

Pollution: Africa's context and priorities in the Minamata Convention

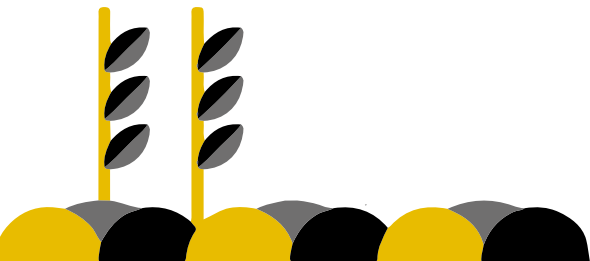
Monika Stankiewicz, Executive Secretary

Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury

2025 Regional Consultative Meeting Africa of the UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders (10-13 July 2025)

20th Ordinary Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN)

Friday, 11 July 2025



Pollution and waste: An overview

Pollution is responsible for **9 million deaths** a year globally, or one in six fatalities. Pollution-related deaths have increased by **66 per cent** over the last two decades.



2.1 billion tonnes of solid waste are produced annually—enough to reach the moon and back if it was packed into standard shipping containers and placed end-to-end.



DISPOSAL More than **90%** of waste generated in Africa is disposed of at **uncontrolled dumpsites and landfills**, often with associated open burning. **19** of the world's 50 **biggest dumpsites** are located **in Africa**, all in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Establishment of new
science-policy panel
on **chemicals, waste**
and pollution on 20
June 2025 in Punta
del Este, Uruguay



Significance of the New Science-Policy Panel

The new **global science-policy panel** will enhance the **sound management of chemicals and waste** and help **prevent pollution**.

Relevance to the Minamata Convention

The panel's establishment is **directly relevant** to the Minamata Convention's objective.

The Convention covers **all life-cycle stages of mercury**, where **scientific assessments** are central to implementation and policy-making.

Next Steps for the Minamata Convention

- Parties to the Convention are expected to follow-up on **OEWG 3.2 outcomes** at **COP-6**.
- The Convention COP may wish to **establish strong collaboration** with the Plenary of the new Panel to ensure the Convention benefits from the latest science and supports global action on mercury.

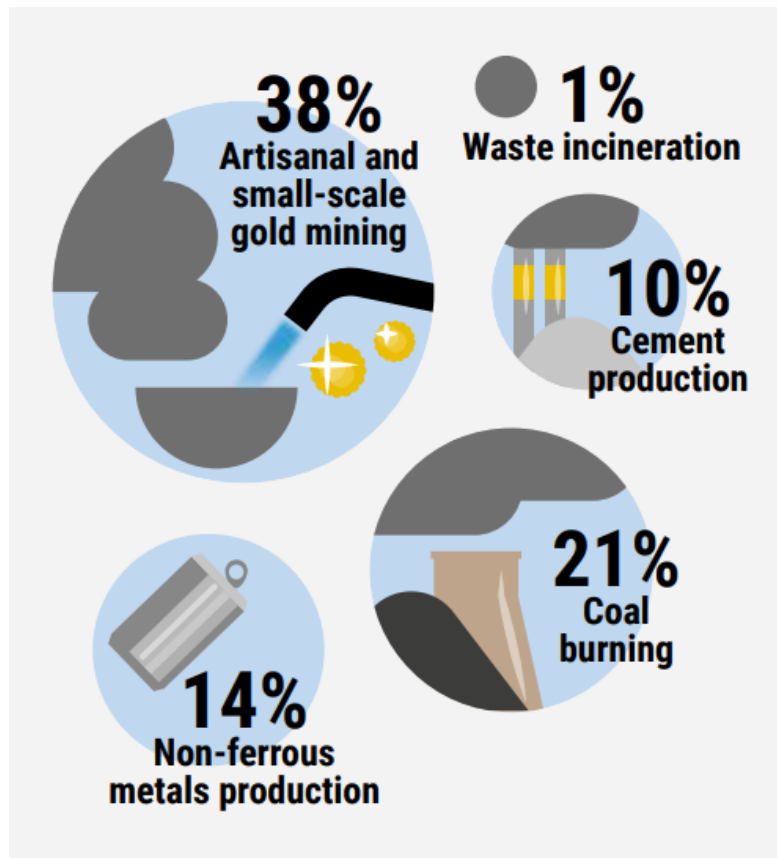
Why a Convention on Mercury?



