



MEDIA ADVISORY

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

WHAT? *First meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury, including:*

- High-Level Segment convened under the theme “Make Mercury History”– Ministerial Roundtables, Action Messages from Ministers and Key Take-Home Messages
- Thematic sessions – Mercury in Land, Air and Water
- “A Moment to Minamata” – looking back on the history of mercury poisoning in Minamata (southern Japan)
- Show Case Events, Knowledge Labs and exhibition, around the Mercury Life-Cycle
- Events around Geneva for the “Hg Week”, with a special session on Health (at WHO), on Gold (Maison de la Paix), and on Science (University of Geneva), exhibition of photographs on mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining by Pulitzer Prize winner Larry C Price and artistic installation “Mercury Drop” (Press Photo Op!) on the Place des Nations

WHEN? 24 to 29 September 2017

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

WHO? President of Switzerland,
President of Guyana,
More than 80 Ministers,
CEO of Conservation International,
Erik Solheim, Head of UN Environment,
Heads of UN agencies and the Global Environment Facility,
Over 1000 delegates

Background information:

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 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 “Make 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, thermometers, fluorescent lamps or dental amalgam.



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, which entered into force on 16 August 2017 and was ratified as of 22 September by 78 States and the European Union, 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. Negotiators will set the course for the future of the Convention. They will discuss technical matters, such as trade in mercury compounds, storage of mercury, management of contaminated sites, and ASGM as well as a range of key strategic matters on how to support global efforts to make mercury history.

Meeting Highlights will include:

- **“Mercury Drop”** 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 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:

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

Please contact Niamh Brannigan to arrange interviews with experts on:

- 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:

- See full meeting programme and timetable here: <http://cop1.mercuryconvention.org/timetable>
- See Minamata Convention website here: 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

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