



ZMWG Blog

Summary of the First Conference of the Parties for the Minamata Convention on Mercury

24th-29th September, Geneva, Switzerland.

The Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG) closely followed the First Conference of the Parties for the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP1) in Geneva, Switzerland, 24th-29th of September 2017 and intervened as appropriate [1]. We were pleased to see the COP1 reached consensus on pending matters from prior meetings of the Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee (INC) which resulted in establishing an effective Convention operational framework for achieving significant mercury reductions.

Our main priorities for COP1 included adoption of forms and guidance that was approved at INC 7, and addressing the issues of reporting, waste thresholds, interim storage guidelines, effectiveness evaluation, and matters for future action, which included the following decisions.

- Article 3 guidance on identifying mercury stocks, and the forms/instructions for complying with mercury trade consent and related certification requirements;
- The product and process exemption forms and associated register of exemptions under Article 6 of the Convention; a registrar will be kept by the Secretariat and these will also be available to the public
- Article 8 (air emissions) guidance on BAT/ BEP, options for existing facility control requirements, preparing emissions inventories, and selection of “relevant sources” within the

specified source categories; and

- The Guidance for preparing the ASGM National Action Plan (NAP) under article 7.

COP1 also saw significant progress concerning various other ZMWG priorities, including :

Reporting: Forms were adopted for use by Parties to report back on the measures undertaken to meet Convention obligations and on the effectiveness of those measures. In particular, ZMWG most welcomed the decision for a shorter reporting cycle for supply and trade, reporting per year data on a biennial basis. For other obligations, Parties will report every four years. It was also agreed that each Party will submit its first biennial report by 31 December 2019 and its first full report by December 2021. Parties are also encouraged to submit an electronic form, and the Secretariat is requested to make the Parties electronic reports available.

Furthermore, it was agreed that Parties would provide access to their data related to mercury emissions, under Article 8. Parties would also provide the rational on how they plan to ensure that facilities responsible for at least 75% of the emissions from a source category are subject to controls.

Waste Thresholds: COP1 established an intercessional work group to further elaborate on waste thresholds, building on a document introduced by Japan. As recommended by NRDC/ZMWG, the terms of reference for the working group were focused more on determining which mercury wastes warrant thresholds rather than assuming thresholds are appropriate for all wastes. The expert group will identify the types of waste that fall within the categories specified in paragraph 2 of Article 11, provide related information; prioritising the types of waste identified that are most relevant for the establishment of waste thresholds, and identify possible approaches to establishing any needed thresholds for those prioritised waste for consideration at COP2. We were also pleased to see COP1 approving the participation of civil society within the working group, another ZMWG priority.

Interim Storage: COP1 requested the Secretariat to undertake further revision of the draft guidelines through input from relevant experts, including technical experts from the Basel Convention and present a revised draft for consideration at COP2. Provisional use of the current draft guidelines is encouraged.

Effectiveness Evaluation: COP1 adopted a draft road map for establishing arrangements both for providing comparable monitoring data and elements of an effectiveness evaluation framework, as ZMWG had sought. To that end an *ad hoc* group of experts was established including 25 experts nominated by the Parties – 5 per region, as well as 10 civil society experts, including NGOs, as observers.

Matters for Future Action (Article 3) - (Article 14): Several matters were brought up for consideration. Under Article 3, trade in mercury compounds was one of several issues identified for future consideration by the COP. In regards to Article 14 – Capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer, Parties and other stakeholders were invited to submit relevant information on capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer for the Secretariat to compile and present at COP2.

Despite progress made, challenges remain, both related to the location and structure of the Minamata Convention Secretariat and the Memorandum of Understanding regarding the financial mechanism of the Convention with the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). The Secretariat will be temporarily located in Geneva, with further review of arrangements at COP2.

In summary, the final road map is now in place to ‘zero down’ global mercury pollution, but critical work remains. ZMWG looks forward to a productive second meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which will be held in Geneva 19-23 November 2018.

[1] All ZMWG interventions are available on our [website](http://www.zeromercury.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=309:unenvironment-minamata-mercury-cop1-24-29-september-2017-geneva-switzerland&catid=54:developments-main-category&Itemid=104) http://www.zeromercury.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=309:unenvironment-minamata-mercury-cop1-24-29-september-2017-geneva-switzerland&catid=54:developments-main-category&Itemid=104