- *Exposure to mercury – even small amounts – may cause serious health problems, and is a threat to the development of the child in utero and early in life.*
- *May have toxic effects on the nervous, digestive and immune systems, and on lungs, kidneys, skin and eyes.*
- *Considered by WHO as one of the top ten chemicals of major public health concern.*
- *People are mainly exposed to methylmercury, an organic compound, when they eat fish and shellfish that contain the compound.*

**Every year,
about 2,000
tonnes of
mercury is
emitted into the
atmosphere.**

Sources of emissions



13 May 2025

Associated Press



CLIMATE

Mercury fuels gold mining in Senegal. And it's poisoning the people who use it



Across West Africa, mercury — a potent neurotoxin — remains the dominant method for extracting gold from ore in the region's booming informal mining sector, much of it illegal and unregulated. In Senegal's gold-rich Kedougou region, women like Camara use the metal regularly, often without protective gloves and masks, to make a living.

Objective of the Minamata Convention (Article 1)



« (...) to protect the human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. »

Provisions cover the entire life cycle of mercury, including:

- *mercury mining,*
- *mercury trade,*
- *mercury-added products,*
- *industrial processes using mercury,*
- *ASGM,*
- *emissions to air,*
- *releases to land and water,*
- *interim storage,*
- *mercury waste, and*
- *contaminated sites.*

