

ZMWG statement on products and processes, 9 June 2010

In order to protect human health and the global environment from the release of mercury and its compounds the phase-out of most mercury demand is critical. Mercury demand can be reduced through the substitution of non-mercury alternatives in products and industrial processes.

We recommend the following actions to reduce *mercury demand in products*:

- Prohibit any new use of mercury in products
- Phase out the use of mercury in the manufacture of products where appropriate safe alternatives are available. Prompt phase out is achievable for some products since non-mercury alternatives are available and are already widely used in the world. For example, in the case of switches and relays, measuring devices, batteries, paints and pesticides.
- Phase out the trade of mercury-containing products, so that these products cannot be dumped in the developing world;
- Establish mercury content limits for mercury products still allowed under the treaty and/or labeling requirements to inform consumers that they contain mercury
- Provide periodic review for those products which do not have obvious immediate substitutes, to determine whether functional substitutes have become available.

We also recommend the promotion of non-mercury alternatives, including quality control measures as needed to ensure the alternatives are safe and effective.

In addition to reducing demand from the use of mercury in products, reduction of demand of mercury for industrial processes is required.

We recommend the following actions to reduce *mercury demand in industrial processes*.

- Prohibit any new uses of mercury in industrial processes, similar to products.
- Prohibit the construction of new chlor-alkali plants and phase out existing mercury cell plants by a date certain
- Encourage and promote development and deployment of a no mercury catalyst for VCM production in countries using an acetylene-based process.

Finally, ASGM.

ASGM is often characterized – correctly -- as a massive, complex, and difficult source of mercury demand.

We want to first convey that, on a country by country basis, this problem is solvable. In fact, there are existing successes that have led to substantial reductions in mercury use that can serve as models for broader programs, and these take into account the socio economic dimensions of the issue.

Provisions are clearly needed in the treaty to directly address this problem. Activities could be country-specific but begin with an initial assessment of the country situation. Following the initial assessment, Parties should conduct activities aimed at eliminating the three worst practices:

1. Whole ore amalgamation
2. The open burning of amalgam without the use of a vapour capture system such as a retort
3. The use of cyanide after mercury amalgamation or use of cyanide on mercury contaminated tailings without removing the mercury

Financial and technical assistance required to perform these measures would be identified and included in the initial assessment.

It is anticipated that subsequent activities, when implemented, would result in the elimination of mercury use in ASGM where it is feasible to do so.

Thank you.