

ZMWG summary and considerations on the outcome of COP 6

Summary of the sixth Conference of the Parties for the Minamata Convention on Mercury, 3-7 November 2025, Geneva, Switzerland.

The Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG) followed closely the sixth Conference of the Parties for the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP6) in Geneva, Switzerland , 3-7 November 2025. Almost all of our main priorities, detailed in our [views](#), have been reflected in Decisions to strengthen the implementation of the provisions of the mercury-added cosmetics ban; to phase out dental amalgam; to prepare the work to better regulate mercury compounds.

Next COP will be held in Geneva from 14 to 18 June 2027 under the presidency of Marie-Claire L'Henry (France).

Cosmetics

Following a proposal from the African Group, Parties agreed to intensify global efforts to eliminate mercury-added skin-lightening products. The decision notably strengthens cooperation with international organizations to curb manufacture and trade of these products, along the lines of our recommendations. It further underlines the importance to continuing work on this complicated and multifaceted issue.

In its final decision, the COP encourages Parties to report any implementation challenges related to their obligations on curbing mercury-added cosmetics and requests the Global Mercury Partnership (GMP) to compile and disseminate information on the presence of mercury in these products. The Secretariat is invited to provide COP-7 with information on mechanisms that support enforcement and on methods for identifying mercury in cosmetics, as well as to collaborate with the World Customs Organization and INTERPOL to investigate sources of illegal mercury trade. The decision further enhanced the relations with the World Health Organisation (WHO); in cooperation with the partners and the GMP, WHO is invited to share lessons learned from its relevant ongoing projects and to prepare an illustrative national public health system-wide strategy, focused on reduction measures for mercury added cosmetics. It is noted that skin lightening products that may not contain mercury are also to be part of this strategy -in an effort to tackle colorism.

Dental amalgam

An historic milestone took place at COP-6! Parties agreed to set **2034** (instead of the initially suggested date of 2030) **as the global phase-out date** after which the manufacture, import, or export of dental amalgam will no longer be permitted, except for when its use is considered necessary by the dental practitioner based on the needs of the patient (these exceptions will be reviewed three years after entering into force). Also, Parties that have not yet phased out dental amalgam shall (immediately) take measures, as appropriate, to not allow, or significantly phase down dental amalgam.

Supply and trade

The COP approved updates on the guidance on identifying large mercury stocks and supply sources, and on the guidance for using import and export forms to help Parties identify, manage, and reduce mercury trade from primary mercury mining.

The COP also decided to invite Parties that have reported experiences and challenges with implementing Article 3.3 on primary mercury mining to keep sharing information with the Secretariat

The Secretariat was tasked with preparing strategies for non-compliant Parties and improving guidance on customs codes.

The Implementation and Compliance Committee is requested to review the reasons provided by Parties facing difficulties in meeting Article 3 trade-related requirements and consider whether further recommendations beyond those from COP-4 and COP-5 are needed. It was further requested to collaborate with compliance bodies of other environmental agreements to support Parties in preventing and combating illegal trade.

Mercury Compounds

An important, and complementary to the cosmetics and supply/trade, decision on mercury compounds was established by the COP. It encourages Parties to consider creating an additional Convention annex to regulate such trade. Parties and stakeholders are invited to submit information on their supply, use and trade and potential compounds candidates for listing in the annex by 31 March 2026. The COP establishes an open-ended expert group (OEEG) to advance technical discussions ahead of COP-7.

Effectiveness Evaluation (EE)

The Secretariat presented its progress report and supporting documents for the first effectiveness evaluation of the Convention, along with an update from the Open-ended Scientific Group. During discussions, several parties raised concerns about data gaps, delays, and the need for reliable, comparable information. Many emphasized the importance of capacity building and financial and technical support for national reporting. Minor text amendments were suggested, and the draft decision, which is requesting Parties to submit their full national reports under Article 21 by 31 December 2025 to ensure up-to-date information for the first effectiveness evaluation, was adopted.

Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM)

The COP requested the Secretariat, in coordination with relevant international initiatives, to explore how supply-chain transparency and certification can reduce mercury use and enhance accountability of buyers and intermediaries across the gold trade. Parties also call for strengthened collaboration with the Global Mercury Partnership and the engagement of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and youth in this effort.

Annex B – vinylchloride monomer

The negotiations failed to agree on the phase-out of VCM process. After discussions in a contact group, only one party (China) refused to recognize the validity of evidence on feasibility and called instead for a report on the criteria and indicators by which feasibility could be determined. Hence it has not been possible to reach consensus to establish the economic and technical feasibility of mercury-free catalysts in vinyl chloride monomer production at this meeting. Parties will reconsider the issue during COP-7.

Extension exemption

Bangladesh, India and Thailand presented requests for extending some exemptions from the phaseout obligation for specific mercury-added products, listed in Annex A of the Convention. Several delegates questioned whether the requests met the Convention's criteria, and the African

group called for a COP decision establishing clear procedures for future temporary exemption requests.

In its Decision on the exemption extension requests, the COP grants the extensions and notes that, apart from the three extensions granted by COP-6, all registered exemptions from the 2020 phaseout dates listed in Annexes A and B to the Convention will expire on 31 December 2025 and cannot be requested again.

Granted exemptions can be seen below but the end date may differ:

- India: Antiseptics; non-electronic measuring devices; switches and relays; high-pressure mercury vapour (HPMV) lamps.
- Thailand: Switches and relays; lamps (CFLs, LFLs, CCFL, EEFL); HPMV lamps; non-electronic measuring devices.
- Bangladesh (import only): Batteries; switches and relays; pesticides, biocides, and antiseptics; HPMV lamps.

In its Decision on the procedure for requests to extend exemptions, the COP calls for any request for an extension to be submitted at least six months, but no less than two months, before the last COP held before the expiry date of the exemption. The request is expected to contain the information specified in paragraph 6 (a), (b), and (c) of Article 6 of the Convention for each mercury-added product or process included in the request. The Secretariat may consult as needed with the Party submitting the extension request.

Stakeholder participation

Stakeholder participation reached new levels at COP-6, with women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and civil society taking an increasingly visible and engaged role in the discussions. COP-6 also marked the establishment of the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Mercury, the launch of the Convention's Women's Caucus, and the presentation of the Youth Declaration.

Events at the COP

During the COP, the Global Mercury Partnership organized a Knowledge Lab and a Special Events addressing skin-lightening products and harmful beauty practices, as well as a photo exhibition "*Humanæ*" by Angélica Dass on the Geneva lakeshore and a film screening and panel discussion on *Detoxifying Cosmetics and Beauty Ideals*.

ZMWG celebrated its 20th year anniversary while at the COP!

Our **ZMWG views and statements** can be found [here](#).

The ZMWG further had an **exhibition booth** showcasing our work and recent reports on mercury added skin lightening creams, videos, relevant publications and posters.

A **ZMWG press release** on the decision on cosmetics was released on 7 November and can be found [here](#).



