

Asia Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP-6)

DATES: 23-24 SEPTEMBER 202

LOCATION:
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE CENTRE (UNCC), BANGKOK, THAILAND







### **Contributors:**

#### **Documentation:**

**Punyathorn Jeungsmarn,** Program Officer, The Asian Center for Environmental Health, Bangkok,

### **Design and Compilation:**

**Dr. Sharmin Azad Liza**, Program Associate, Environment and Social Development Organization-ESDO

### **Support Team:**

- **Siddika Sultana**, Executive Director, Environment and Social Development Organization-ESDO
- Lien T. To, In Center for Community Health and Injury Prevention, World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry
- **Ziyad Alawneh**, Engineer, World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry
- Maik Walther, President and COO, GC Asia Dental PTE LTD

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### **Report:**

Asia Pacific regional preparatory meeting for the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP-6)

Bangkok, Thailand | 23-24 September 2025

# **Executive Summary**

The Asia-Pacific region showed significant support for the African proposal to phase out dental amalgam globally by 2030, with countries including Bangladesh, Vanuatu, Palau, Iran, and Vietnam expressing willingness to consider the amendment. However, challenges remain in certain countries; Thailand favors a phase-down approach due to the influence of dental associations, Saudi Arabia cited trade-related concerns, and India may seek extensions for Mercury-bearing product exemptions. Japan and Qatar have already phased out dental amalgam, while Iran and Sri Lanka are implementing gradual transition plans, and Bangladesh is revising its exemption list to align with the African amendment. NGOs, including the World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry, ESDO, and the Asian Center for Environmental Health, played a key role in educating delegates, advocating for mercury-free alternatives, and facilitating interventions. Discussions on funding and capacity-building opportunities, such as the Specific International Program (SIP), highlighted the importance of partnerships for training and technical support, especially for non-party countries. Moving forward, follow-up meetings are planned with key Ministries of Health and dental associations in Thailand, India, and other countries to advance mercury-free dental practices across the region.

#### **Key Highlights**

- Two days of discussions on COP-6 agenda items, logistics, and coordination.
- Priority issues included mercury-added products (cosmetics, dental amalgam, vinyl chloride monomer) and mercury supply/trade.
- Attention to illegal mercury trade and artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM).



- Training on negotiation and chairing of COP contact groups.
- Review of national reporting progress and updates to reporting guidance.
- Draft regional statement developed for presentation at COP-6.
- UNEP-hosted reception and networking with partners.

### Introduction

The Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting was convened in Bangkok to prepare for the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-6) to the Minamata Convention on Mercury. The meeting brought together representatives from Parties, observers, and stakeholders, including governmental agencies, professional associations, and non-governmental organizations, to discuss critical issues surrounding mercury management. Key agenda items included amendments to Annex A, capacity building, compliance mechanisms, reporting requirements, and effectiveness evaluation, as well as cross-cutting issues relevant to chemical and waste management. A particular emphasis was placed on the phase-out of dental amalgam, given its significant contribution to mercury exposure, and the promotion of mercury-free alternatives in dentistry. The meeting provided a platform for knowledge exchange, regional coordination, and strategic planning to support Parties in implementing the Convention's objectives while addressing technical, policy, and social challenges associated with mercury reduction.

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# **Meeting Objectives**

- Assess Asia-Pacific countries' perspectives and preparedness regarding the African amendment for a global phase-out of dental amalgam by 2030.
- Involve Ministries of Health, dental associations, and other relevant stakeholders to promote mercury-free dental alternatives and align national policies with COP-6 priorities.
- Examine challenges, opportunities, and strategies for effective advocacy, education, and policymaking to support COP-6 outcomes.
- Enhance coordination among NGOs, regional centers, and the World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry to advance mercury-free dentistry across the Asia-Pacific region.
- Review the official agenda, technical documents, and logistical arrangements to ensure countries are fully prepared for negotiations and decision-making at COP-6.

- Align regional positions on mercury-added products, mercury supply and trade, artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM), mercury waste management, and national reporting obligations.
- Develop joint regional statements and elect representatives to the COP-7 Bureau, Implementation and Compliance Committee, and Governing Board of the Specific International Programme.
- Provide knowledge exchange and training on negotiation techniques, chairing of COP contact groups, and effective participation in multilateral environmental agreements.
- Foster stronger partnerships among governments, international organizations, and civil society to enhance the implementation of the Minamata Convention in the Asia-Pacific region.

### **Pre-Session Contacts**

The Southeast Asian team coordinated to reach out to ASEAN countries—including Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam—to request support for the African proposal on the phase-out of dental amalgam.

