4. Each Party shall designate a national focal point for the exchange of information under this Convention, including with regard to the consent of importing Parties under Article 3.

5. For the purposes of this Convention, information on the health and safety of humans and the environment shall not be regarded as confidential. Parties that exchange other information pursuant to this Convention shall protect any confidential information as mutually agreed.

Article 18

Public information, awareness and education

1. Each Party shall, within its capabilities, promote and facilitate:

(a) Provision to the public of available information on:

(i) The health and environmental effects of mercury and mercury compounds;

(ii) Alternatives to mercury and mercury compounds;

(iii) The topics identified in paragraph 1 of Article 17;

(iv) The results of its research, development and monitoring activities under Article 19; and

(v) Activities to meet its obligations under this Convention;

(b) Education, training and public awareness related to the effects of exposure to mercury and mercury compounds on human health and the environment in collaboration with relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and vulnerable populations, as appropriate.

2. Each Party shall use existing mechanisms or give consideration to the development of mechanisms, such as pollutant release and transfer registers where applicable, for the collection and dissemination of information on estimates of its annual quantities of mercury and mercury compounds that are emitted, released or disposed of through human activities.

Article 19

Research, development and monitoring

1. Parties shall endeavour to cooperate to develop and improve, taking into account their respective circumstances and capabilities:

(a) Inventories of use, consumption, and anthropogenic emissions to air and releases to water and land of mercury and mercury compounds;

(b) Modelling and geographically representative monitoring of levels of mercury and mercury compounds in vulnerable populations and in environmental media, including biotic media such as fish, marine mammals, sea turtles and birds, as well as collaboration in the collection and exchange of relevant and appropriate samples;

(c) Assessments of the impact of mercury and mercury compounds on human health and the environment, in addition to social, economic and cultural impacts, particularly in respect of vulnerable populations;

(d) Harmonized methodologies for the activities undertaken under subparagraphs (a), (b) and (c);

(e) Information on the environmental cycle, transport (including long-range transport and deposition), transformation and fate of mercury and mercury compounds in a range of ecosystems, taking appropriate account of the distinction between anthropogenic and natural emissions and releases of mercury and of remobilization of mercury from historic deposition;

(f) Information on commerce and trade in mercury and mercury compounds and mercury-added products; and

(g) Information and research on the technical and economic availability of mercury-free products and processes and on best available techniques and best environmental practices to reduce and monitor emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds.

2. Parties should, where appropriate, build on existing monitoring networks and research programmes in undertaking the activities identified in paragraph 1.