The Convention

**...entered into
force in 2017**

**...currently with
152 Parties.**

Minamata Convention Ratification Map

Africa

Asia Pacific

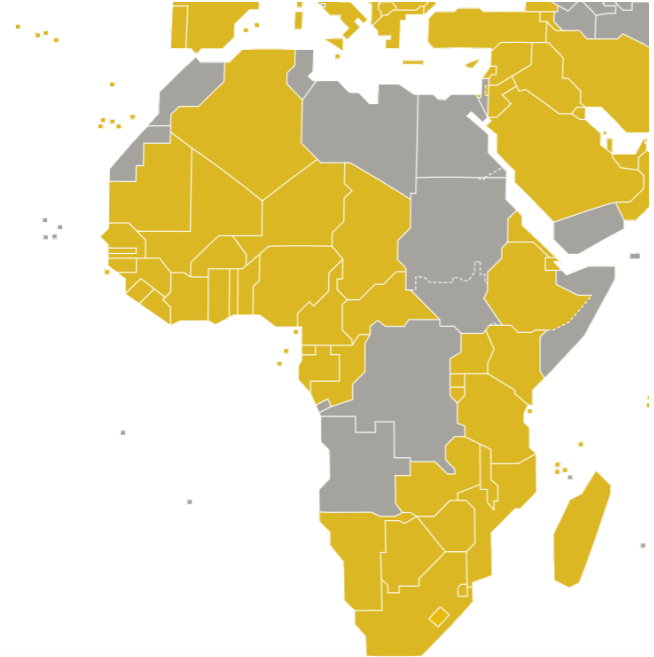
Eastern European States

Latin America and the
Caribbean

Western European and
Others Group

● PARTY

● NON-PARTY



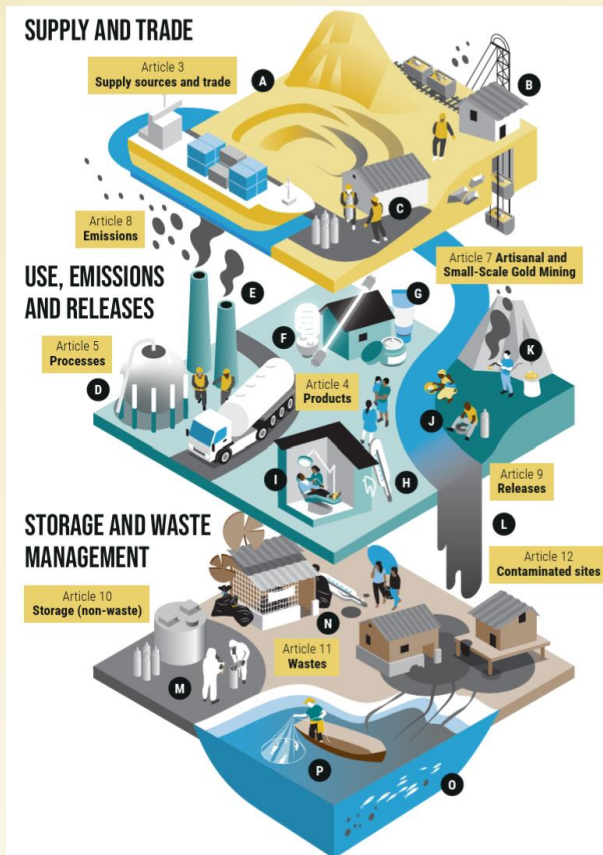
Logic of the Minamata Convention

Control Measures across the Mercury Life Stage

Keep mercury underground

Reduce the use and presence of mercury in the economy, industry and society

Reduce mercury to the environment



Enabling/Supportive Context



Art. 13: Financial resources and mechanism

Art. 14: Capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer

Art. 15: Implementation and Compliance Committee

Art. 16: Health aspects

Art. 17: Information exchange

Art. 18: Public information, awareness and education

Art. 19: Research, development and monitoring

Art. 20: Implementation plans

Art. 21: Reporting

Art. 22: Effectiveness evaluation

Art. 23: Conference of the Parties

Art. 24: Secretariat

Arts. 25-35: Various procedural articles



In the Lead-up to COP-6

Geneva, 3-7 November 2025

COP-6 Bureau Members from Africa region

Mr. Sidi Ould Aloueimine (Mauritania)

Mr. Mohamed Abdulai Kamara (Sierra Leone)

Calendar until COP-6

July/August

September

October/November

7 Jul: Registration **opens**
(invitations sent)

25 Jul: Deadline for application
of online events, knowledge labs
and exhibition booths

26-27 Aug: COP-6 Documents
Briefing Sessions (online)

COP-6 documents on the
website

5 Sept: Deadline for registration
of sponsored delegates

30 Sept: Information session on
budget (online, for Parties only)

7-9 Oct: Africa regional meeting
(Gaborone, Botswana)

13-17 Oct: pre-COP-6 Online
Events Week

24 Oct: Deadline for registration
(Non-sponsored delegates)

2 Nov: COP-6 Bureau meeting
and Regional preparatory
meetings, in Geneva

COP-6

3-7 November
Geneva, CIGC



MINAMATA
CONVENTION
ON MERCURY

COP-6 Meeting webpage

<https://minamataconvention.org/en/meetings/cop6>



English ▾ 🔍

The Convention ▾ Meetings ▾ Parties ▾ Implementation ▾ Focus areas ▾ Resources ▾ News ▾



Sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP-6)

📍 Geneva, Switzerland, 03 Nov 2025 - 07 Nov 2025

- Meeting information
- Documents
- Schedule
- Regional meetings
- COP events
- Information for participants
- Greening the COP

- Newsroom
- Live streaming
- Live updates feature
- Safe space for
 - In-session documents (CRPs and draft report)
 - Contact groups

Meeting Information

Newsroom

Intersessional Work

Information for participants

Meeting Information

The sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP-6) will take place in **Geneva, Switzerland**, from **3 to 7 November 2025**. During COP-5, the Conference of the Parties elected **Osvaldo Álvarez** (Chile) as the **President of COP-6**.

This page will be updated as new information becomes available.

Consideration of key issues for COP-6



COP-6 Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
3. Rules of procedure and financial rules for the Conference of the Parties.
4. Matters for consideration or action by the Conference of the Parties.
5. International cooperation and coordination.
6. Programme of work and budget.
7. Venue and dates of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
8. Other matters.
9. Adoption of the report of the meeting.
10. Closure of the meeting.

