

**MINAMATA
CONVENTION
ON MERCURY**

Distr.: General

2 March 2022

English only

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

Online, 1–5 November 2021 and Bali, Indonesia,

21–25 March 2022

Agenda item 5*

International cooperation and coordination**Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations
Environment Programme to the Conference of the Parties to the
Minamata Convention on Mercury at its fourth meeting****Note by the secretariat**

1. The annex to the present note sets out the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury at its fourth meeting. The report highlights the activities undertaken by UNEP in relation to work on mercury and to the decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention at its first, second and third meetings, covering the period from November 2019 to January 2022. The annex is presented as received, without formal editing.
2. Following the introduction, which refers to the resolutions of the United Nations Environment Assembly that contribute to the goals of the Convention and the implementation of the decisions of the Conference of the Parties, the report is divided into three sections. Section I sets out updates on programmatic collaboration between UNEP and the secretariat of the Minamata Convention; section II presents updates on the administrative and financial management support provided by UNEP to the secretariat of the Minamata Convention; section III contains updates on UNEP support to the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting.

* UNEP/MC/COP.4/1

Annex

Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury at its fourth meeting

Introduction

1. This report is submitted by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to the fourth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (Minamata Convention). The report highlights the activities undertaken by UNEP in relation to work on mercury and to the decisions taken at the first, second and third meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP 1, COP 2 and COP 3). As such, the report covers the reporting period between November 2019 and January 2022.

2. The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) has adopted the following resolutions, which contribute to the implementation of the strategic goals of the Convention and decisions of its Conference of the Parties as listed in the table 1 below.

Table 1
Relevant UNEA Resolutions

No	Relevant UNEA Resolutions
1.	UNEA4/7: Environmentally sound management of waste
2.	UNEA4/8: Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste
3.	UNEA3/4: Environment and Health
4.	UNEA3/5: Investing in innovative environmental solutions for accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals
5.	UNEA3/6: Managing Soil Pollution to Achieve Sustainable Development
6.	UNEA 3/8: Preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally
7.	UNEA3/10: Addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems
8.	UNEA2/7: Sound management of chemicals and waste
9.	UNEA2/8 Sustainable consumption and production
10.	UNEA2/18: 'The relationship between United Nations Environment Programme and the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) for which it provides the Secretariats'
11.	UNEA1/5: Chemicals and waste

3. Table 2 below highlights decisions from COP 1, COP 2 and COP 3 of the Minamata Convention mandating the Secretariat, the Conference of Parties and the Parties that are relevant to programmatic collaboration with UNEP.

Table 2
Minamata Decisions relevant to Programmatic Collaboration with UNEP

No.	Minamata Decisions relevant to Programmatic contributions of UNEP
1.	MC-1/4: Guidance in relation to mercury emissions
2.	MC-1/5: Guidance to the Global Environment Facility
3.	MC-1/6: Specific international programme to support capacity-building and technical assistance
4.	MC-1/9: Establishment of arrangements in regard to effectiveness evaluation
5.	MC-1/10: Financial rules for the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury and any of its subsidiary bodies, as well as financial provisions governing the functioning of the secretariat
6.	MC-1/11: Secretariat
7.	MC-1/13: Guidance on the preparation of national action plans for artisanal and small-scale gold mining
8.	MC-1/14: Mercury emissions related to the open burning of waste
9.	MC-1/15: Programme of work of the secretariat and proposed budget for the biennium 2018–2019
10.	MC-1/16: Guidance in relation to mercury emission
11.	MC-1/17: Guidance in relation to mercury releases

No.	Minamata Decisions relevant to Programmatic contributions of UNEP
12.	MC-1/19: Mercury waste
13.	MC/2/1: Secretariat
14.	MC-2/2: Mercury waste thresholds
15.	MC/2/3 Releases
16.	MC-2/7: Cooperation between the secretariat of the Minamata Convention and the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions
17.	MC-2/9: Harmonized System codes
18.	MC/2/10: Effectiveness evaluation
19.	MC-3/3: Customs codes
20.	MC-3/4: Releases of mercury
21.	MC-3/5: Mercury waste thresholds
22.	MC-3/10: Arrangements for the first effectiveness evaluation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury
23.	MC-3/11: Enhanced cooperation between the secretariat of the Minamata Convention and the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions
24.	MC-3/12: Programme of work and budget for the biennium 2020–2021

Section I: Programmatic collaboration between UNEP and the Minamata Convention

a. UNEP Global Mercury Partnership

4. UNEP provides secretariat support to the Global Mercury Partnership, which gathers over 200 stakeholders¹ committed to protecting human health and the environment from the impacts of mercury and reducing its global environmental releases.

5. Initiated in 2005 by a decision of the UNEP Governing Council, the Partnership was instrumental in helping build momentum for a global legally-binding instrument on mercury, and contributed knowledge to negotiators, other stakeholders and the public during the negotiation process through the entry into force of the Minamata Convention². The Partnership currently focuses its work on supporting timely and effective implementation of the Minamata Convention, as well as on providing state of the art knowledge and science on mercury and on undertaking outreach and awareness raising towards global action.

6. The Partnership is structured around 8 priorities for action or so-called “partnership areas”: (1) artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM); (2) mercury cell chlor-alkali production; (3) mercury air transport and fate research; (4) mercury in products; (5) mercury releases from coal combustion; (6) mercury waste management; (7) mercury supply and storage; and (8) mercury releases from the cement industry. Detailed activity reports from individual Partnership areas is made available to the COP in document UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/16 and further information on the latest activities is also available on the Partnership website³.

