



DMUN Foundation

Office of the Executive Director

Secretariat of the Foundation

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Request for Accreditation to the Minamata Convention on Mercury As Observer

OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE - C/OED/2025/64

2 September 2025

Addressee

Her Excellency Monika Stankiewicz,
Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention on Mercury,
On behalf of the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury

Sender

Mr. Jaewon Choi
Executive Director
Office of the Executive Director
Secretariat of the DMUN Foundation

PLEASE CONFIRM RECEIPT THROUGH EMAIL

Excellency,

The Executive Director of the DMUN Foundation, on behalf of the Secretariat and Members of the DMUN Foundation, presents its compliments to the Executive Secretary and the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury and has the honor to refer to the following information requested for circulation by Ms. Lily Y. YangLiu, Deputy Executive Director for Advocacy and Research of the DMUN Foundation.

In reference to the relevant clauses on admission and participation of international non-governmental organizations of the rules of procedure for the Conference of Parties of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, in particular to rules 6 and 7 and article 23, paragraph 6 of the Convention itself, the Executive Director, on behalf of the Members of the DMUN Foundation respectfully request the accreditation of the international non-governmental organization "DMUN Foundation" as an Observer organization to the Convention.

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The DMUN Foundation is an international non-governmental organization founded in 2021. With a broad individual and organizational membership that represents the interests of over 26,000 young people across 161 states and territories, the Foundation is the largest INGO dedicated for children and youth engagement in multilateral and intergovernmental bodies and processes.

In particular to the objectives and relevancy of the Foundation to the Convention, the Foundation possesses a distinctive and unique ability to conduct public outreach to the youth demographic regarding the Minamata Convention, but also our distinct ability to collect valuable inputs and suggestions from the children, youth, and youth organization sectors, representing such crucial voices inside the United Nations and its Convention Bodies.

The Foundation would like to note that its Membership includes many experts of “lived experience”, including children and youth victims of mercury poisoning, young professionals with expertise in the mercury industry and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements, and young representatives of academia and research institutions that address mercury.

We also note that precedents of children and youth-focused and -led organizations being admitted as Observers to the Convention exist, such as the International Youth Council-YEMEN (IYCY) and more recently, Children and Youth International (Major Group for Children and Youth).

Noting these precedents, we believe it to be apt that the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury forwards our application for consideration by States Parties at the upcoming session of the Conference of Parties.

We also note that The Foundation has multiple precedents in facilitating and advocating for youth participation inside the United Nations and its Convention Bodies, with a focus on the environment. The Foundation has received Observer Status from the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity (UNCBD), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the UNODC Convention on Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

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In these bodies the Foundation has collected valuable youth opinions through independent consultations and joint statement writing sessions and has even nominated multiple youth representatives to represent youth voices through the Foundation's observer status.

In recent years, multilateral environmental agreements (such as the BRS Conventions and UNFCCC) has markedly raised its commitment to strengthen engagement of and partnership with children and youth, respecting their agency and the value they add to multilateral environmental decision-making (e.g., Youth2030, UN Youth Office, and the Our Common Agenda Policy Brief on Meaningful Youth Engagement in Policymaking and Decision-making Processes).

We emphasize that participation is one of the four core principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Consistent with the CRC, children's rights to be heard, their views considered and given due weight must be a basic tenet of all civil society engagement mechanisms in multilateral bodies, not willfully excluded.

Looking beyond children and youth merely as a vulnerable population group, young people's views and voices are ambition-raisers in multilateral processes, bringing new perspectives, knowledge and innovative solutions to the work of the Convention.

Please find attached the supporting documents demonstrating our qualifications and previous work relating to the Convention.

The Executive Director, on behalf of the Secretariat and Members of the DMUN Foundation, avails itself of this opportunity to renew the Executive Secretary and the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on the Assurances of its highest consideration.

INFORMATION ON THE FOCAL POINT/CONTACT PERSON

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Jaewon Choi,
Executive Director,
DMUN Foundation



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Attachment I: Statement of the DMUN Foundation's Mission and Scope of Work

Source: www.dmun.org/about

Mission Statement

- Equip young people with opportunities to be informed of global events, helping young people express their perspectives on said issues.
- Provide support to ensure that young people are given effective representation in multilateral and intergovernmental engagements, with particular concentration towards youths of underrepresented backgrounds.
- Demonstrate that youth-led organizations are well-capable of fulfilling any and all obligations expected of civil society stakeholders expected by society.

Theory of Change

We create a linear platform to identify, nurture, and support young leaders.

All of our programs and initiatives support each other in coherence. We believe that through our philosophy of change, our youth education programs, policy research, and policy advocacy form a trifecta of youth-led leadership and change.

- ❖ If youth receive the opportunities to learn about global issues,
 - Then, they will want to create action to address these issues.
- ❖ If we provide platforms of advocacy for youths willing to take action,
 - Then, they are able to create meaningful progress.
- ❖ If this cycle of change continues,
 - Then, more youths will be involved in creating positive contributions,
- ❖ **As a combined result, the world becomes a better place.**



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Extent of Outreach

Throughout our journey, we've proudly set new records and marked historic firsts that reflect our commitment to youth empowerment and innovation. These accomplishments are proof of what's possible when young people lead with purpose.