COP-6 provisional agenda available on the Convention's website in all UN languages:
<https://minamataconvention.org/en/documents/UNEP-MC-COP.6-01-provisional-agenda>

Consideration of key issues for COP-6 *cont.*



Agenda Item 4 sub-items: Matters for consideration or action by the Conference of the Parties:

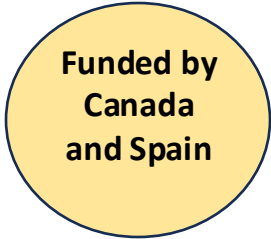
- (a) Mercury supply sources and trade;**
- (b) Mercury-added products and manufacturing processes in which mercury or mercury compounds are used:**
 - (i) Amendments to annex A;**
 - (ii) Cosmetics listed in part I of annex A;**
 - (iii) Consideration of the feasibility of mercury-free alternatives for manufacturing vinyl chloride monomer;**
- (c) Artisanal and small-scale gold mining;**
- (d) Mercury waste;**
- (e) Financial resources and mechanism:**
- (f) Capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer;**
- (g) Implementation and Compliance Committee;**
- (h) National reporting;**
 - (i) Effectiveness evaluation;**
 - (j) Cross-cutting matters;**
 - (k) Knowledge management;**
- (l) Mercury and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.**

Item 4(a): Mercury supply sources and trade – Study on mercury compounds (Decision MC-5/3)

In response to [Decision MC-5/3](#), recalling para. 13 of Article 3, the Secretariat has developed this [draft study](#) of the global supply, production, trade and use of mercury compounds.

COP-7 will consider the study with the view of the specific task for COP included in the Convention:

Article 3(13): The Conference of the Parties shall evaluate whether the trade in specific mercury compounds compromises the objective of this Convention and consider whether specific mercury compounds should, by their listing in an additional annex adopted in accordance with Article 27, be made subject to paragraphs 6 and 8



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Item 4(a): Mercury supply sources and trade – Implementation of Decision MC-5/2

In response to [Decision MC-5/2](#) on mercury supply sources and trade, the Secretariat is undertaking the following work for consideration at COP-6:

- ☑ Collected information on experiences and challenges faced in the **implementation of Article 3** as well as information on activities undertaken in relation to the **Bali Declaration** on illegal trade from COP-4.
- ☑ Developed updates to the following Convention guidance:
 - **Guidance on trade forms** that would assist Parties in identifying, managing and reducing **trade of mercury from primary mining**.
 - **Guidance on the identification of individual stocks and sources** of mercury to include types of action that could be taken to fulfil the **continuing obligation to endeavour to identify stocks and sources**. Information will be included in an INF document.

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Spain

Item 4(b): Products and processes – Amendments to Annex A

COP decision [MC-5/4](#)

- Amended Annexes A (mercury-added products) and Annex B (mercury use in processes) to the Convention
- Decided to consider the proposal to amend Annex A with regard to dental amalgam

The Conference of the Parties

6. *Decides* to consider at its sixth meeting the proposal to amend part I of annex A by adding the following entry:

Mercury-added products	Date after which the manufacture, import or export of the product shall not be allowed (phase-out date)
[Dental Amalgam]	[2030]

7. *Decides* to consider at its sixth meeting the proposal to amend part II of annex A by adding the following provision:

Mercury-added products	Provisions
Dental Amalgam	In addition, Parties shall: (iv) [[Exclude or not allow] [Phase down], by taking measures as appropriate, the use of dental amalgam in government insurance policies and <u>programmes</u> .] (Alternative to (iv)) [Take measures, as appropriate, to exclude, not allow, [or phase down] dental amalgam in government policies or <u>programmes</u>]

Item 4(b): Products and processes – Mercury-added cosmetics

COP decision [MC-5/5](#) requested the Secretariat to prepare a **report** compiling and synthesizing information submitted on challenges in preventing the manufacture, import and export of mercury-added cosmetics, as well as on current or proposed measures for addressing these challenges.

Report is to be finalized as an INF document for COP-6, which will include the Libreville Commitment as annex.