7. Work under the Partnership is also conducted in a cross-cutting manner, and has been carried out in the present reporting period on the topics of mercury from oil and gas and from non-ferrous metals, pursuant to the request of the Partnership Advisory Group at its tenth meeting (PAG-10, November 2019, Geneva). Experts consultations were launched in April 2020 on these two topics, with the overall objective of identifying potential useful contributions from the Partnership, within the context of its mission and its existing areas of work. Interested Partnership area leads, together with the PAG co-chairs, subsequently agreed to guide a process for developing study reports. The study report on mercury from oil and gas aims amongst others at better understanding potential releases of mercury, as well as possibly how waste is treated and accounted for and may be entering the market for other uses. As for the study report on mercury from non-ferrous metals, its aims include to better understand the mercury mass balance globally between supply, storage, and waste treatment related to non-ferrous metals mining and smelting operations. Both reports also include considerations on possible future work, research, and cooperation. Partners and other relevant stakeholders contributed to the reports by

¹ As of 27 January 2022, there were 236 members of the Partnership, including 37 governments, 11 international organizations, 77 non-governmental organizations, 58 industry/private sector as well as 53 academia and others.

² Examples of such contributions by the Partnership, which were invited by the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a legally binding instrument on mercury, included a global inventory of mercury-cell chlor-alkali facilities as well as guidance for countries to develop their National Action Plans on reducing mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining

³ www.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/

providing inputs through open consultations and online expert meetings. Further information about these reports may be found in document UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/16.

8. In response to decisions of COP 3 of the Minamata Convention, the Partnership also collaborated with the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention to support intersessional work in preparation for COP4, namely on the issues of customs codes and on the management of tailings from ASGM (see section b. Contribution to intersessional work on the Minamata Convention).

9. Several awareness-raising, information dissemination and experience-sharing activities have been conducted by the Partnership since COP3. To enhance communication and outreach, a Partnership Newsletter was launched in 2020, to share on a regular basis with partners and interested stakeholders' latest highlights by Partnership areas and partners. The Partnership also launched a series of webinars to support sharing of information and experience. Interests and priority topics were identified through needs expressed through the PAG and Areas of work, as well as an online survey conducted by the Secretariat in April 2020. In the context of the 2020 deadline for phase out under the Minamata Convention, online information-sharing sessions were organized by the Partnership on mercury-containing medical devices and mercury in skin-lightening products in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as on the phase-out of mercury-added lamps. Online information-sharing sessions were also held on topics of relevance to ASGM, namely through a webinar for Spanish speaking countries on ASGM and National Action Plans (NAPs) in the Latin American and Caribbean region, on integrating gender dimensions into ASGM NAPs, and on best management practices in the use of cyanide in ASGM, in cooperation with the planetGOLD Programme. The Partnership also contributed to several "Minamata Online" sessions⁴ and co-hosted a session on multimedia modelling on global mercury movement, co-organized by the Partnership area on mercury air transport and fate research together with the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention, the International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant (ICMGP) and the Geneva Environment Network" and on mercury emissions from coal, co-organized by the Partnership area on mercury releases from coal combustion together with the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention and the ICMGP. Finally, side events were organized in the margins of the first segment of COP4 (1 to 5 November 2021). The Partnership area on ASGM and the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention co-hosted a side event on the sound management of mercury-containing tailings in ASGM and the Partnership Area on mercury air transport and fate research together with the Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) organized a side event on the Guidance on monitoring of mercury and mercury compounds to support the effectiveness evaluation of the Convention⁵.

10. The Secretariat of the Partnership also contributed to the review process of project proposals submitted by Parties in the framework of the third Round of applications to the Specific International Programme of the Minamata Convention, through the provision of technical input and the participation in Cross-Secretariat Task Team meetings, together with the secretariats of the Minamata Convention, Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Special Programme.

11. Finally during the reporting period, the Partnership Advisory Group held its eleventh meeting (PAG-11) on 15 and 16 December 2020, under the co-chairmanship of Rodges Ankrah, Environmental Protection Agency of the United States of America, and Teeraporn Wiriwutikorn, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Thailand. The meeting, which saw attendance of over hundred participants, exchanged on recent activities by Partnership Areas and future priorities, the ongoing work on mercury from oil and gas and from non-ferrous metals, as well as contributions to COP4 and the 15th International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant (Cape Town, 24 to 29 July 2022)⁶. The Partnership Advisory Group will be holding its twelfth meeting (PAG-12) on 11 and 14 March 2022⁷.

b. Contribution to intersessional work of the Minamata Convention

12. At its third meeting, the Conference of the Parties agreed on a number of action items to effectively implement the Minamata Convention and prepare for its fourth meeting. UNEP participated as observer and provided input to activities that took place intersessionally according to the decisions of COP3, among them in the meetings of the technical experts on guidance in relation to mercury releases (decision MC-3/4), of the technical experts on waste thresholds (decision MC-3/5), of the ad-hoc technical expert group on effectiveness evaluation (decision MC-3/10) and contributed to their work in

⁴ <http://www.mercuryconvention.org/Resources/MinamataOnline/tabid/8527/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

⁵ Further information about these events may be found on the Partnership website: <https://www.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/events>

⁶ Further information about the meeting, including its report, may be found at: <https://www.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/events/unep-event/partnership-advisory-group-meeting-11>

⁷ <https://www.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/events/unep-event/partnership-advisory-group-meeting-12>

the lead up to the fourth meeting. In addition, UNEP and the Global Mercury Partnership have been working jointly with the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention to update the Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining National Action Plan Guidance Document regarding management of tailings (decision MC-3/5, documents UNEP/MC/COP.4/6 and UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/6). The Global Mercury Partnership, through its area of work on Mercury in Products, also collaborated with the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on the topic of customs codes, in the development of a guidance document on their use in the context of the Convention (decision MC-3/3, documents UNEP/MC/COP.4/27 and UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/5). The Partnership also collaborated with the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on developing tools to assist countries in the use of remote sensing to support ASGM policy development and implementation.

