

ISLANDS Webinar

Sharing SIDS experiences on the Minamata Convention

Introduction

Mercury is a highly toxic element considered one of the top ten chemicals of major public health concern according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Mercury is controlled through [the Minamata Convention](#), a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury. The Convention entered into force in 2017 and covers the entire life-cycle of mercury, including supply, trade, mercury-added products, industrial processes using mercury, artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM), emissions to air, releases to land and water, interim storage, waste and contaminated sites. Since exposure to mercury can negatively impact the nervous system of children, infants and fetuses, the Convention pays specific attention to women and the need of strategic exposure prevention in vulnerable populations.

As the first step to implementing the Minamata Convention, Caribbean countries (Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago) recently completed their Minamata Convention Initial Assessments (MIAs) and National Action Plan (NAP) for Artisanal and Small – Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) in Guyana. In the Pacific, Palau, Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu have ratified the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) globally prioritized mercury waste management; phase-out of mercury-added products; mercury emissions releases (incorporation of BAT/BEP). In the Caribbean Saint Kitts and Nevis found that over 70% of its releases are from mercury-added imported consumer products, similarly, the Saint Lucia inventory revealed that its major sources were consumer and

medical products (such as dental amalgam fillings, manometers, and gauges) accounting for over 90% of all releases. Belize found over 32% of mercury release is coming from medical products and over 42% is released due to the use and disposal of mercury containing electrical switches and relays, polyurethane with mercury catalysts, batteries, lighting devices, and thermometers.* In Trinidad and Tobago, 75% of releases come from the energy sector through the extraction and use of fuels; whereas in Suriname and Guyana over 95% of mercury releases in both countries come from artisanal and small-scale gold mining activities. Samoa and Vanuatu recently completed their MIAs and identified the majority of mercury releases are from mercury-added imported consumer products (batteries with mercury, skin lightening creams and soaps with mercury chemicals, lighting devices).*

Through the MIA process, countries understand the key sources of mercury and set priorities. Under the ISLANDS Programme, the Caribbean Region plans reduce mercury by 87,8 t, and the Pacific Region plans to reduce mercury by 1 t. Activities to reduce mercury in SIDS include preventing the imports of products containing mercury, as well as the environmentally sound management of mercury wastes. This webinar will provide SIDS the opportunity to share ideas on next steps of mercury reduction.

Objectives

The objectives of this event are to:

1. Share experiences of completing MIAs across SIDS regions and explore key sources of mercury in SIDS
2. Learn from each other on national approaches and experiences to phasing out mercury containing products
3. Understand the challenges facing SIDS in phasing out mercury and implementing the Minamata Convention
4. Introduce the [ISLANDS](#) community of practice on [Mercury](#) and encourage webinar participants to join and participate in community discussions

* UNEP and Minamata Convention on Mercury (2021) Minamata Convention Initial Assessments (MIAs). [online] 2022. Available at: <https://www.mercuryconvention.org/en/parties/minamata-initial-assessments>

Date and time

14 December 2022

In the regions:

17:00–18:30 (Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago) (AST) (GMT-4)

22:00–23:30 (Geneva, Switzerland) (CET) (GMT+1)

Next day, Dec 15 7:00–8:30 (Port Moresby, PNG) (GMT+10)Next day, Dec 15 9:00–10:30 (Suva, Fiji) (GMT+12)**Agenda (AST) (GMT-4)****17:05h–17:10h****Welcome and Opening Remarks**Moderator **Mr. Kenneth Davis**, Programme Manager, UNEP
Chemicals and Health BranchSpeaker **Ms. Melanie Ashton**, Project Coordinator and Private
Sector Engagement Specialist, ISLANDS**17:10h–17:20h****National Action Plan for ASGM, Guyana and next actions to
phase out mercury**Speaker **Ms. Michelle Astwood**, Environmental Specialist, Ministry
of Natural Resources, Guyana**17:20h–17:30h****Achievements and challenges working with the communities
and advocacy on phasing out Amalgam**Speaker **Ms. Emele Duituturaga**, Pacific Coordinator, World
Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry, Fiji**17:30h–17:40h****Presentation of the Specific International Program**Speaker **Dr. Linroy Christian**, Director of Analytical Services,
Ministry of Agriculture, Land, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs,
Antigua and Barbuda**17:40h–17:50h****The health aspects and recommendations: skin lightening
creams and their potential risk to the people of the Caribbean**Speaker **Dr. Terry Mohammed**, Deputy Dean, Faculty of Science
and Technology, UWI St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago

17:50h–18:20h Q and A session and facilitated discussion**Panellists:**

Ms. **Michelle Astwood**, Environmental Specialist, Ministry of Natural Resources, Guyana

Ms. **Emele Duituturaga**, Pacific Coordinator, World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry, Fiji

Dr. **Linroy Christian**, Director of Analytical Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Land, Fisheries and Barbuda Affairs, Antigua and Barbuda

Dr. **Terry Mohammed**, Deputy Dean, Faculty of Science and Technology, UWI St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago

Dr. **Nadira Rambocas**, Doctor, Private office in Valsayn and Medical Associates Hospital, Trinidad and Tobago

18:20h–18:30h Official Launch of the Green Forum ISLANDS Mercury Community of Practice and Closing reflections

Speaker **Ms. Melanie Ashton**, Project Coordinator and Private Sector Engagement Specialist, ISLANDS

The event will be in English and Spanish.

Contacts

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Partner Background

About ISLANDS

The Global Environment Facility [Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in Small Island Developing States](#) (ISLANDS)

Programme supports 33 Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) across the Atlantic, Caribbean, Indian and Pacific Oceans to safely and sustainably manage chemical and hazardous waste. A global project connects and facilitates SIDS-SIDS learning across and between project regions including through dedicated communities of practice on the Green Forum.

About UN Environment Programme

UNEP is the leading global voice on the environment. It provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.