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Union

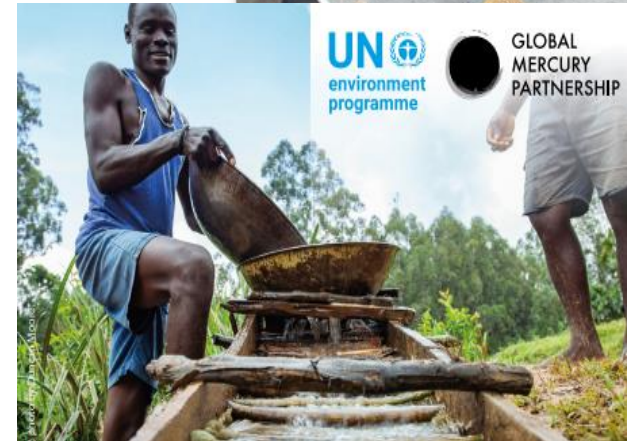
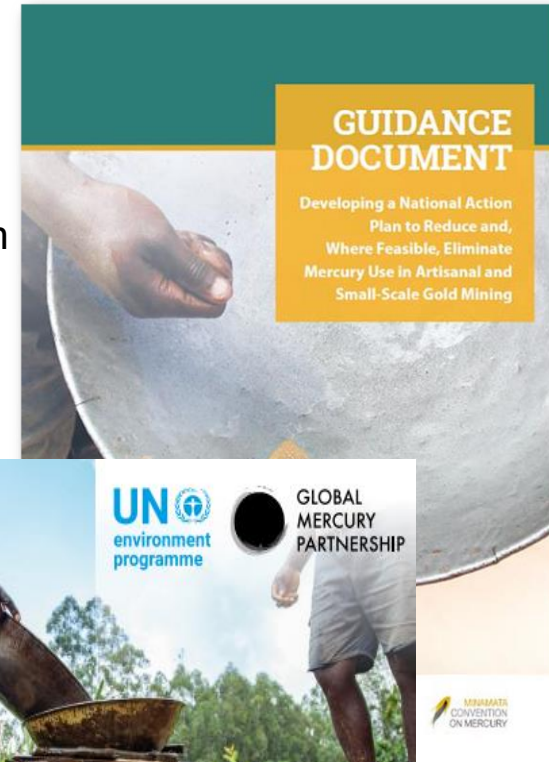
Libreville Commitment on the elimination of mercury-containing skin-lightening cosmetics in Africa:

- ✓ Adopted in January 2025 by countries participating in the GEF Skin Lightening Project meeting in Gabon.
- ✓ Proposes COP to adopt a **work programme to accelerate the elimination of mercury-added skin-lightening products**.



Article 7: Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM)

- Largest mercury use and source of mercury emissions globally
- Parties to notify Secretariat if it determines ASGM – using mercury in mining and processing – is more than insignificant in its territory
- After notification, Party must develop and implement a national action plan (NAP)
- Flexible approach based on country-driven strategies under its NAP
- Does not ban mining nor mercury use in ASGM
- Addresses worst practices, e.g. open burning, whole ore amalgamation, etc.
- Significant implications for Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and children continuous engagement critical in development, implementation and review of NAPs
- Regional cooperation needed to address illegal trade of mercury fueling mercury use in ASGM



Item 4(c): Artisanal and small-scale gold mining

Issues for consideration at COP-6

- An **update on the progress** made with respect to notifications, submissions and reviews pursuant to Article 7
- Consideration of how Parties could undertake and report on **reviews of the implementation of Art. 7 on ASGM (RIA supplement)**
- **Consideration of a supplemental section on the effective engagement and participation of Indigenous Peoples, local communities** and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of ASGM national action plans



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Australia

Item 4(j): Cross-cutting matters

COP decision **MC-5/1**:

- Compile views on the **needs and priorities of the Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities**, with regard to the effects of mercury on their health, livelihoods, culture and knowledge, with a view to future work on identifying possible solutions
- Report to the COP at its sixth meeting on the result of the Needs and Priorities compilation

Status of intersessional work:

- ☒ Needs and priorities compilation survey : 171 Indigenous People's organization and local communities, from 33 countries, responded to the survey developed by the Secretariat.
- ☐ A report on the results of the survey is currently being developed.