13. Responding to the need for quantified data on mercury emissions from the open burning of waste (decision MC-1/14), since 2018, UNEP, in collaboration with the Government of Japan, has conducted mercury monitoring of open dumping and open burning of wastes on landfill sites in Cameroon, Indonesia, Kenya, Myanmar and Nigeria. These landfill sites were mainly used for municipal solid waste generated from the capitals and surrounding cities where municipal solid waste generated was mixed, collected, and transferred to those landfill sites. Open burning of waste occasionally happened to reduce the volume of municipal solid waste or occurred accidentally due to mixed and miscellaneous components of municipal solid waste. Based on the monitoring, the fact sheets of mercury monitoring on open dumping sites and open burning were produced as technical backgrounds.

c. Support to countries in the ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention

14. With funding from Global Environment facility (GEF), UNEP has been supporting to date⁸ 67 countries in the development of Minamata Initial Assessments (MIA), including through assistance and training in the use of the UNEP Mercury Inventory Toolkit. Preceding the introduction by the GEF of the MIA “concept”, UNEP had supported a number of other countries through similar projects (now so called “pre-MIAs”).

15. UNEP has been supporting 31 countries in the development of their National Action Plans to reduce mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining (NAP), by providing technical assistance and guidance in mercury-free technologies, formalization, baseline assessments, amongst others.

16. Supported MIAs have been completed in 27 countries and NAPs in 10 countries. Reviewed projects reports have been submitted to the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention and have been made publicly available through the website of the Convention⁹.

17. UNEP supports the global component for the NAP projects it implements. This work encompasses the provision of recommendations, facilitation of experts engagement, assistance in the planning and development of the NAP project components, support to the development of baseline estimates, provision of in-house and peer review of the national overview reports on artisanal and small-scale gold mining and draft NAP documents, “help desk” services and responses to various requests from participating countries. Key tools and original guidance materials have been developed through the global component on topics such as baseline estimates, formalization, mercury-free processing techniques, mercury trade, incorporating gender dimension and rapid environmental assessments. Regional trainings and webinars are regularly organized by UNEP to ensure NAP countries are able to use and benefit from guidance materials and share experiences in their actions to address mercury use in ASGM and development of their NAPs.

18. UNEP supports a similar global component for MIAs. Through this component, reviews of final MIA reports are being undertaken, using a standard checklist. UNEP is compiling and analyzing data from the inventory reports produced as part of the Minamata Initial Assessments to identify trends and national priorities for future technical assistance and capacity building activities.

19. UNEP is the co-lead agency of planetGOLD together with Conservation international. With funding from the GEF and co-financers, the programme currently works in 23 countries to develop innovative models to support artisanal and small-scale gold miners improve their livelihoods while reducing mercury use. PlanetGOLD focuses on formalization, access to finance and international markets, technology transfer and knowledge management and communication to achieve a sustainable reduction of the mercury used by the sector. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and

⁸ as of 9 June 2021

⁹ <http://mercuryconvention.org/Countries/Parties/MinamataInitialAssessments/tabid/6166/language/en-US/Default.aspx> and

<http://mercuryconvention.org/Countries/Parties/NationalActionPlans/tabid/7966/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) have also implemented child projects within the programme.

20. UNEP is the lead agency for the multifocal GEF Programme “Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme): Enhancing Environmental Security”. In this programme, UNEP works with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in the region to address land-based pollution sources. Mercury pollution from operating and closed chlor-alkali industries will be one focus area. The projects under the programme have been submitted for GEF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) endorsement.

21. UNEP is implementing a project addressing primary mercury mining in Mexico. The project aims to assist the country in its efforts to comply with Article 3 of the Convention (Mercury supply sources and trade) and will introduce sustainable alternative livelihood options for the communities currently relying on mercury mining.

22. With support from the GEF, UNEP also leads the development of a project in Mexico to support the conversion of chlor-alkali plants, developing contaminated sites management plans, assessing remediation options, and stabilizing the excess mercury resulting from the conversion. This project is supported by the private sector which provides the investment for the conversion.

23. UNEP is the lead agency for the GEF Programme “Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in Small Island Developing States”. In this programme, UNEP is working with the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and UNDP to assist 33 Small-Islands Developing States with the management of chemicals and chemicals-containing products. The programme contributes to the implementation of the Minamata and Stockholm Conventions as well as SAICM. The first three UNEP child projects have recently been approved and will initiate implementation in 2021.

24. UNEP is working with WHO to develop projects addressing some of the priorities identified in MIA projects. These include mercury use in dentistry, mercury-containing medical measuring devices and mercury in cosmetics (approved). Additionally, UNEP is developing mercury trade projects in order to reinforce control capacity of Parties as well as support their reporting obligations. UNEP is also working with other GEF agencies to develop interventions to address mercury emissions from sources listed in Article 8 (Emissions) and Annex D (List of point sources of emissions of mercury and mercury compounds to the atmosphere).

