

**Zero Mercury Working Group Opening Statement
at INC1 on Mercury, 7-11 June 2010, Stockholm, Sweden**

7 June 2010

Thank you Mr. Chair,

We would also like to thank the government of Sweden and the Nordic Council for their hospitality and UNEP for all the work done and in preparation for this meeting. We would like to congratulate you as a Chair and the Bureau members of their election.

I am talking on behalf of the Zero Mercury Working Group, an international coalition of more than 80 environmental NGOs from over 45 countries, from around the world, formed in 2005, striving 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.

It is appropriate as we begin the INC deliberations to bear in mind why we are here. We are here because mercury is a potent toxic chemical particularly harmful to the development of children. Yet this chemical continues to be used unnecessarily in a variety of products and processes where safer alternatives are available. And mercury releases to the environment continue unabated due to inadequate waste management practices and emission controls. Consequently, many aquatic food sources are not safe for children to eat, workers are needlessly exposed, and the most vulnerable on this planet tend to bear the disproportionate burden of mercury pollution. This is an intolerable situation requiring action in the form of aggressive, binding control measures.

The case for taking bold and decisive action is clear, and in most cases, the path forward is evident because it has already been done successfully.

As many of you know, the Zero Mercury Working Group has delineated some critical elements for an effective mercury treaty, as contained in our partial concept draft and treaty framework documents. Some of these elements include:

- A ban on new primary mercury mines and the closure of existing primary mines by a date certain
- A ban on the export of elemental mercury except for the purpose of storage or sequestration of the mercury
- A systematic phase out of manufacturing of mercury products, and an associated export ban of these products so that they can no longer be dumped on the developing world
- The phase out of using mercury in manufacturing processes such as chlor alkali production
- Promoting the use of non-mercury and lower mercury use technologies in artisanal and small-scale gold mining; and the capture and control of mercury emissions from coal combustion, ore processing, and other sources of mercury releases.
- Development of a fish and marine mammal food source monitoring network to provide food consumption guidance and to monitor overall effectiveness of the treaty.
- Providing adequate financial and technical assistance, including the creation of a dedicated fund with an accompanying compliance mechanism, to ensure effective implementation of the treaty.

To finish the job before us, we need to use our time wisely. We are pleased that the INC 1 has adopted the rules of procedure as recommended by the ad-hoc open ended working group last fall in Bangkok, and can now begin the discussion of possible treaty provisions. Similarly, we hope INC 1 can make significant progress in areas where little conceptual disagreement appears to exist and in areas where more detailed discussions can follow the initial preliminary run through of the issues. To build off this progress, UNEP can then prepare detailed treaty options or similar materials that can be used as a starting point for INC 2 deliberations.

We look forward to working constructively with all parties to achieve a robust mercury treaty.

Thank you.