# **Meeting Overview by Day**

#### Day One (23 September 2025)

- **Opening session:** Statements from the Executive Secretary, UNEP Regional Office and Co-Chairs.
- Organizational and logistical updates for COP-6, including registration, credentials, online events, and exhibitions.



#### • Technical agenda discussions:

- o Mercury-added products and manufacturing processes (Annex A amendments, cosmetics ban, vinyl chloride monomer alternatives, exemption extensions).
- o Artisanal and small-scale gold mining.
- o Mercury waste thresholds and management.
- o National reporting requirements.

#### • Afternoon session:



- Mercury supply sources and trade; updates on the Bali Declaration.
- o Implementation and Compliance Committee report.
- o Programme of work and budget for 2026–2027, including funding scenarios and capacity-building priorities.

#### Day Two (24 September 2025)

#### • Closed morning session (Parties only):

- Election of officers for COP-7 Bureau, Implementation and Compliance Committee, and Governing Board of the Specific International Programme.
- o Drafting of the Asia-Pacific regional statement.
- o Training on negotiation and chairing of COP contact groups.

#### • Open afternoon session:

 Cross-cutting matters (implementation of previous COP decisions, Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework, knowledge management).



- o Discussion of the venue and date of COP-7.
- Updates on international cooperation from BRS Secretariat, UNEP Global Mercury Partnership, Global Framework on Chemicals, and Science-Policy Panel.
- o Any other business, conclusions and closure, followed by a reception hosted by
- UNEP Mercury Project.

### **Activities and Interventions on the Floor**

- Discussions on dental amalgams took place on the morning of 23rd September, when the amendment to annex A was discussed.
- The Secretariat presented the amendment background; no parties made specific interventions on the amalgam.



• "Interventions were made by the World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry, the Asian Center for Environmental Health, and ESDO, strongly supporting the African proposal. These interventions highlighted the urgent need for a global phase-out of dental amalgam, emphasized public health and environmental benefits, and called for technical and financial assistance to aid countries in the transition."



• Dr. Shahriar Hossain's poem 'Mercury-Free Teeth' was presented by Punyathorn Jeungsmarn of the Asian Center for Environmental Health, Bangkok, as part of the session highlighting civil society engagement and public awareness on mercury-free dentistry.

- Questions raised to the Secretariat included:
  - Non-contribution of some countries to the convention
  - o Civil society's role in compliance
  - o Funding and training opportunities for non-parties
  - Establishment of regional treatment centers for hazardous chemicals, including dental amalgam
- The World Alliance introduced the newly established Arab Center for Environmental Health and discussed Specific International Program (SIP) funding, including partnerships with NGOs.

## **Bilateral Discussions with Delegates**

During bilateral discussions, several Asia-Pacific countries shared updates on their progress toward mercury reduction and dental amalgam phase-out. Afghanistan and Syria have new delegates who are still familiarizing themselves with the Minamata Convention processes; continued engagement and follow-up are planned to maintain momentum on mercury-related issues. Bangladesh is actively revising its exemption list and remains a strong supporter of the African Amendment, demonstrating commitment to advancing a global dental amalgam phase-out and promoting mercury-free dentistry. India indicated the possibility of requesting a second extension on its dental amalgam phase-down, reflecting caution in fully committing to global timelines due to domestic considerations.

Iran has an active national committee overseeing the phase-out process; however, dentists still prefer amalgam, suggesting that a five-year transitional period may be needed. Japan has largely phased out dental amalgam but remains cautious about advocating publicly until receiving guidance from its Health Ministry. Australia received a letter from the World Alliance and is considering its position regarding future participation. Nepal, also not yet a Party, has already banned mercury and expressed a desire to accede to the Convention. Indonesia likewise remains cautious about advocating publicly and is focusing on strengthening monitoring to support informed decision-making.

Pacific Island countries such as Vanuatu and Palau expressed clear support for the African Amendment, indicating regional alignment on mercury reduction. Pakistan is committed to a dental amalgam phase-down by 2030, aligning with regional and global targets. Qatar has phased out dental amalgam and is currently preparing its Minamata Initial Assessment report to ensure proper monitoring and management of mercury use. Saudi Arabia, despite low dental amalgam usage, faces trade-related concerns that limit its ability to fully support global phase-out initiatives. Sri Lanka is redesigning its phase-out strategy in consultation with the Ministry of Health to ensure a feasible and effective transition. In Thailand, the Pollution Control Department supports mercury reduction, while the Department of Health remains hesitant; further engagement with the national dental association is planned. Finally, Vietnam's new delegate has expressed support for mercury reduction, with follow-up engagement planned to strengthen ongoing commitment.