25. With funding from the Government of China, UNEP has been supporting China, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam in the implementation of chemicals and waste MEAs, including the Minamata Convention. Based upon nationally identified needs, a public awareness raising video on the issue of mercury in products, as well as a report and the corresponding training materials are expected to be finalized shortly. This activity is benefitting from the input of the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention.

d. Support through the Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening

26. The Executive Board of the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)¹⁰ held its sixth meeting in two online sessions in March and September 2021. At the first session, held from 1-5 March 2021, the Executive Board considered applications received under the fourth round of funding and preparations for the launch of the call for proposals for the fifth round of funding. At the meeting, fifteen new projects were approved for funding, bringing the total global portfolio of country projects to 57 projects in Africa, Asia Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean, with a total amount of US \$ 15,2 million committed under the projects. The fifth round of funding was launched on 7 April 2021, with a closing date of 7 August 2021 and applications are undergoing appraisal, for consideration by the Executive Board at its seventh meeting in early 2022.

27. At the second session of the sixth meeting, held from 1-2 September 2021, the Executive Board adopted a recommendation to UNEA to extend the duration of the Special Programme for a period of five years, in accordance with paragraph 24 of its Terms of Reference adopted by UNEA resolution 1/5, and to include the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 in the Special Programme. The Board also adopted amendments to its Rules of Procedure, in order to

¹⁰ The Terms of Reference of the Special Programme were adopted by UNEA resolution 1/5 and the Special Programme was established in September 2015.

clarify and streamline the process for nomination of members to the Executive Board and received an update on the operations of the Special Programme.

28. A detailed update on developments with respect to the Special Programme as of 30 July 2021 was provided as an information document for the meeting (document UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/10).

e. UNEP COVID-19 Pandemic Response

29. In May 2020, UNEP launched a study in coordination with the secretariats of the MEAs secretariats, on options, opportunities, and barriers for accelerating a transition to multilateralism in a virtual setting, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2021, UNEP again approached the MEAs secretariats to assess experiences and lessons learned thus far with regards to virtual meetings and prepared a revised Study. The updated and revised Study provides general guidance on how interactive inter-governmental meetings can be held virtually, in a manner that respects the legal framework for such meetings, and looks at (i) the terminology for such meetings; (ii) highlights the principles that through practice have emerged to guide inter-governmental meetings; (iii) examines the requirements set by Rules of Procedure that need to be met for virtual inter-governmental meetings to be properly constituted and (iv) provides standard operating procedures for the conducting virtual meetings, that includes practical guidance such as managing internet connections, decision-making, report writing, interpretation, overcoming the digital divide and possible revisions to Rules of Procedure.

f. Collaboration on cross-cutting aspects between UNEP and the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention

30. Continuous consultations and collaboration regularly take place on programmatic cooperation, including on the basis of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy for 2018–2021 and relevant sub-programmes of the Programme of Work for the periods 2018–2019 and 2020–2021, in particular the Sub-programmes “Chemicals, Waste and Air Quality” and “Environmental Governance”.

31. Pursuant to UNEA resolution 4/8 on the sound management of chemicals and waste, UNEP produced “An assessment of options for strengthening the science-policy interface at the international level for the sound management of chemicals and waste”. The report seeks to facilitate and inform discussions on strengthening the science-policy interface for chemicals and waste management and thereby support and promote science-based local, national, regional and global action on the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. It aims to provide elements for bringing agendas together, and on how science-policy platforms need to interact and inform each other. Following a brief description, each option is assessed according to its potential strengths, weaknesses, and implications, including budgetary considerations. In its assessment, the report highlights that a Science-Policy Interface should be authoritative, policy relevant but not policy prescriptive, highly responsive platform to address the challenges posed by chemicals and waste including its links with other agendas.

32. A joint task force on programmatic cooperation among UNEP and the secretariats of the BRS Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the SAICM further supports cooperation in areas of common concern. Established in 2014 and reinvigorated in early 2018 with updated terms of reference, it aims at enhancing programmatic cooperation among the entities represented, including proposing new initiatives to strengthen cooperation, to improve the delivery of the respective programmes of work and to enhance efficiencies wherever possible. As part of its work, common areas of interest were identified and mapped. Specific focus was placed on acting on opportunities to reach out together to broader audiences. A “Make the Invisible Visible” campaign was for instance jointly developed, which saw a commonly conceptualized, branded and interactive display on chemicals and waste at UNEA-4, the third meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG3) for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, and the Conventions Conferences of the Parties in 2019.

33. The Conference of the Parties is provided with an “Update on the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020”, set forth in UNEP/MC/COP.4/INF/20. The report provides a brief update on the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 since November 2019. The main development since November 2019 is due to the Covid-19 pandemic the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) originally scheduled for October 2020 has now been postponed indefinitely. Virtual work has been undertaken to support the work of the Intersessional Process (IP) to advance its deliberations at IP4 and ICCM5 at the time when in-person meetings can take place. Regular meetings and consultations took place in the context of the joint task force to provide a coordinated UNEP's input to the Virtual Working Groups of the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 process, between

October 2020 and February 2021, on the topics of 1- Targets and Indicators, 2- Governance, 3- Issues of concern, 4- finance.