- We operate the world's largest virtual Model UN conference.
- We are the first organization to nominate people under the age of 18 to participate in 6 UN conferences.
- Our advocacy eliminated the minimum age requirement in the United Nations Financing for Development Conferences.
- We are the first youth-led organization to participate as Observer in 3 Intergovernmental Bodies and Organizations. (AHC Tax, OPCW, IPBES)
- We are the first NGO dedicated in intergovernmental advocacy to have a leadership body composed of youth and also children.



(Data provided in the front page of the website)

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Scope of Work

Programs

The DMUN Foundation delivers a wide range of youth capacity-building and educational programs aimed at fostering leadership, diplomacy, and global awareness. These include Model United Nations simulations, the world's largest independent virtual MUN conference, and specialized initiatives such as the DMUN Sustainability Forum, DMUN Model EU, DMUN Model Parliament and Congress, and DMUN Moot Court. Each program provides young people with practical skills in negotiation, public speaking, and consensus-building while ensuring equitable access through scholarships, multilingual resources, and open participation.

Advocacy

Beyond education, the Foundation engages in youth advocacy within intergovernmental and multilateral processes. It facilitates the direct participation of children and youth in high-level forums such as the UN High-Level Political Forum, the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, and the Summit of the Future. Through interventions, statements, and policy recommendations, the Foundation champions reforms that recognize young people as rightsholders in global governance. It actively works to eliminate systemic barriers that prevent youth-led organizations from engaging with intergovernmental bodies, advocating for modalities such as youth quotas, observer recognition, and accessible consultation processes.

Research

The DMUN Foundation also serves as a policy and knowledge hub, conducting research on youth participation, multilateralism, and systemic reform of international processes. This includes policy briefs, concept notes, and submissions to UN bodies and intergovernmental negotiations. Through the Katija Hyoungjoo Neuber Institute (KHNI), its affiliated think-tank, the Foundation produces evidence-based analyses that strengthen youth advocacy and inform decision-makers. Research outputs explore themes such as NGO participation in the UN system, youth inclusion in sustainable development frameworks, and accountability mechanisms in global governance.



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Attachment II: Description of the Membership System

The Constitution of the Foundation charges the Secretariat of the Foundation to maintain three types of Membership: Individual, Organizational, and Honorary. The types of Member have differing rights to participation and involvement in the decision-making and operations of the Foundation, but by principle, all Members are given one vote at the Annual General Meetings of the Governing Body, can submit candidatures for elected positions, and can participate in all relevant activities and programs of the Foundation. The Foundation's Membership is primarily made up of individual members, with over

Individual Membership is open to youth and adults who subscribe to the mission, vision, and values of the Foundation. Individual Members constitute the principal constituency of the institution and are vested with fundamental rights, including the ability to vote in elections for the Board of Trustees, to submit agenda items for consideration at the Annual General Meeting, and to participate in Foundation programs. Persons under the age of eighteen may be admitted as Individual Members upon the consent of a legal guardian that is already admitted as a Member to the Foundation (to act as a chaperone for the child during in-person events). The Constitution mandates Individual Membership to be free of charge, with no membership dues levied.

Organizational Membership is reserved for youth-led entities, academic clubs, and civil society organizations whose objectives are demonstrably aligned with the mission of the Foundation. Admission is contingent upon the submission of an application, the demonstration of at least two years of substantive programmatic activity in youth empowerment, and the conclusion of a memorandum of understanding delineating roles and responsibilities. Each Organizational Member designates one representative to serve as the formal liaison to the Foundation. Organizational Members are vested with full rights of participation, including the right to vote in elections and constitutional matters, eligibility to serve on committees, and representation in the Annual General Meeting. Annual dues are assessed to Organizational Members by resolution of the Board of Trustees upon recommendation of the Finance Committee, and the timely payment of such dues is required to maintain good standing.



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Honorary Membership is conferred upon individuals who have rendered exceptional service either to the Foundation or to the broader cause of youth empowerment in multilateral settings. Such membership is conferred through nomination by the Board of Trustees and approval by majority vote. Honorary Members are accorded rights equivalent to those of Individual and Organizational Members, including the right to vote and to serve on committees, thereby integrating their distinguished expertise and contributions into the governance of the Foundation.

In the Fourth Session of the Annual General Meetings of the Board of Trustees and the Governing Body, Members agreed upon a decision without a vote to instruct the Secretariat to stop the issuance of Honorary Membership to concerns over cost implications and duplicative work. All existing Honorary Members admitted prior to this decision continue to receive their privileges for lifetime.

All Members of the Foundation, regardless of category, are obliged to uphold the mission, vision, and values of the institution; to comply with the Constitution and all bylaws promulgated thereunder; and to engage actively, to the extent feasible, in the activities and programs of the Foundation. Membership may be suspended or terminated by decision of the Board of Trustees, adopted by the requisite majority, in cases of non-payment of dues, conduct injurious to the reputation or values of the Foundation, or conviction of a serious criminal offense. Such action requires due notice and affords the Member the opportunity to respond in accordance with principles of fairness and accountability. An appeal to such termination or suspension can be submitted for consideration at the Annual General Meetings of the Governing Body, which would be processed through a majority vote.



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Other Documents

Attachment III: Constitution of the DMUN Foundation

Attachment IV: 2024 Annual Report of the DMUN Foundation

Attachment V: 2023 Annual Report of the DMUN Foundation

Attachment VI: Certified Translation and Original Copy of Non-Profit Status, Republic of Korea

(Attached in this order)