

Guidelines on media access to meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury

A. Introduction

1. The present guidelines apply to media organizations wishing to cover meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury regardless of the format (online, in-person or hybrid). As required, other guidance or instructions may apply when deemed necessary by the Minamata Convention Secretariat or United Nations (UN) Security, in conformity with UN and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) rules and regulations.

2. The purpose of these guidelines is to grant as much access as possible to members of the press while safeguarding and protecting the meeting venue and ensuring the safety, security and comfort of all of its occupants: staff, delegates and media alike. While ensuring safety and security is the starting point of Minamata Convention Secretariat's policies, it is equally true that journalists play an essential role and that their ability to cover Convention's activities must therefore be facilitated to the greatest extent possible.

B. Media accreditation

3. Media accreditation is required to attend the meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Minamata Convention. Approved media accreditation is valid only for the specified accreditation dates.

C. Eligibility for accreditation

4. Media accreditation is strictly reserved for members of the press who represent a bona fide media organization.¹

5. Double accreditation, as a media representative and a member of a party or observer delegation, is not permitted. Press officers travelling with a party or observer delegation must register as a member of the respective delegation.

D. Press badge

6. Issued press badges are not transferable and therefore shall not be loaned to another person at any time. Lost or stolen badges must immediately be reported to the registration desk in the meeting venue.

E. Security and etiquette

¹ The Minamata Convention Secretariat must be satisfied that the individuals applying for accreditation are bona fide media professionals and represent bona fide media organizations, formally registered as a media organization in a country recognized by the United Nations General Assembly. Media accreditation is not accorded to the information outlets of non-governmental organizations. Applications are considered on a case-by-case basis and accreditation is not automatic. The decisions of the Minamata Convention Secretariat are final.

7. Members of the press are subject to security screening when accessing the meeting venue. They shall cooperate with the Minamata Convention Secretariat and UN security staff at all times and comply with their requests and instructions regarding access and conduct within the venue, including the use of the facilities.

8. Members of the press are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner in their interaction with other members of the press, UN staff, and meeting participants.

F. Access to meeting rooms

9. Unless otherwise decided, members of the press have access to designated areas in open plenary sessions, side events, press conferences, public exhibitions, and public spaces. Regional preparatory and coordination meetings, contact groups, bilateral meetings, UN staff meetings, Bureau meetings and any closed spaces where negotiations are taking place remain closed to and cannot be accessed by members of the press.

G. Still photographs and audio/video recordings

10. Unless otherwise decided, still photographs may be taken from designated photographer's areas in open plenary sessions, side events, press conferences, public exhibitions, and public spaces.

11. Unless otherwise decided, audio and video recordings may be made from designated areas in the first fifteen minutes of the opening ceremony to the conference, as well as the opening and closing ceremonies of high-level segments. Audio and video recordings at side events are subject to approval by the organizer, panelists and the Secretariat, must be announced to the audience at the beginning of the event, and must be made from designated areas. All other sounds and images must be sought directly from the host broadcaster. Audio and video recordings may also be made in press conferences, public exhibitions and public spaces.

12. Upon arrival, the Secretariat Public Information Officer will inform accredited members of the press of each of the designated areas.

13. These activities should be carried out unobtrusively and without disrupting the activities or movements of other participants or the security provisions of that area.

H. Measures

14. Any non-observance of these guidelines will normally be resolved in consultations between the Minamata Convention Secretariat and the relevant member of the press and/or media organization it represents. It may involve other meeting participants if deemed necessary by the Minamata Convention Secretariat.

15. Kindly note, that, in conformity with applicable UN/UNEP rules and regulations, the Minamata Convention Secretariat and the UN Security reserve the right to take the following measures for non-

observance of these guidelines or any other activity that violates the principles of the Charter, the codes of behavior and ethics of journalism, or the ethics of the UN:

- (a) Confiscation of badge;
- (b) Removal from the premises;
- (c) Confiscation of unauthorized material;
- (d) Any other measure falling within their mandate that is deemed appropriate or necessary.

16. For the purposes of paragraphs 14 and 15 above, the Minamata Convention Secretariat and UN Security may act upon a complaint or on their own initiative.