection Governmental Building 3, Republic Square 0010 Yerevan Armenia Tel.: +374 11 818 519 Fax: +374 11 818 519 Email: anahit.aleksandryan@yahoo.com</p> <p>LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN BRAZIL* Mr. Ney Canani First-Secretary Embassy of Brazil in Washington 3006 Massachusetts Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20008 Tel: (202) 238-2812 E-mail: ney.canani@itamaraty.gov.br</p>

<p>WESTERN EUROPE AND OTHERS THE NETHERLANDS Mr. Reginald Hernaus Lead Negotiator Chemicals and Wastes International Affairs Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment Rijnstraat 8 The Hague The Netherlands Tel.: +31 70 456 6485 Email: reggie.hernaus@minienm.nl</p>	<p>WESTERN EUROPE AND OTHERS NORWAY Mr. Atle Fretheim Consultant Kaptein Gløersensvei 24 Norway Tel.: +47 950 68 313 Email: atle.fretheim@kld.dep.no and ar-freth@online.no</p>
<p>Regrets received from</p>	
<p>*Mr. Nero Cunha Ferreira Second Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs Chemin Louis-Dunant 15, 6th Floor 1202, Geneva Switzerland Tel.: +41 22 332 5023 Mobile: +41 76 609 8422 E-mail: nero.ferreira@itamaraty.gov.br</p>	

OBSERVERS

<p>Ms. Nalini Sharma Programme Management Officer Special Programme Secretariat Chemicals and Health Branch Economy Division Telephone: +41 22 917 8343 Email: Nalini.sharma@un.org</p> <p>Mr. Anil Sookdeo Coordinator, Chemicals and Waste Global Environment Facility Tel +1(202) 458 0683 Email: asookdeo@thegef.org</p>	<p>Ms. Evelyn Swain Senior Environmental Specialist Global Environment Facility Email: eswain@thegef.org</p> <p>Mr. Ibrahima Sow Coordinator, Africa Region Global Environment Facility Email: isow@thegef.org</p> <p>Mr. Yuki Shiga Environmental Specialist Global Environment Facility Email: yshiga@thegef.org</p>
--	---

SECRETARIAT

<p>Ms. Rossana Del Carmen Silva Repetto Executive Secretary Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Telephone: +41 22 917 4983 Email: rossana.silva-repetto@un.org</p> <p>Mr. Takafumi Anan Associate Programme Officer (Science and Technology) Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Telephone: +41 22 917 8965 Email: takafumi.anan@un.org</p>	<p>Dr Claudia ten Have Senior Policy and Coordination Officer Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury International Environment House 1 Geneva, Switzerland Telephone: +41 22 917 8638 Email: claudia.tenhave@un.org</p>
---	--