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**United Nations
Environment
Programme**

**Conference of the Parties to the
Minamata Convention on Mercury**

Third meeting

Geneva, 25–29 November 2019

Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda*

Organizational matters: organization of work

Scenario note for the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to provide, in the annex to the present note, a scenario note for the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury, prepared by the President of the Conference of the Parties. The note is intended to assist participants in preparing for the meeting.

* UNEP/MC/COP.3/1.

Annex

Scenario note prepared by the President of the Conference of the Parties

I. Introduction

1. The main purpose of the present note is to assist parties and other stakeholders to prepare for the meeting with the aim of ensuring its success, including by making sure that all decisions and issues that are required by the Convention to be considered by the Conference of the Parties at this third meeting are adequately addressed and concluded.
2. In this scenario note, I set out some general expectations for the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties, over which I will preside. These expectations have been developed in consultation with the Bureau and, through that body, the regional groups, and I am pleased to share them with all stakeholders as we prepare for the upcoming meeting.
3. The third meeting is taking place just over twelve months after the second, and it represents an opportunity for consolidating the substantial progress made so far, as well as for making further progress on a number of ongoing issues and mandates with imminent deadlines as provided by the Convention. The need for significant effort on key issues was anticipated in developing the rules of procedure for our meetings, in which we stipulated that the second and third meetings were to be held, respectively, one and two years after the first, and that thereafter ordinary meetings would be held every two years.

II. Timing and organization of work

4. At its second meeting, the Conference of the Parties decided to hold its third meeting at the Geneva International Conference Centre from 25 to 29 November 2019. Accordingly, the meeting will open at 10 a.m. on Monday, 25 November 2019, and close at 6 p.m. on Friday, 29 November 2019. Based on the successful practice at the first and second meetings of the Conference of the Parties, provision will be made for meetings of the United Nations regional groups, and a meeting of the Bureau on Sunday, 24 November 2019.
5. During the one-week duration of the meeting, it is anticipated that the Conference of the Parties will meet in plenary, and that discussions may also take place in smaller groups, as necessary. As decided by the Conference of the Parties, a high-level segment will not be convened at the third meeting.
6. From Monday to Friday, the proposed daily schedule for plenary sessions will be two three-hour sessions per day, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Side events will take place during lunchtime (from 1.15 p.m. to 2.45 p.m.) and in the evening after the afternoon plenary session (from 6.15 p.m. to 7.00 p.m.). I invite you to participate in these events, which will address interesting topics including activities being carried out by the Convention's partners.
7. Each morning from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m., the Bureau will meet to, among other things, agree on the order of business of the day. Regional groups will have the opportunity to meet each morning from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. I would like to encourage the regional groups to facilitate the dissemination of information on the order of business for each day through their respective Bureau members. Interpretation will not be provided for meetings of the regional groups but interpretation facilities and equipment will be available should the regional groups wish to make their own arrangements for interpretation.
8. The secretariat has made arrangements for the meeting to be paperless. Pre-session documents are available on the Convention's website.¹ In addition, all the meeting documents, including in-session documents, will be available on an intranet site created for the meeting. Participants are expected to bring their own laptop computers or other devices to access the documents. Technical support will be available on site.
9. On the morning of Monday, 25 November, in my capacity as President of the Conference of the Parties, I will open the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which will then be requested to adopt the agenda for the meeting.

¹ <http://www.mercuryconvention.org/Meetings/COP3>.

10. I will then provide an opportunity for statements, starting with those by representatives speaking on behalf of groups of countries. If requested, individual parties and observers will have the opportunity to make short opening statements. The duration of each statement will be limited to five minutes. I would encourage you to submit any longer statements, as well as national statements, to the secretariat for publication on the intranet site as we hope to be able to move swiftly from the opening session to substantive discussions in plenary.

11. We will proceed with the consideration of other organizational matters, including the organization of our work, on the basis of the tentative schedule of work that will be presented to you.

12. I will then request the secretariat to introduce the election of officers for the intersessional period and the fourth meeting of our Conference, to provide information on the election of members of the Implementation and Compliance Committee, expected to take place during the meeting, and remind us of the details regarding the need for the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to confirm members of the Governing Board of the Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance for the next term, based on the nominations received from the regions during the meeting. Regional groups will thus have the opportunity to consider the nominations, taking into account the expertise required for the Governing Board, and gender and other relevant considerations. The elections are expected to take place later during the meeting.

13. The secretariat will be requested to introduce the approach to be followed regarding credentials. It is expected that the Bureau will examine the credentials of representatives attending the meeting and provide a report to the Conference of the Parties in the afternoon of Thursday, 28 November.

