



ZMWG Blog

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

19-23 November, 2018, Geneva, Switzerland.

The Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG) closely followed the Second Conference of the Parties for the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP2) in Geneva, Switzerland, 19-23 November 2018, and [intervened as appropriate](#). Our main priorities for COP2 were waste thresholds, interim storage guidelines, and effectiveness evaluation. We also closely followed matters for future action, including the review process of annexes A and B; and harmonized custom codes to distinguish mercury-added products.

Waste Thresholds

Decision MC2/2 established a process to develop mercury waste thresholds. As advocated by ZMWG, an expert group will focus its efforts on establishing mercury content thresholds for “waste contaminated with mercury”. The group will also develop lists of wastes falling under

three definitional categories: “consisting of mercury,” “containing mercury” and “contaminated with mercury.”

Effectiveness Evaluation

Decision MC 2/10 amended the effectiveness evaluation roadmap set forth in COP 1, modifying the experts mandate and composition of its membership while agreeing on an outline of work.

The group will review the outcome indicators developed previously as part of the EE framework, and further elaborate on sources of information and baselines for those indicators. It will consider how to integrate monitoring data into the framework. In addition, the group will identify those categories of monitoring data most effective in providing information on global trends, what data could be used to assess the impact on levels and trends of mercury, and data limitations. Importantly, as advocated by ZMWG, the group will also assess the information, identify gaps and outline options to enhance the quality of the information.

Interim storage

Decision MC 2/6 adopted the interim mercury storage guidelines which included a number of key elements to facilitate environmentally sound management. We were pleased to see many of the important elements that ZMWG had proposed during the intersessional period are included in the guidelines, including provisions on financial assurances related to closure of the sites.

Releases

Decision MC 2/3 established an intersessional process to identify relevant point source categories of releases of mercury and mercury compound to land and water, including the establishment of a group of technical experts.

Contaminated sites

Decision MC 2/8 invites parties and other stakeholders to submit additional comments and information to complement and further improve the draft guidance, calling in particular for information and comments to make the guidance more practicable.

Review of Annex A and B

No specific decision was taken by the COP to start reviewing annexes A and B. However, a call for relevant information was launched by the Secretariat to prepare for COP3.

This is an important area for ZMWG; given the technological and political developments around the world since Annex A and B were adopted in 2013, we will be seeking to further strengthen the Convention.

HS Codes for mercury-added products

The Decision requests the Secretariat to suggest approaches for modifying customs codes to allow countries to distinguish mercury-added products from those products that do not contain mercury, including approaches for possible harmonization among countries. This is an important success for ZMWG, in support of the Global Mercury Partnership, recognizing the critical need for Parties to identify the production, import and export of mercury-added products to comply with Article 4.

Other issues

Other issues included a request for further information on capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer; as well as on the SIP; a small modification to the rules of procedure of the Implementation and Compliance Committee; and a decision that the secretariat of the MC will be autonomous and based in Geneva, with special arrangements with the BRS Secretariat. Finally, a new president, David Kapindula (Zambia), was elected for COP 3, along with new Bureau members.

ZMWG looks forward to a productive third meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Geneva 25-29 November 2019.