34. UNEP also prepared in February 2020, upon request from OEWG3 for the SAICM, an Assessment paper entitled: “Assessment on linkages with other clusters related to chemicals and waste management and options to coordinate and cooperate on areas of common interest”. This paper benefitted from inputs from BRS Secretariat, SAICM Secretariat, 10 Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) Secretariat, CITES, amongst others. Beyond the continuing cooperation on issues of common interest, such as mercury wastes, the BRS Conventions Secretariat and the Minamata Convention Secretariat have also joined efforts to draft an exploratory study on biodiversity linkages with chemicals, and a study on chemical linkages to climate change.

g. Information sharing and dialogue facilitating programmatic cooperation between UNEP and the MEAs

35. UNEP continues to support coherent implementation of MEAs in line with paragraph 89 of the Rio+20 outcome document and in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition to periodic dialogue and information sharing between the Executive Director of UNEP and the Heads of the UNEP-administered MEAs, the Executive Secretaries of the global UNEP-administered MEAs regularly engage with UNEP’s Senior Management Team. At a technical level, there are several mechanisms in place to promote regular dialogue between UNEP and the MEAs including the meetings organized through the MEAs Focal Points Network, which offer an opportunity to discuss work relevant for strengthening programmatic cooperation among the MEAs and UNEP. In this context, UNEP initiated in December 2020 the Network of MEAs Gender Officers and Focal Points to share the gender-related information such as seminars, publication announcements and capacity building opportunities

36. In April and May 2020, UNEP hosted four virtual MEAs discovery workshops for the UNEP-administered MEAs with a view of collecting inputs for the preparation of UNEP’s Medium-Term Strategy 2022-25 and engaged the MEAs further in the Strategy preparation process.

37. In January 2021, UNEP convened the Bern II Workshop of Biodiversity-Related Conventions on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to mobilize coordinated inputs from various MEAs to the development of the framework that strengthens cooperation and synergies at multiple levels. Cooperation on common elements such as indicators, reporting, monitoring, capacity building, financial mechanisms, and national policies, were recommended. The consultation workshop provided a platform for promoting synergies within and across MEAs clusters by bringing together the Secretariats of the Conventions, chairs and regional representatives of their governing bodies, and relevant NGOs and agencies. The Minamata Convention participated actively in the Workshop and contributed with critical elements for cooperation on mercury management and governance in relation to biodiversity. The report¹¹ of the consultation workshop has been made available as an information document to subsidiary meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

38. To promote synergies and strengthening coherent reporting across conventions, on September 20th, 2021, UNEP facilitated through InforMEA a webinar on “Mining of Reports and SDGs” for communication officers of MEAs, including Minamata. During the webinar the Data Reporting Tool for MEAs – DaRT¹², a user-friendly, multilingual, and cost-effective tool that simplifies access and management of information for national reporting under multiple MEAs, was discussed.

39. In September 2021, UNEP organized an expert consultation workshop as part of a project on strengthening coordination and collaboration between biodiversity and chemicals/waste clusters funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The workshop drew from a study and an overall analysis conducted by UNEP-WCMC on the potential for strengthening cooperation and synergies across biodiversity as well as chemicals and waste clusters, including a case study on pesticides as part of the project. The workshop brought together national focal points or experts working on biodiversity and chemicals and waste clusters, including the participation of the Minamata Convention Secretariat, to identify challenges and opportunities in strengthening cooperation and coordination across the two clusters at all levels with a specific focus on the national-level experiences.

h. Additional UNEP Tools

¹¹ <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/35906/Bern2rep21.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>

¹² <https://dart.informea.org/>

40. Since 2005, UNEP has developed and maintained the Mercury Inventory Toolkit¹³ to provide countries a scientifically robust methodology to assess their mercury emissions and releases. Over 100 countries have used the Toolkit to set their national priorities as a part of their MIA and related projects. The Toolkit is also one of the methods recommended in the guidance from the Minamata Convention on preparing inventories of emissions pursuant to Article 8¹⁴.

41. The Global Mercury Assessment 2018, produced by UNEP in response to a request from its Governing Council¹⁵, is the fourth such assessment undertaken, following earlier reports in 2002, 2008, and 2013. The assessment was carried out in close cooperation and with the support of the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme secretariat. The Global Mercury Assessment contributed to the development of estimates of emissions and releases of mercury to the environment, to updating the information on environmental levels and trends in air and to the development of the new sections on humans and biota.

42. The Minamata Convention Secretariat continued to provide support as an active member of the InforMEA Initiative. The InforMEA Portal's standards, schemas and best practices inspired the information architecture of the recently launched new Website of the Minamata Convention. In turn, the development of the Minamata Website's Calendar has triggered the enhancement of the InforMEA Meeting Calendar, which brings together meetings from all MEAs in an automated and frequently updated manner, to facilitate informed scheduling of meetings during frequently adjusted planning in times of a global pandemic. The Minamata Convention further informed the Initiative's work on dashboards and outreach related issues. The e-learning course on the Minamata Convention has to date 1800 registered learners of who soon 1000 have obtained a certificate of completion. A one-stop portal for information on MEAs, the InforMEA helps member states and other users access information. In addition to access to over 40 courses on International Law and MEAs, InforMEA provides access to treaty texts, Conference of Parties decisions, national plans and reports, laws, court decisions, and how these relate to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It serves over 100,000 registered users from over 90 countries.

43. As a way of stimulating dialogue and information sharing among the national focal points of the Minamata Convention and other biodiversity and chemicals and waste related conventions, UNEP and the Center for Governance and Sustainability at the University of Massachusetts Boston organized a 5-week online Course on the Implementation of MEAs held between November and December 2020. The course brought together 37 national focal points or experts of biodiversity and chemicals and waste-related conventions from five African countries (Gambia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, and Uganda) to exchange information and share experiences on effective implementation of MEAs. The online course was attended by eight government officials affiliated to the Minamata Convention. Building on the feedback from the 2020 online course, the second phase of the course was rolled out between November and December 2021. It brought together 18 national focal points or experts of biodiversity and chemicals and waste-related conventions from five countries from the Middle East and North Africa region (Iran, Jordan Morocco, Qatar, and Tunisia). Among the original content produced for the course were video interviews with convention Secretariats, including the Minamata Convention Secretariat, on the best practices and challenges of implementation. The online course also utilized existing materials from the InforMEA learning platform.

i. Regional cooperation

Mercury waste

44. UNEP, with the support of the Japanese Ministry of the Environment, completed a mercury waste management project. UNEP developed a Regional Study on Mercury Waste in the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations¹⁶ and the Global Mercury Waste Assessment¹⁷ and conducted a series of mercury monitoring in 5 countries, the result of which is expected to be available in 2021.