III. Use of small groups

14. There may be matters requiring further or more detailed consideration before their conclusion in plenary. While it may therefore be necessary to establish small groups for such additional detailed consideration, I hope that the use of such groups can be kept to the minimum necessary. The outcome of the deliberations of the smaller groups will be presented to the Conference of the Parties in plenary for its consideration and possible agreement or adoption.

15. The Bureau and I are fully aware of the challenges faced by many delegations in covering a wide-ranging set of simultaneous discussions and we will endeavour to limit the number of concurrent sessions to two. Decisions concerning the number and nature of the groups required and the organization of their work will be made in consultation with the Bureau throughout the meeting.

16. We have in principle envisaged the establishment of contact groups on effectiveness evaluation, on technical matters, as well as on the programme of work and budget. We hope to be able to establish the first contact groups as early as Monday in order to allow the maximum time possible for their important deliberations. Contact groups will be chaired by co-chairs, one from a developing country and one from a developed country, as is customary. Again, it would be ideal to also take gender balance into consideration.

IV. Issues on our agenda

17. At the first and second meetings, we took decisions that were key for the ongoing implementation of the Convention, including providing guidance on the operation, duration and terms of reference of the Specific International Programme and providing guidance to the Global Environment Facility on overall strategies, policies, programme priorities and eligibility for access to and utilization of financial resources. Important to mention here is the full operationalization of the Specific International Programme, which, thanks to the contributions of its donors, has to date approved five projects in its first round, with the Programme's Governing Board convening in September 2019 to approve projects for the second round. Further necessary action was taken in electing the first members of the Implementation and Compliance Committee and approving the rules of procedure the Committee, elaborated to facilitate its work. The Conference of the Parties decided on rules of procedure and financial rules for itself and its subsidiary bodies, with only a few unresolved issues remaining in square brackets in those rules. We adopted several guidance documents, including in relation to mercury supply sources and trade, mercury emissions, and the sound interim storage of mercury other than waste mercury. We also commissioned intersessional work on a number of issues, including waste thresholds, releases and arrangements for the effectiveness evaluation of the Convention. We decided to accept the offer of the Government of Switzerland to host an autonomous secretariat of the Convention in Geneva, along with Switzerland's annual host country contribution of

1 million Swiss francs, and requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to continue performing the functions of the secretariat.

18. Our third meeting is an excellent opportunity to further consolidate the strong foundation we have built with the support of UNEP. It is expected of us that we undertake work on technical issues, such as waste thresholds, the guidance on the management of contaminated sites and harmonized system codes. We will consider the reports of the group of technical experts on guidance in relation to mercury releases and the technical expert group on effectiveness evaluation with a view to adopting decisions that will allow us to provide a framework for the evaluation of our Convention's effectiveness. We will have the opportunity to look in detail at the considerable work done by the technical expert group on the effectiveness evaluation to decide on this important framework for the Convention. Information on capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer will also be considered.

19. In accordance with decision MC-2/7, we will have before us for our consideration the operative proposal on a stable framework for the sharing of secretariat services between the secretariat of the Minamata Convention and the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, submitted by the Executive Director of UNEP. At our third meeting, we will also review the two scenarios prepared by the secretariat for the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2020–2021 with a view to adopting a decision that will allow the secretariat to continue working towards the implementation of the Convention and supporting us in the coming two years.

20. We also have as part of our tasks the review of the financial mechanism of the Convention and the issues relating to the review of annexes A and B to the Convention, which is due by 2022. A group of countries has also submitted a proposal for the amendment of annex A to the Convention and the Conference of the Parties needs to consider and discuss that important matter. We will also consider unresolved matters pertaining to the rules of procedure and the financial rules.

V. Desired outcome of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties

21. Our common desired outcome of the third meeting is to conclude our consideration of all the issues that are required by the Convention or our previous decisions to be considered, decided upon or adopted by the Conference of the Parties at this time. Agreement on some issues may require specific decisions to be adopted by the Conference of the Parties, while other issues may only require agreement by the Conference of the Parties to be reflected in the meeting report.

22. I strongly encourage you to thoroughly prepare for this important meeting, familiarizing yourselves with the documents prepared by the secretariat and undertaking preliminary discussions at various levels, including national and regional consultations and bilateral discussions, as well as taking the opportunity to consult with other regions and delegations as you consider appropriate, both before and during the meeting. This will enable us to maximize consensus, which will allow us to continue making progress towards fulfilling the objectives of the Minamata Convention.

23. Together with the Bureau, I urge all participants to prepare themselves to work together in a spirit of cooperation at the third meeting, with a clear recognition of the Convention's important objectives and our common goal of safeguarding human health and protecting our planet for future generations. I look forward to seeing you in Geneva to mark once again a historic event aimed at "Making mercury history"!