Issues for COP-6 attention and consideration:

- ☐ Consider the Secretariat's updates on the financial mechanism
 - ☐ GEF-8 status, recent approvals that include participation of countries in Africa (see next slide)
 - ☐ GEF-9 Replenishment process underway
 - ☐ 10 new projects approved in 4th round for Specific International Programme, ***including projects in Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Madagascar, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe***
- ☐ Consider the draft terms of reference for the third review of the financial mechanism

Looking ahead:

- ☐ COP-7 decision on SIP extension of initial 10 year term

Financial resources and mechanism: projects and programmes for Africa



Specific International Programme – Fourth round of applications – approved projects in Africa

Chad. Controlling trade in mercury and mercury-added products in Chad (\$230,000)
Djibouti. Strengthening the legal and institutional framework for the environmentally sound management of mercury and mercury-containing wastes (\$201,000)
Eritrea. National capacity building to raise awareness of the health and environmental effects of mercury in ASGM activities in Eritrea (\$85,000)
Madagascar. Strengthen the capacity of Madagascar for the implementation of the Minamata Convention and the management of mercury containing products (\$244,000)
United Republic of Tanzania. Strengthening National Capacity for implementation of the Minamata Convention on mercury in the United Republic of Tanzania (\$211,000)
Zimbabwe. Mitigating Mercury Emissions & Releases from Coal Combustion Power Plants in Zimbabwe towards fulfilling Article 8 Obligations under the Minamata Convention (\$194,000)

Selected GEF-8 approved programmes and projects in Africa

Global elimination of mercury in non-ferrous metals initiative – GEMINI (GEF ID 11892), <i>including</i> Zambia and South Africa. GEF Project Financing: \$58,810,000
Elimination of Mercury-Added Skin Lightening Products (SLPs) in Africa (GEF ID: 11877), <i>including</i> Burkina Faso, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea, Madagascar, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo, Uganda. GEF Project financing: \$15,000,000
Global Electronics Management (GEM) Program (GEF ID: 11553), <i>including</i> Botswana, Djibouti, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Somalia, South Africa. GEF Project financing: \$60,000,000
Monitoring of POPs and mercury under the Stockholm and Minamata Conventions in the Africa Region (GEF ID: 11536), <i>including</i> Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia. GEF Project financing: \$60,000,000

planetGOLD programme includes Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe + Senegal (under development)

<https://www.planetgold.org/>

Item 4(h): National reporting

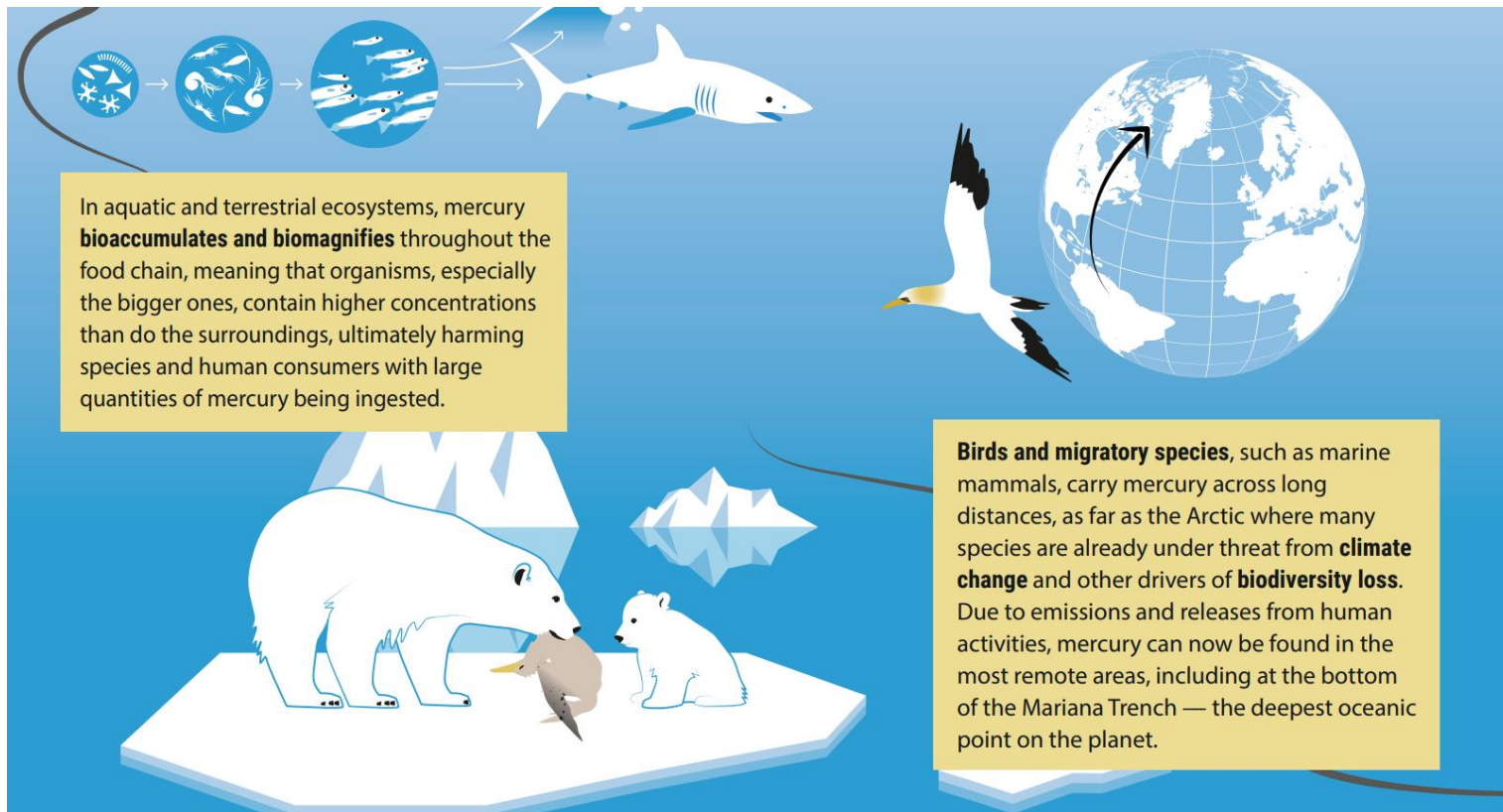
- ✓ Minamata reporting rates stand out, 86 % for the second short reports.
- ✓ National reporting information is essential for tracking implementation and effectiveness of the Convention.