¹³ <https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/mercury/mercury-inventory-toolkit>

¹⁴ Guidance on the methodology for preparing inventories of emissions pursuant to Article 8 of the Minamata Convention on Mercury” available at http://mercuryconvention.org/Portals/11/documents/forms-guidance/English/guidance_Article8_inventory.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/mercury/global-mercury-assessment>

¹⁶ https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/21135/reg_study_mercury_waste_mgt_asean.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

¹⁷ <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/22766>

Support to countries in the ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention

45. In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the Regional Action Plan for Cooperation on the Sound Management of Chemicals and Wastes 2019-2020 included a number of priority actions related with mercury and the Minamata Convention. During the last period, different knowledge and information exchange activities were promoted, including a webinar on “ASGM and National Action Plans in the region: “lessons learned, tools and implementation” for the Spanish speaking countries in Latin America and Caribbean region, where the global status and progress made on NAP development was presented, as well as the available tools and assistance from the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership and others. Honduras and Ecuador shared their specific experiences during their NAP development processes. Also within the framework of the LAC Network, the report entitled “Authorities and contact/focal points responsible for the authorization of mercury trade in Latin America and the Caribbean countries” was developed with the support of the Mexico National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change (INECC). This report compiled a list of authorities and contacts or focal points responsible for the authorization of mercury trade in Latin America and the Caribbean, with emphasis on establishing or strengthening mechanisms to control the legal and illegal trade of mercury in the region and therefore contributing to the fulfilment of the Minamata Convention.

46. UNEP is the executing agency for the GEF funded project entitled “Development of Minamata Convention on Mercury Initial Assessment in Africa” (MIA II) being implemented in Angola, Malawi, and Zimbabwe. Through the project, Malawi and Zimbabwe developed draft MIA reports.

47. UNEP, with support from GEF is implementing 9 MIA projects funded in 15 countries in Asia and the Pacific region. Through the project, UNEP assisted in the development of Mongolia’s NAP on Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining. NAPs for the Philippines and Cambodia are currently in preparation. In Myanmar, UNEP is working with partners, such as Artisanal Gold Council (AGC), Spectrum, WHO, Myanmar Environmental Assessment Association (MEAA) and conducted an ASGM Baseline Inventory Training to the NAP Working Group. The 5-day training was organized in November 2020 by the AGC and UNEP and hosted by the Environmental Conservation Department (ECD).

Mercury monitoring

48. Although half of the global mercury consumption and emissions occur in the Asia and the Pacific region, many countries do not have sufficient information on mercury levels, resulting in policy development and implementation challenges. A new initiative was launched in 2019 funded by the Government of Japan to help countries in the region in the areas of information exchange (Article 17), awareness and education (Article 18), and research, development and monitoring (Article 19) of the Convention. The project establishes partnership with the Minamata Environmental Academia and the National Institute for Minamata Disease (NIMD) to provide knowledge and experiences they have accumulated. The project will also establish a region-wide network of analytical institutions with mercury monitoring capabilities around Asia and the Pacific. Online training programmes on mercury monitoring in December 2020 and on mercury inventory and flow analysis in March 2021 were organized and attended by approximately 100 participants and observers. The project will develop a training package on mercury inventory and flow analysis in collaboration with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and will undertake laboratory proficiency testing in the region to obtain basic skills to generate information relevant to national mercury policies.

The programme on capacity building related to MEAs in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries phase III (ACP MEAs III)

49. UNEP is coordinating the implementation of an EC-UNEP partnership programme (ACP MEAs), which addresses challenging environmental issues in the African, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) regions. This programme builds national and institutional capacities, processes and infrastructure in the 79 ACP countries to enforce and comply with MEAs related to chemicals and wastes, and to improve national legal frameworks, including legislations, and mechanisms, for the effective implementation of the Minamata Convention. The ACP-MEAs programme provided comments to the report jointly produced by the Secretariats of the BRS Conventions and the Minamata Convention entitled “Interlinkages between the chemicals and waste Multilateral Environmental Agreements and biodiversity: KEY INSIGHTS¹⁸” and will actively pursue actions to implement some of the recommendations from the report. The Minamata Convention Secretariat is part of the extended partners of the Programme and will implement activities under the Programme related to the organization of regional preparatory meetings for the meetings of the Conferences of the Parties. It also provides

¹⁸ <http://mercuryconvention.org/biodiversity-report/>

information on developments and activities happening under the conventions to other implementing partners in the conduct of their activities.

Section II: Administrative and financial management support provided to the Minamata Convention Secretariat by UNEP

a. UNEP led COVID-19 Pandemic liquidity situation assessment

50. In 2020, UNEP continued to monitor the impact of Covid-19 on funding and programme delivery as well as ensuring that required administrative support was effectively provided. Consultations between UNEP Corporate Services Division and the Secretariat reviewed the inflow of contributions, generation of PSC as well as expenditure trends, and suggested prudential measures as necessary, to meet programmatic and staff related expenses. Overall, the assessment revealed that funding was sufficient to cover the expenses.

b. Enhancements to the UN system-wide Enterprise Planning Tool, Umoja

51. Umoja is the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) tool that has been implemented in 2015 to process all administrative transactions within a common platform for the entire United Nations Secretariat. Umoja has been implemented in phases, in 2018, the Implementing Partner module was rolled out. This module enhances transparency and accountability in the selection of partners with whom the United Nations Secretariat engages with to execute its mandate.

