

Minamata

Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury



2013
Oct.7 Mon. → **11** Fri.



Organized

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)



Some of Photos
by Tamaki Ozaki

Host Nation

Japan

Schedule

Preparatory Meeting^{※1} **Oct.7** Mon. → **8** Tues.

Venue: Kumamoto City [Hotel Nikko Kumamoto]
※1: Meetings at the working level will be held

Conference of Plenipotentiaries

▶ Ceremonial Opening **Oct.9** Wed. Venue: Minamata City [Ecopark area and Minamata Municipal Culture Hall]

▶ Adoption and Signings **Oct.10** Thurs. → **11** Fri. Venue: Kumamoto City [Hotel Nikko Kumamoto]

Many people, including the representatives of the governments and NGO's from about 140 nations, will be expected to participate. Your cooperation towards the success of the conference will be greatly appreciated

Dipcon Minamata

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Outline up to now

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) for the enactment of the Convention on International Mercury Regulation was established at the International Board for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP*¹) in 2010. Based on the experience of Minamata Disease, the Japanese government has contributed actively to its establishment and expressed the strong wish to invite the diplomatic conference for adoption and signing to Japan as well as to name the gathering the "Minamata Convention" in May 2010. In January 2013 the draft articles were agreed and the naming of the "Minamata Convention on Mercury" was decided at the INC 5 meeting held in Geneva. At the same time the decision was made to have the cities of Kumamoto and Minamata act as venues. Affirming the participation of the National government, the Kumamoto Prefectural Government has undertaken various bidding activities. At the INC 5, the promotion of activities, along with a screening of Governor Kabashima's video message, was accomplished.

*1: It is an institution of United Nations that coordinates world-wide environmental activities, assisting with various activities regarding environment and promoting international cooperation on the environmental issues.

About "Minamata Convention on Mercury"

Mercury has been used in many ways in our daily life. Small amounts of mercury are emitted into the environment by human activities such as coal burning at coal-fired power plants. There is a fear that mercury pollution will progress on a global scale. In order to prevent such mercury pollution on a global basis and any subsequent damage to human health, the enactment of a convention on international management of mercury has come up for debate under the UNEP and the draft articles were agreed to at the INC 5.

The contents of the convention are as follows.

- It is mentioned in the preamble that, viewing Minamata Disease as a lesson, reoccurrences of mercury pollution must be prevented.
- Usage of mercury in the process of acetaldehyde production, which was the cause of Minamata Disease, must be banned by 2018.
- International trading of mercury should be reduced, which includes limitation of use of mercury that can be imported and exported.
- Production and trading of batteries with mercury, blood pressure devices, fluorescent lamps containing more than a certain amount of mercury should be banned basically by 2020.
- Reduction of mercury use and emissions in small-scale gold mining in developing countries
- Reduction of mercury emission into the air, water, and soil
- Environmentally appropriate storing and management of mercury, mercury compounds, and mercury waste
- Support through funds and techniques made available to developing countries
- Effectuation of the convention will be 90 days after the ratifications*² by 50 countries

*2:ratification:the procedure which signatory finally decides to be restraint by the convention (Ex. It is to be approved by the National Diet)

About the "Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Mercury Convention: Kumamoto Promotion Council"

The Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Mercury Convention:Kumamoto Promotion Council consists of Kumamoto Prefecture, Kumamoto City, the city of Minamata, and concerned bodies. It is to support the operation of this conference and transmit information from the local area. We are preparing to welcome the participants from abroad and for the conference to be successful.

【Contact information】

Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Mercury Convention:Kumamoto Promotion Council Office

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The participants of this conference are limited to government agencies of countries, as well as international organizations and NGOs that had registered in advance. Therefore, the conference is not open to the public. Information regarding Minamata disease and environmental preservation activity will be transmitted and exhibited around the venue.