Second full national reports

- ✓ On-line reporting tool (ORT) for the **second full national report was launched on 6 March 2025** and the personalized credentials for National Focal Points (NFP) to log-in to the ORT were sent out on 3 March 2025.
- ✓ **Due Date for second full national reports: 31 December 2025.**
- ✓ Cooperation with **BCRC Senegal** to conduct online training sessions in **French and Arabic** on completing the second full national reports.



Item 4(l): Mercury and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework



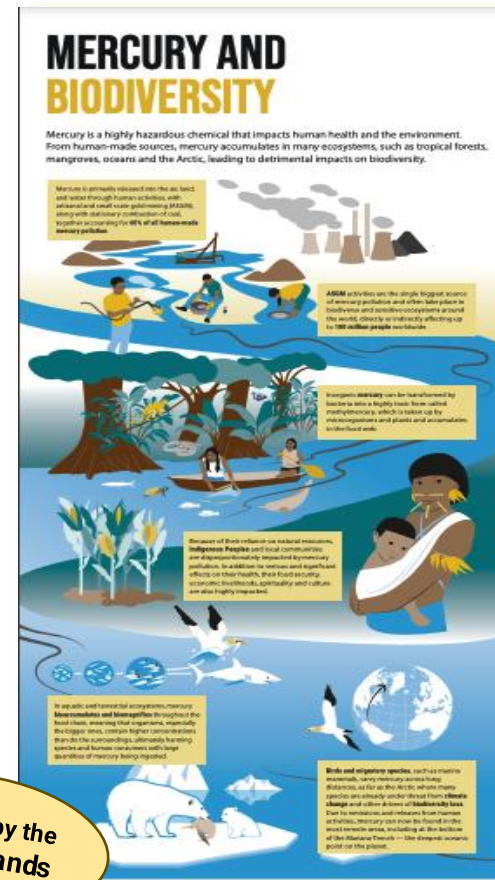
Item 4(l): Mercury and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

COP-5: Recognized:

- Opportunities for implementation of Minamata and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework to be mutually supportive
- Value of working across sectors and scales to generate co-benefits for broader environmental goals

Issue for COP-6 consideration:

- ❑ **Road map** to support Parties in demonstrating and maximizing co-benefits in implementing the Minamata Convention & the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
- ❑ Technical document **on integrating national targets to reduce mercury pollution from gold mining into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)** developed by the secretariat



Funded by the
Netherlands

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[#MakeMercuryHistory](https://twitter.com/minamataMEA)



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