52. Beginning 2021, additional modules have been rolled out to complete the implementation of Umoja as a one-stop solution for all administrative processes. These modules, collectively known as the Integrated Planning and Management Reporting (IPMR) tool include; (a) budgeting tool (b) programmatic view that incorporates SDGs and Gender markers, (c) Management tools that measure and record performance as well as highlight any existing funding gaps and finally (d) Dashboards that present visualization tools of captured data for reporting purposes.

53. UNEP will continue to engage the Convention to ensure adequate representation, training and incorporation of its requirements resulting in a successful implementation.

54. The roll out of the IPMR tool has so far led to an increase of Umoja license fees that are settled by respective MEAs. The increase in the license fee for the year 2020 was significantly higher than previous years due to the new cost distribution methodology decided by UNHQ, which is based on the number of registered users per entity.

c. Support provided to the convention from programme support resources

55. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/217 and the applicable United Nations procedures as stipulated in ST/AI/286, programme support cost at a maximum rate of 13 per cent is charged to all extrabudgetary resources to recover the incremental costs incurred when supporting their activities. The amount of programme support resources available in any given year is based on the income generated for that purpose in the previous year.

56. UNEP closely monitors its programme support resources, and in the last few years, the fund balance of programme support resources have reduced significantly due to increasing requests from donors to waive or reduce the programme support rate chargeable and from initiatives such as Umoja, and maintenance of its master data as well as the Global Service Delivery Model. In order to reverse the trend on request for waivers or reduction of programme support costs, on 26 April 2018, the Executive Director issued a memorandum to the Heads of all Offices requesting them to re-consider their requests for waivers, review their cost structures and closely monitor utilization of their programme support resources.

57. The central administrative functions funded by the pool of retained program support resources include preparation of financial statements, administration of human resources and advisory and technical support services provided by UNEP Headquarters. The current list of revised central administrative services attached as Annex I to this report may be subject to change should there be new administrative guidelines issued by the United Nations Secretariat.

58. As part of the Secretary-General's reforms, a new Global Service Delivery Model has been implemented by the United Nations Secretariat. This necessitates an ongoing review of the cost recovery arrangements for sharing and utilization of programme support resources, and to clarify and streamline the responsibilities of both the MEAs secretariats and UNEP Headquarters.

59. UNEP is committed to the continuous review of the existing Project Support Cost (PSC) policy to determine its adequacy in the sharing and apportionment of Programme Support Resources. A draft document is ready for consultative circulation in order to receive further input from all stakeholders before final approval.

Section III: Updates on the support by UNEP to the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties

60. UNEP and the secretariat of the Minamata Convention (which provides a separate report to the Conference of Parties) have, on the basis of reciprocity, provided the support of expert staff to the secretariat of the Minamata Convention to facilitate the running of contact groups during COP3. UNEP also provided legal support to COP 3.

Annex I

UNEP's core services in support of the Minamata Convention

Table 3 below provides the list of core administrative and support services provided by UNEP in support of the Minamata Convention. Core administrative and support services are those services provided by UNEP against the 33% share of the programme support costs income attributable to all Minamata Convention trust funds. The list of core services is not exhaustive and may include additional core services, as mutually agreed from time to time between UNEP and the Convention. The table below is without prejudice to the delegation of authority from the Executive Director of UNEP to the Executive Secretary of Minamata Convention.

Table 3
List of core administrative and support services

Service Category	Description
Policy, guidelines, and procedures	<p>All policies concerning administrative arrangements are governed by the United Nations General Assembly resolutions and those of United Nations Environment Programme's governing body. United Nations Financial Regulations and Rules supplemented by Multilateral Environmental Agreements' and entities' financial procedures or rules ensure effective and efficient use of resources in accordance with the purposes for which funds are provided, within authorized limits and available income. The United Nations Financial Regulations and Rules also regulate the organization's procurement activities.</p> <p>United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules set the framework within which United Nations Environment Programme's personnel, including different categories of staff members, consultants, and independent contractors, are recruited, and administered.</p> <p>United Nations Secretariat policies supplement and provide details on the implementation of the resolutions and regulations. They are embodied in United Nations administrative issuances i.e. Secretary-General's Bulletins, Administrative Instructions and Information Circulars which may be further interpreted and translated into guidelines and procedures for day to day operations.</p>
Human Resources	Recruitment and performance management.
<i>Talent Acquisition and Management</i>	Developing staffing plans and implementing related recruitment activities namely classification, vacancy announcement, assessments, evaluation, review, and selection.
<i>Staff Administration</i>	Advise on staff, on-boarding administering contracts, processing entitlements and benefits, review, and update of dependency status, leave records, lateral move, separation from service etc. Advise on Administering end-of-service and post-retirement benefits including pension fund deductions and After Service Health Insurance scheme.
<i>Staff development and training</i>	<p>Mandatory online ethics and integrity training, competency based interviewing skills, management development programme etc.</p> <p>Identify capacity building needs and provide opportunities for continuous learning with a view to build a multi-skilled workforce promoting career development for staff. These include in-house developed training modules on Results Based Management and Gender Mainstreaming, among others.</p>
<i>Performance Management</i>	Implementing and monitoring compliance with performance management policies, process, and tools (INSPIRA) to reward/recognize/retain staff and address underperformance. Supporting rebuttal process guidance and conducting training on writing workplans and performance assessments. Managing the Financial Disclosure programme.

