



ZERO MERCURY WORKING GROUP (ZMWG) INTERVENTION AT THE COW MEETING ON 21 Feb 2011

Thank You Madam Chair

My name is Rachel Kamande from the European Environmental Bureau, speaking on behalf of the Zero Mercury Working Group, an international coalition of more than 90 public interest environmental and health non-governmental organizations from over 45 countries from around the world, which strives for zero supply, demand, and emissions of mercury from all anthropogenic sources, with the goal of reducing mercury in the global environment to a minimum.

ZMWG welcomes the progress made during INC 2 meeting in Chiba, and gratefully acknowledges the efforts undertaken toward the development of a legally binding treaty on mercury. In order to achieve meaningful results, the mercury convention will need to be significantly more ambitious than the draft elements paper.

As UNEP prepares to draft the text for the INC 3, the ZMWG feels that in developing the mercury treaty text, the INC must strengthen critical portions of the elements paper to substantially reduce mercury use and releases.

For instance, environmentally sound management of mercury waste is an issue shared by all countries, and its challenges are most acutely felt by developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The proposed Mercury Treaty can greatly assist countries with these challenges, but before this can be done, there are a few broad issues which need to be addressed.

Among others, the INC must effectively clarify the relationship of the Mercury Treaty with the Basel Convention. Central to the resolution of this issue is the identification of specific control measures related to the management of mercury waste, and the determination which instrument should create these measures. We firmly believe that the expertise on mercury lies with the INC. Thus, measures such as, designating threshold limits, acceptable practices for mercury waste management, etc. must be determined by the Mercury Treaty and not by the Basel Convention.

The role of the Basel Convention in this regard, will be to cooperate and assist in addressing the technical aspects of implementing the measures defined under the Mercury Treaty.

Lastly, if there is no prohibition on the export of mercury waste to the developing world, there is a high probability that recovered mercury from those wastes would be diverted to unsound uses such as those under ASGM.

Thank you Madam Chair.