# **Key Perspectives from Delegates and Observers – Asia- Pacific COP-6 Prep Meeting**

Direct comments and commitments from national focal points and observer organizations on dental amalgam and the African Amendment.

#### **Focal points - Comment Boxes**



#### **Afghanistan**

Name: Javeedullah Hamad – Director, Environmental Assessment & Sustainable Development Division

#### Comment:

"New to the process; ongoing engagement planned."



#### Bangladesh

Name: Razinara Begum - Director, Waste & Chemicals Management

Comment:

"We are revising our exemption list before COP-6 and will support the African Amendment. We also call for technical support, funding, and technology transfer to improve mercury waste management."

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#### Iran

Name: Khodayar Rouzbahani – National Focal Point Comment:

"Active national committee working on phaseout; dentists still prefer amalgam; possible five-year extension needed." 66

#### Pacific Islands (Vanuatu & Palau)

Name: Kliu Basilius – Education & Outreach Manager,
Palau

Comment:

"We are happy to support the African Amendment."

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#### Vietnam

Name: Phan Chi Nhan – Head Comment:

"New delegate, supportive; follow-up planned with focal person."

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#### Sri Lanka

**Name:** Pathmalatha Abeykoon Rathnappuli Hewa Mynattuge – Additional Secretary

Comment:

"Working with the Ministry of Health to redesign our phase-out strategy."

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#### **Observers – Comment Boxes**

# Environment and Social Development Organization- ESDO

Name: Siddika Sultana Executive Director Comment:

"Called for support of the African Amendment and faster mercury-free dentistry, with technical and financial aid for safe waste management. Highlighted that despite COP-5's 2025 ban on mercury cosmetics, skinlightening creams persist across markets and online. Urged strict enforcement, stronger regional cooperation and customs checks, and public awareness to cut demand."

# Asian Center for Environmental Health Name: Md. Mosharraf Hossain Khandker

Technical Advisor
Comment:
"Shared Bangladesh's progress and supports
the African Amendment to phase out dental
amalgam by 2030, promoting safer,

sustainable oral health care."

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#### Toxics Link

Name: Satish Kumar Sinha
Associate Director
Comment:
"Provided technical advice and
supported civil society engagement in the
Minamata process."

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# World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry

Name: Ziyad Alawneh – Engineer Comment: "Engaged delegates to build support for the African Amendment."

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### **Observations from GC Team (Maik Walther)**

- Ministries of Health and Dental Associations: Key gatekeepers for influencing national positions.
- Knowledge Gaps: Limited awareness of cost-effective amalgam alternatives among policymakers.
- Need for Consistent Engagement: Frequent turnover of government representatives requires ongoing education and relationship-building.
- Industry Influence: Some dental amalgam manufacturers sponsor government agencies, complicating phase-out efforts.
- Framing the Narrative: Alternatives to amalgam are viable and cost-effective; clear communication is essential.

### **Recommendations / Next Steps**

- 1. Strengthen Engagement with Ministries of Health: Proactively provide technical and policy input, focusing on evidence-based dentistry and cost-effective alternatives.
- 2. **Mobilize Dental KOLs and Professional Bodies:** Support local champions and dental associations to influence policy shifts.
- 3. **Enhance Capacity Building:** Target training for new delegates and non-Parties to accelerate ratification and implementation.
- 4. **Counter Industry Influence:** Increase transparency about sponsorships and build alliances with independent experts.
- 5. **Communicate Success Stories:** Use examples like Bangladesh to demonstrate the feasibility of phase-out.
- 6. Parallel Lobbying Efforts: Engage simultaneously at national, regional, and international levels.
- 7. **Support the African Amendment:** Continue coordinated advocacy to ensure a global phase-out of dental amalgam by 2030.

# Conclusion

The Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for COP-6 provided a critical platform for countries in the region to align priorities, share experiences, and strengthen collective advocacy for mercury-free dentistry and broader mercury reduction measures. With active participation from the World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry and key regional stakeholders, the meeting facilitated knowledge exchange on best practices, challenges, and policy strategies to accelerate the transition away from dental amalgam. Significant progress was made in building regional support for the African Amendment, which calls for a global dental amalgam phase-out, and in laying the groundwork for effective negotiations at COP-6.

Delegates emphasized the importance of sustained engagement with Ministries of Health, national dental associations, professional networks, and civil society organizations to secure technical, financial, and policy support. Participants also highlighted the urgent need for capacity building, technology transfer, and improved data collection to support evidence-based policymaking. By strengthening collaboration and aligning national action plans, countries can ensure a just and inclusive transition to mercury-free oral health care.

