



# Dentists' Committee for a Mercury Free Africa

An affiliate of World Alliance for Mercury Free Dentistry

[www.mercuryfreedentistsafrica.org](http://www.mercuryfreedentistsafrica.org) | email: [info@mercuryfreedentistsafrica.org](mailto:info@mercuryfreedentistsafrica.org)



Head, Chemicals and Health Branch,  
Industry and Economy Division,  
United Nations Environmental Program,  
Palais des Nations  
8-14 avenue de la Paix,  
H-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.  
Email: [metals@un.org](mailto:metals@un.org)

11<sup>TH</sup> December, 2023.

Dear Sir,

## APPLICATION TO JOIN UNEP GLOBAL MERCURY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Dentists Committee for a Mercury Free Africa-DCMFA ([www.mercuryfreedentistsafrica.org](http://www.mercuryfreedentistsafrica.org)) hereby applies to join UNEP Global Mercury Partnership to support the main objective of the Minamata Convention on Mercury-protecting human health and the environment from man-made emissions of mercury and mercury compounds. DCMFA was formed on July 23rd 2019 in Lagos Nigeria. We are affiliated with World Alliance for Mercury Free Dentistry based in Washington DC, USA. Our members consist of Dentists, Public Health Physicians, Environmental Scientists, NGOs and other scientists and public-spirited individuals committed to making Africa and developing Economies mercury free by 2030.

Our objectives include:

1. Promoting mercury free dentistry (Minimum Intervention Dentistry-MID) in Dental Education through, curriculum update/caries risk assessment seminars, webinars, workshops, symposia and conferences.
2. To develop a framework for upgrading of Dental Simulation Laboratories with ICT, E learning and AI technology to facilitate the implementation of the children's amendment by simulating the use of 21<sup>st</sup> century mercury free clinical dental procedures.
3. Promoting mercury free dentistry (Minimum Intervention Dentistry-MID) in General Dental Practice through, seminars, webinars, workshops, symposia and conferences.
4. To develop a framework for a 21<sup>st</sup> century oral health policy update to support the implementation of the children's amendment to the Minamata convention on mercury COP 4.2 in Africa and developing economies worldwide.
5. To provide guidelines and strategic frame works for handling mercury wastes generated from dental practices during the phase down period.
6. Advocacy through targeted public awareness campaigns in vulnerable groups (children, pregnant and lactating women; and women of child bearing age).

G T Arotiba  
A. O. Loto

MO Ukpong  
I N Menakaya

**G T Arotiba** BDS (Lagos), FWACS, FMCDS, FDSRCSEd, FICD, DDSci. h. c. (cub), Cert E Learning (UNESCO). Cert Leadership (London graduate school)



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We have promoted mercury free 21st century dentistry through conferences, workshops and webinars from 2018 to date. Our 1<sup>st</sup> webinar series (2020-2022) was titled –‘21<sup>st</sup> Century Dentistry is Mercury Free’. Our current webinar series is titled ‘Make Africa Mercury Free by 2030’ and will continue in 2024 and run till 2030. We plan to upload the recorded webinars on our website for free viewing by Dentists and environmental experts worldwide. We believe the best strategy to implement the Children’s amendment (COP 4.2) is to teach Dentists **NOT TO USE IT** (that is to teach Dentists and other Dental Staff to practice 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mercury Free Dentistry-Minimum Intervention Dentistry).

Dental amalgam (45-55% mercury) is a tooth destructive 19<sup>th</sup> /20<sup>th</sup> century restorative that pollutes our clinics and our environment. Mercury is the most vaporous metal known to man. Amalgam separators can only separate solid wastes. Therefore, there will be continuous emission of mercury vapor in clinics that continue to use it with occupational exposure to dental staff, patients and accompanying family members. European Scientists have labelled dental amalgam a ‘secondary toxin.’ DCMFA is committed to imparting the requisite knowledge and skills to Dentists and other dental staff (Therapists, Nurses and Dental Surgery Assistants etc) to enable them practice 21<sup>st</sup> century mercury free dentistry (minimum intervention dentistry). We believe this is a cost-effective strategy for Africa and other developing economies to implement the children’s amendment to the Minamata convention on mercury (COP 4.2).

Africa and other developing economies typically have poor infrastructure for managing wastes generally and mercury wastes in particular. In many such countries there are no organized systems for collection, sorting, safe transport, storage and treatment of mercury wasted generated by dental clinics. Therefore, there will be continuous emission of mercury vapor and mercury contaminated dental wastes will continue to be discharged into the underground water system through the clinic waste water. This will result in contamination of aquatic protein sources with methyl mercury- a potent neurotoxin that damages children’s brain even before they are born.

This will further compound the health challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa. The WHO and UNEP reported sometimes back that environmental pollution is responsible for 25% of human disease worldwide; but in Sub-Saharan Africa, the proportion is higher (35%).

We, also recognize that adequate provision should be made for handling mercury wastes generated during the phase down period. In this regard we recommend that provision should be made for a limited installation of amalgam separators in Faculties of Dentistry and selected teaching, specialist and regional hospitals. In addition, a system/protocol for collection, sorting and safe transport and storage of mercury wastes generated during the phase down period should be developed, implemented and monitored. Special provision should be made for storage and transport of these hazardous wastes to countries with the requisite technology and infrastructure to handle them. Perhaps a Minamata Marshall Plan should be developed by UNEP to assist manufacturers of Dental amalgam (mostly based in



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Europe and Australia) to switch their factories to making 21<sup>st</sup> century mercury free restorative materials (glass ionomers, bisphenol free composites, compomers and other mercury free 21<sup>st</sup> century filling materials).

