

Press Releases: Acting Assistant Secretary Judith Garber Leads U.S. Delegation to the First Meeting of the Minamata Convention on Mercury

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
September 26, 2017

Acting Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs Judith Garber will travel to Geneva, Switzerland, September 27 – 29, to serve as the head of the U.S. delegation to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP-1).

The Minamata Convention represents a major step forward to help the United States and other countries to reduce people's exposure to mercury, a toxic chemical with significant negative health effects including to the brain and nervous system. The Convention complements the significant steps the United States has already taken domestically to reduce the amount of mercury generated, used, and released into the environment.

The Convention requires countries to apply best available techniques and best environmental practices to control mercury emissions from the largest industrial sources – to include modern technologies. The United States, which already employs these tools, should see a significant reduction in cross-border mercury pollution as a result of improved controls in other countries. The Agreement aims to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury and the United States is a party.

Acting Assistant Secretary Garber will participate in a special High-Level Segment that convenes Ministers and other senior representatives to mark the entry into force of the Minamata Convention and to discuss national efforts to implement the Convention. The Conference of the Parties is also expected to take a number of important technical and operational decisions that will guide Convention implementation in the long-term, including adopting technical guidance on management of mercury air emissions sources.

Follow the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific

Affairs on Twitter @StateDeptOES for updates on Acting Assistant Secretary Garber's trip. For further information, contact Tory Peabody (PeabodyVW@state.gov).

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