



### MEDIA ADVISORY

#### EXPECTED HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FIRST MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY

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**WHAT?** *First meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury, convened under the theme “Make Mercury History”, featuring:*

- High-level Segment – Ministerial Roundtables, Keynote Talk and Action Messages from Ministers
- Thematic sessions – Land, Air and Water
- “A Moment to Minamata” – looking back on the history of Minamata in southern Japan
- Show Case Events and Knowledge Labs around the Mercury Life-Cycle
- Exhibition throughout the week, featuring the “Minamata Journey”
- Events around Geneva for the “Hg Week”, with special session on Health (at WHO), Gold (Maison de la Paix), Science (University of Geneva), exhibition of photographs by Pulitzer Prize winner Larry C Price and Mercury Bubble (Press Photo Op!) on the Place des Nations

**WHEN?** *24 to 29 September 2017*

**WHERE?** The International Conference Centre of Geneva,  
As well as the Palais des Nations and various locations in Geneva

**WHO?** President of Switzerland,  
President of Guyana,  
More than 80 Ministers and CEO of Conservation International,  
Erik Solheim, Head of UN Environment,  
Heads of UN agencies and the Global Environment Facility

#### **Background information:**

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The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury will convene in Geneva from 24 to 29 September 2017. The meeting will play a critical role in the future of the Convention, which aims at protecting the human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury, a highly toxic heavy metal considered by the World Health Organization as one of the top 10 chemicals of major public health concern.

This Conference will culminate in a High-Level Segment (on 28 and 29 September 2017) hosted by the President of Switzerland, entitled “Making Mercury History”, to celebrate the commitment of the international community to the Minamata Convention.

While mercury is naturally occurring, it is also a by-product of a number of industrial processes and can be found in many everyday objects, including batteries, dental amalgam, thermometers and fluorescent lamps. Once released to the atmosphere, soil and water - often through coal burning, and artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) - mercury bioaccumulates in fish, animals and humans, posing a serious threat to human



health and the environment. Through the Minamata Convention the international community can tackle the entire life cycle of mercury.

The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention will bring together more than 150 Member States with some of the world's leading experts on chemicals and health, as well as civil society and international organizations, to address a range of issues including trade in mercury compounds, storage of mercury, management of contaminated sites, and ASGM.

#### Meeting Highlights will include:

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- **Mercury Bubble** with Erik Solheim and Mayor of Geneva: Thursday 28 September 11.00 – 11.30  
Place des Nations – with Press Photo Opportunity!
- **“A Moment to Minamata”** with the Mayor of Minamata and a storyteller of the Minamata Disease:  
Thursday 28 September – 13.00  
International Conference Centre of Geneva
- **High-Level Opening with the President of Switzerland:** Thursday 28 September at 15.00 – Friday 29 September 13.00  
International Conference Centre of Geneva
- **Uniting for Minamata with the President of Guyana and heads of UN agencies and the Global Environment Facility:** Thursday 28 September - 18.15 – 19.30  
UN Assembly Hall, Palais des Nations

#### Media Briefings:

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- Pre-Cop Briefing with full press kit: Friday 22 September at 9.30 Press Room 1 – Palais
- Closing Press Conference: Friday 29 September at 13.15 – Palais

#### Please contact Niamh Brannigan to arrange interviews with experts on:

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- Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining
- The environmental and health impacts of mercury
- The implementation of the convention
- Alternatives to mercury in industrial processes and products

#### Online resources:

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- See full meeting programme and timetable here: <http://cop1.mercuryconvention.org/timetable>
- See Minamata Convention website here: [www.mercuryconvention.org](http://www.mercuryconvention.org)
- Follow us on twitter: [@MinamataMEA](https://twitter.com/MinamataMEA) [#makemercuryhistory](https://twitter.com/MinamataMEA)
- Watch our video on Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining here:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmJTSptLab4&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmJTSptLab4&feature=youtu.be)

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