Our strategic focus is to develop guidelines and templates for implementing the Children's amendment by training Dental personnel the principles and clinical strategies to implement 21<sup>st</sup> century mercury free dentistry) in Dental Education and in Dental Practice. In this regard we are collaborating with stakeholders including Dental Faculties (through the Association of Nigerian Dental Deans-ANDD) and other Dental training institutions on a regional basis -6 geopolitical zones of Nigeria (South-South, South East, South West, North West, North East and North Central) and 6 geopolitical zones of Africa (Northern, Southern, Eastern, Central, Western and Island Nations). Our webinars have been attended by over 200 participants from Africa, The Americas, Europe, Asia and Oceania. Our guidelines and templates will be shared with like minds worldwide for free use in their campaigns in their regions.

Please find attached to this e-mail the following documents:

1. 21st Century Dentistry is Mercury Free (submitted to the Minamata Convention Secretariat before COP4.2).
2. Updating Dental Schools Curricula-the implications for Dental Education.
3. Our 2024 - 2030 plan for Webinars, workshops, Conferences and Symposia.

We look forward to a mutually rewarding partnership with UNEP to make Africa and other Developing economies mercury free by 2030.

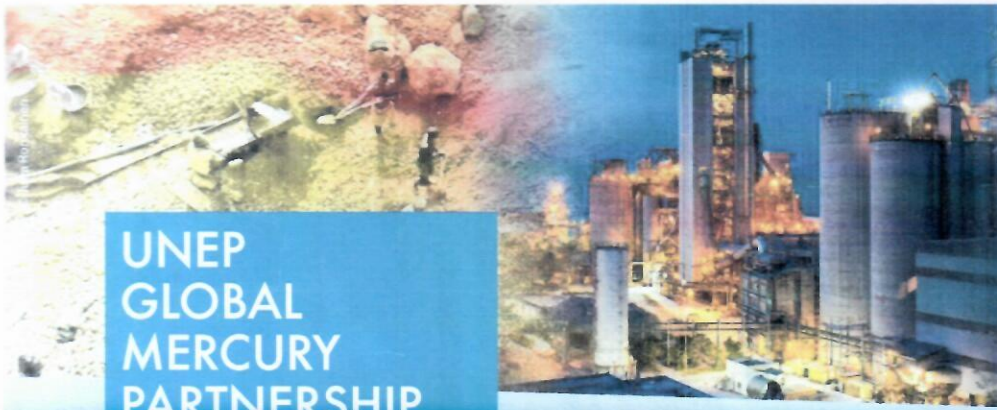
Thank you for your kind attention.

Yours Sincerely,

Prof Godwin Toyin Arotiba BDS, FWACS, FMCDS, FDSRCSEd (UK), FICD, DDSci. h.c. (cub), Cert. E-Learning (UNESCO), Cert. Leadership (London Graduate School).

Chairman.

(Past Dean (2012-2016) Faculty of Dental Sciences, College of Medicine, University of Lagos Idi-Araba).



# UNEP GLOBAL MERCURY PARTNERSHIP

Yellowfin Tuna. Courtesy NOAA Fisheries. © Photo by Jeff Muir

## PARTNERSHIP AREAS

Please check the partnership area(s) to which your organization intends to contribute to:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artisanal and small-scale gold mining   | <input type="checkbox"/> Mercury releases from coal combustion     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mercury cell chlor-alkali production    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mercury waste management       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mercury air transport and fate research | <input type="checkbox"/> Mercury supply and storage                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mercury in products          | <input type="checkbox"/> Mercury releases from the cement industry |

> Please specify in your support letter how your organization intends to contribute to each of the selected partnership area(s).

## ORGANIZATION APPLYING TO BECOME A PARTNER

Name of Organization: Dentists Committee for a Mercury Free Africa

Type of Organization:

<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry / private sector
<input type="checkbox"/> Intergovernmental Organization	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Academia / scientific institution
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-governmental Organization	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify

Mailing Address: 1st Floor, No 19 Ogunlana Drive, Obele Bus Stop, Surulere , Lagos.

Postcode: 101283 City: Lagos Country: Nigeria

E-mail: makeafricamercuryfree2030@gmail.com

Telephone: +2348037520961 Website: www.mercuryfreedentistsafrica.org

## ORGANIZATION'S REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNEP GLOBAL MERCURY PARTNERSHIP

Mr.  Dr.

First Name: Godwin Toyin Last Name: Arotiba

Functional Title: Chairman

Section / Department: Office of the Chairman

E-mail: gtarotiba@gmail.com

\* UNEP Global Mercury Partnership registration forms are to be accompanied by a letter to UNEP signifying support for the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership and commitment to achieving its goal. The support letter should specify how the organization intends to contribute to meeting the goal of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership. Please submit the support letter and registration form to:

**Head, Chemicals and Health Branch**  
**Industry and Economy Division**  
**United Nations Environment Programme**  
 Palais des Nations  
 8-14 avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland  
 E-mail: metals@un.org