Service Category	Description
Budget and Finance	Review, management, oversight and reporting of budgets and financial resources of the governing bodies and donors.
<i>Budgeting / Fund Management</i>	Review, support on presenting and justifying budgets to the governing bodies. Process budgetary authorizations and financial transactions. Advise staff, management, and governing bodies on the use of financial resources. Create, maintain, and close Trust Funds.
<i>General Accounting / Financial Statements</i>	Authority to sign the consolidated financial statements rests with the Executive Director. Extracts from the consolidated statements are signed by UNON. Maintenance of accounts and preparation of Financial Statements including the Programme Support account. Advise on processing accounting entries/adjustments including donor refunds; year-end accruals; statutory reporting and support to the annual external audit.
<i>Payments / Expenditure</i>	Advise on the processing of payments to Implementing Partners, consultants, vendors, and meeting participants as well as advise on monitoring advances and recording expenditures from financial reports received from Implementing Partners.
<i>Payroll</i>	Advise on processing payment of salaries, entitlements, related advances, and maintenance of payroll accounts.
<i>Contributions /Cash Management</i>	Authority to accept contributions from the Parties rests with the United Nations Environment Programme Executive Director. Advise on issuance of invoices to Parties, recording and monitoring contribution receivables, processing contributions upon receipt of payments; reconciling applied deposit accounts.
<i>Treasury/Banking/ Investment</i>	Advise on the receipt and disbursement of funds, House Bank management, bank reconciliations, maintenance of banking details for staff, vendors, implementing partners and consultants. Investment of United Nations Environment Programme funds in the right products is managed by UNHQ Treasury.
<i>Oversight</i>	Coordinate internal audit, investigation, inspection, and external audit.
Legal	Legal advice, opinions, and representation in the Internal Justice System.
<i>Advisory and Representation</i>	Provision of corporate legal advice and institutional support. Representing the organisation before the Management Evaluation Unit with regards to requests filed by staff members. Representing the organisation at the United Nations Dispute Tribunal (UNDT) and provision of support to the Office of Legal Affairs with regards to appeals filed at the United Nations Appeals Tribunal. Negotiating settlements of claims; provision of legal support and advice in mediation, reconciliation, and arbitration. Legal and institutional support in disciplinary procedures; provision of legal advice in cases of alleged misconduct and relevant investigations. Reviewing and clearing Host Country Agreements and legal instruments in accordance with the Delegation of Authority Policy and Framework for the Management and Administration of Multilateral Environmental Agreements. Provision of legal advice on human resources issues e.g., interpretation of the Staff Regulations and Rules, advise on outside activities, separation from employment, settlements. Coordinating audits, inspections and evaluations undertaken by the Office of Internal Oversight Services. Providing advice on engaging with implementing partners, provision of templates for this purpose.

Service Category	Description
Support Services	Services to support operations including office space, premises, host country arrangements and protocols.
<i>Contracts and Procurement</i>	Supervising procurement related functions and providing advice on procurement proposals of significant financial or operational impact; reviewing the proposed strategy/approach to best serve office's interests. Providing oversight over the service providers. Representation at the High-Level Committee on Management Procurement Network on development of policies and procedures of interest to the office. Liaising with the contracts committee for the preparation and presentation of cases for approval and addressing to follow-up queries. Provision of general contract administration services including amendment, extension, or closure.
<i>Inventory / Asset Management</i>	Provision of services to manage inventory of equipment items and assets including bar coding, maintain records and track movement of items; conduct physical inventories; process the disposal of obsolete and unserviceable items.
<i>Travel, Shipping and Visa</i>	Providing advice on developments in Secretariat travel policies and procedures. This includes advice on shipping services, handled through external vendors under contracts encompassing all aspects of incoming and outgoing official shipments of organizational goods and property as well as staff members' personal effects during recruitment, transfer and separation.
<i>Facilities Management</i>	Advising on the provision of comfortable and efficient working environment for the staff.
<i>Mail Pouch</i>	Advising on different mail services i.e postal, international express courier and diplomatic pouch, including but not limited to cost, transit days, document preparation, etc.
<i>Archives/Document Management</i>	Advising on and overseeing the implementation of policies for the management of archives in accordance with established archival standards and practices. Advise on Maintaining and managing archives.
<i>Enterprise Resource Programme (ERP) – Umoja</i>	Advising on all aspects of workflow analysis, business process reengineering and organizational transformation. Managing core transformational activities connected to the Umoja implementation and system life cycle. Providing training and guidance on Umoja functionality, access, and modality for the execution of administrative processes.
<i>Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) and Internal Controls</i>	Implementation of the United Nations Secretariat ERM policy and framework, its monitoring and development. Advise on developments and activities related to the life cycle of ERM. Liaison directly with the UN Secretariat's Department of Management for all issues relating to ERM and IC implementation and update of the ERM treatment plan.
Information and Communications Technology	Computing, telecommunications, office automation, infrastructure support including electronic mail as well as consulting, advisory and help desk services.
<i>ICT Infrastructure and services</i>	Advising on the Provision of secure infrastructure services such as internet connectivity and Wi-Fi access; local area network and systems directory services; office computer, standard software productivity tools and security software; email, file storage and sharing, print, IP telephony; computer and video conference services. Provision of cloud and on-premise hosting services for websites, software applications, and databases. Access to corporate internet/intranet and mail systems.
<i>Software development and maintenance</i>	Providing advice from tactical, operational, and strategic aspects with consideration to the specific needs of the office. Making recommendations on cost effective options e.g. outsourcing or in-house IT services. Provision of customised / off the shelf software applications to support the specific needs of office.
<i>Help desk services</i>	Provision of local and global services to staff in resolving various IT related issues for the UN enterprise applications.