Sustained collaboration will be essential to advance mercury-free oral health care, protect vulnerable populations such as children, women, and dental workers from mercury exposure, address environmental contamination from mercury waste streams, and achieve the overarching objectives of the Minamata Convention, safeguarding public health and the environment across the Asia-Pacific region.

# **Pictorials**



All participants with the Co-chair and Secretariat



Participants of the World Alliance, IPEN, and the Asian Center of Environmental Health



Discussion with the Iran Delegate



Discussion between the Arab Center for Environmental Health and the World Alliance Delegate



Intervention by Executive Director of ESDO, Siddika Sultana



After discussion with the Australian delegate, Rachel Burgess, and Tony Robinson



Director of the Asian Center of Environmental Health; Siddika Sultana, Director of Waste & Chemicals Management; Razinara Begum, Technical Advisor; Mosharraf Hossain Khandker, from Bangladesh



After a discussion between Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Pakistan delegate



Dr. Shahriar Hossain's poem 'Mercury-Free Teeth' was presented by Punyathorn Jeungsmarn of the Asian Center for Environmental Health, Bangkok



After discussion with the Indonesian delegate, Krishna Bayumurti, and Siddika Sultana



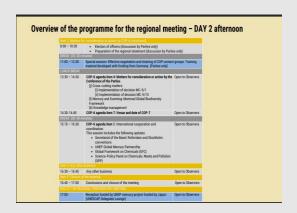
Siddika Sultana, Mosharraf Hossain Khandker, the Asian Center of Environmental Health, and Lien T. To, World Alliance



Discussion with the Afghanistan delegate and the World Alliance







Program agenda



**CO-CHAIR** of the Asia Pacific regional preparatory meeting

# Annex

List of meeting participants: Asia-Pacific regional preparatory meeting for COP-6 | Minamata Convention

# 23 - 24 September 2025 | Bangkok, Thailand

No ·	First Name	Last Name	Party	Title
1	Saeed Ahmed	Al-Zahrani	Saudi Arabia	Co-chair of the Meeting
2	Aisha Humera	Moriani	Pakistan	Co-chair of the Meeting
3	Javeedullah	Hamad	Afghanistan	Director, Environmental Assessment and Sustainable Development Division
4	Faisal	Hotak	Afghanistan	Relations Officer
5	Razinara	Begum	Bangladesh	Director (Waste and Chemicals Management)
6	Li	Gu	China	Director level official, Department of International Cooperation
7	Dingding	Shao	China	Deputy Director, Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center
8	Jing	Ye	China	Professor level Senior Engineer, Solid Waste and Chemicals Management Centre
9	Manqian	Yao	China	Attache, Department of Treaty and Law
10	Amith	Raj	India	Director
11	Subrahmanya m	Nallamolu	India	Addl. Director, HSM Division
12	Aditia	Nugraha	Indonesia	Environmental Policy Analyst

No	First Name	Last Name	Party	Title
13	Khodayar	Rouzbahani	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	National Focal Point
14	Mojgan	Khalilpour	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	ТВС
15	Ali Sami Khashan	Al-Rikabi	Iraq	Chief Biologist
16	Haruka	Shimazaki	Japan	Officer,Office of Mercury and International Chemicals Management, Chemical Safety Division
17	Takashi	Nishida	Japan	Senior Consultant
18	Walaa Mohammad Ali	Al-Obeidat	Jordan	ТВС
19	Virasack	Chundara	Lao People's Democratic Republic	National Focal Point
20	Hassan	Azhar	Maldives	Project Manager
21	Dulmaa	Batchuluun	Mongolia	Officer
22	Mohsina	Zubair	Pakistan	Director (Lab/NEQS)
23	Kliu	Basilius	Palau	Education and Outreach Manager
24	Angelica Anne N.	Gallego	Philippines	Senior Environmental Management Specialist
25	Aisha Shikh S A	Baobad	Qatar	National Focal Point
26	Saleh	Almarri	Qatar	Assistant Director, Chemicals & Hazardous Waste Department
27	Abdullah Abdulmohsin	Alrasheed	Saudi Arabia	Consultant
28	Majed Helal	Alanazi	Saudi Arabia	Chemical Safety Manager
29	Nawaf Essam	Bilasi	Saudi Arabia	CEO Advisor for International Cooperation

