

ZMWG Coal intervention, 10 June 2010

Thank you Mr. Chair

As indicated by the UNEP Global Atmospheric Mercury Assessment, the majority of anthropogenic mercury emitted to the atmosphere comes from burning fossil fuels, predominantly coal. Ore processing, cement production, and waste incineration also add significant amounts of mercury to our environment.

Despite the global threat posed by these emissions, they remain largely unregulated and unabated in most of the world, even though cost-effective and well-recognized technologies are currently available to control mercury emissions from these sources. We recognize that the applications, costs and efficiencies of these technologies will vary, and that these factual issues require careful study, discussion and elaboration, as anticipated in the upcoming Paragraph 29 study. Further, we understand that finding the appropriate policy measures will be a complicated challenge, one deeply connected to issues of social and economic development, and that the approaches must be cost-effective. Nonetheless, the treaty negotiations must address this anthropogenically-generated source of global mercury as a priority. If we wish to make seafood and other water-related foods safe for everyone, everywhere to eat, then this is our moment, as an international community, to rise up to the challenge.

Specifically, the treaty should reduce, with a goal of elimination in a timely fashion, mercury emissions from these sources. One approach to consider, would have the treaty establish Best Available Techniques (BAT) for coal-fired power plants, cement kilns, and other combustion processes that release mercury to the environment with an agreed upon schedule for phased-in application. We are open to considering alternative options on exactly how best to achieve mercury emission reductions, in light of the results of the upcoming Paragraph 29 study, but the environmental community stands firm that emission controls must become an important part of the treaty.

Thank you