

## Manila 2011 Declaration on Mercury Free Healthcare

Gathered in Manila, Philippines on the occasion of the Asia Regional Conference on Mercury-Free Health Care, more than 100 representatives of ministries of health and environment, health professional organizations, hospitals, and other health sector organizations from ten Asian countries came together to address policy and technical issues regarding the substitution of mercury-based medical devices. The group made the following declaration:

### **Recognizing,**

the important role the health sector plays in protecting and promoting public health;

the negative consequences of mercury pollution on human health;

the negative impacts of mercury pollution on the environment;

and mercury's toxic, persistent and bioaccumulative nature;

### **Recognizing that,**

alternatives to mercury-based medical devices are available, affordable and at least as accurate as mercury devices in their use;

health systems in many countries in Asia have switched or are in the process of switching to the available alternatives;

the WHO-HCWH Global Initiative for Mercury-Free Health Care aims to substitute 70 percent of mercury thermometers and blood pressure devices globally by 2017;

the substitution of mercury-based medical devices will contribute to health system strengthening by improving the quality of health care and the occupational health and safety of health care workers;

the world's governments are negotiating a legally binding treaty to phase-out most uses of mercury;

# Asia Regional Conference on Mercury-Free Health Care

March 15-16, 2011, Philippines



Organized by:



***We, the participants in the Asia Regional Conference on Mercury Free Health Care recommend the following plan of action.***

## **For Governments and Regional Bodies:**

1. Formulate the policy and directives to phase-out the use of mercury devices in the health sector's day-to-day practice.
2. Promote multi-sectoral collaboration for better implementation of policy-based plans, including collaboration between Ministries of Health, Environment and Industry.
3. Provide information to the people—including health professionals-- regarding the harmful effects of mercury, thereby educating and communicating with a diversity of stakeholders.
4. Replace mercury devices with alternatives that are at least as accurate and well calibrated as mercury devices in public health facilities.
5. Identify not only alternatives to mercury-based medical devices, but also provide for the safe storage and disposal of these mercury devices—including potentially mandating extended producer responsibility.
6. Encourage the development of an appropriate plan for the phase-out of mercury thermometers and sphygmomanometers in the International Negotiating Committee to Prepare a Global Legally Binding Instrument on Mercury.

## **For WHO and other UN Agencies**

1. Make technical assistance and expertise available to Governments and other health sector organizations for mercury substitution and safe disposal.
2. Produce information, educational, and technical guidance materials.
3. Make resources available for the initiation of Mercury-free Health Care.
4. Encourage policy makers to work towards mercury-free health care.

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## **For Civil Society Organizations:**

1. Advocate for policies and practices that substitute mercury-based medical devices with safe, accurate, affordable alternatives.
2. Change the public perception of the issue through educational activities.
3. Work as a watchdog for the implementation of government activities and policies.
4. Network with different stakeholders, government organizations and civil society organizations to see the effective implementation.
5. Promote initiatives in the private sector health institutions, as well as with manufacturers for mercury free health care.

## **For the Private Sector**

1. Phase-out the production, sale and marketing of mercury-based medical devices.
2. Expand production and distribution of non-mercury devices, making quality and validated alternatives available at affordable prices.
3. Provide for Extended Producer Responsibility by taking back phased-out mercury equipment and managing the mercury waste.
4. Support the goals of mercury-free health care.

Manila, the Philippines, March 15, 2011