No	First Name Last Name		Party	Title	
30	Majid bin Hilal	Al-Enezi	Saudi Arabia	ТВС	
31	Ziad bin Abu Bakr	Bagazi	Saudi Arabia	TBC	
32	Abdulrahman bin Mohammed	Al-Mutairi	Saudi Arabia	TBC	
33	Abdulrahman bin Abdullah	Al-Bishr	Saudi Arabia	TBC	
34	Abdullah bin Ahmed	Mahnashi	Saudi Arabia	TBC	
35	Fares bin Ali	Al-Najrani	Saudi Arabia	TBC	
36	Ahmed bin Sayed	Al-Khouli	Saudi Arabia	TBC	
37	Pathmalatha Abeykoon	Rathnappuli Hewa Mynattuge	Sri Lanka	Additional Secretay	
38	Ibrahim Mahmoud	Ibrahim Absa	State of Palestine	National Focal Point	
39	Fathia	Mohammad	Syrian Arab Republic	Chemist	
40	Prapaisri	Asanarattanajind a	Thailand	Environmentalist, Senior Professional Level	
41	Noppadon	Srihirun	Thailand	Environmentalist, Practitioner Level	
42	Pınar	Saylam	Turkiye	Architect	
43	Liliele Lili Nafatali		Tuvalu	Acting Environment Impact Assessment Officer	
44	Hana Alzaabi		United Arab Emirates	Environmental Principal Researcher	
45	Phan Chi Nhan		Viet Nam	Head	

No	First Name	Last Name	Non-Party	Title
1	Bhadrika	Bhattarai	Nepal	Chemist

2	Rachel	Burgess	Australia (Observer Party)	Branch Head, Chemicals & Atmosphere Branch
3	Tony	Robinson	Australia (Observer Party)	Director, International Chemicals & Waste section

No ·	First Name	Last Name	Observers	Title
1	Md. Mosharraf Hossain	Khandker	Asian Center for Environmental Health	Technical Advisor
2	Punyathor n	Jeungsmarn	Asian Center for Environmental Health	Program Officer
3	Jashaf Shamir	Lorenzo	BAN Toxics	Deputy Executive Director
4	Qjiel Giuliano Mikhl Zamora	Mariano	Children and Youth International	Youth Delegate
5	Joella Marie	Balinis	Children and Youth International	Youth Advocate
6	Jerald Tupaz	Villarmino	Children and Youth International	Youth Advocate
7	Chinkie Pelino	Golle	EcoWaste Coalition	IPEN Regional Coordinator for Southeast and East Asia
8	Elaine G.	Lucero	EcoWaste Coalition	National Coordinator
9	Siddika	Sultana	Environment and Social Development Organization	Executive Director
10	Lillian	Ebuen	International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology	DDS
11	Hino Samuel	Jose	International Youth Council-YEMEN	Youth delegate
12	Lennett	David	Natural Resources Defense Council	Director
13	Krishna Bayumurti	Zaki	Nexus3 Foundation	General Manager
14	Rajendra Bahadur	Adhikari	Rural Area Development Programme	Chairman/Programme Coordinator
15	Apsara	Lamsal- Lamichhane	Rural Area Development Programme	Board of Directors & Vice-Chair, Helambu Rural Municipality

16	Suresh	Gurung	Rural Area Development Programme	Sr. Programme Manager
17	Daud	Miya	Rural Area Development Programme	Director
18	Anthony	Talouli	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme	Director of Waste Management & Pollution Control Programme
19	Satish Kumar	Sinha	Toxics Link	Associate Director
20	Yujeong	Kim	UNEP - ROAP	UNEP Senior Programme Management Office
21	Marina Demaria	Venancio	UNEP - ROAP	Legal Officer, Montevideo Coordination and Delivery Unit, Environmental Rule of Law Branch, Law Division
22	Thomas	Verbaere	UNEP Global Mercury Partnership	ТВС
23	Ziyad	Alawneh	World Alliance for Mercury- Free Dentistry	Engineer
24	Lien T.	То	World Alliance for Mercury- Free Dentistry	In Center for Community Health and Injury Prevention
25	Malik	Walther	World Alliance for Mercury- Free Dentistry	President and COO of GC Asia Dental PTE LTD
26	Amit	Dutta	Young Naturalist Network	General Secretary

N o.	First Name	Last Name	Secretariat	Title
1	Monika	Stankiewicz	Minamata Convention Secretariat	Executive Secretary
2	Eisaku	Toda	Minamata Convention Secretariat	Senior Programme Management Officer
3	Richard	Gutierrez	Minamata Convention Secretariat	Programme Management Officer

It's time to phase out mercury—from cosmetics to dentistry. Our region must lead with strong enforcement, cross-border cooperation, and public awareness to ensure every product and procedure is safe for all.

- mercuryfreedentistry.net
- asiancenter.asia