

**Opening Statement of Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG)
Minamata COP 2 – 19 November 2018, Geneva, Switzerland**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

I am speaking on behalf of the Zero Mercury Working Group, an international coalition of over 100 public interest NGOs from more than 50 countries.

We would also like to thank the Government of Switzerland as well as UN Environment, the Bureau and the Secretariat for all their work in preparation for this meeting; and further congratulate Ms. Rossana Silva Repetto, for her appointment as Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention.

Zero Mercury also congratulates all governments that have now ratified the Convention, along with those who are now completing their MIAs.

To promote the Convention's implementation, we participated on each of the intersessional expert groups and provided input. In parallel, our NGO partners have been supporting their respective governments with early ratification and implementation of certain Treaty provisions.

Earlier this year we organized two workshops, one in Asia and one in Africa, in collaboration with the GEF and UNDP Small Grants Programme to build NGO capacity to support implementation of projects with emphasis on mercury source and use reduction. Representatives from 35 countries attended the meetings.

Under our global skin lightening cream campaign, over 300 creams from 22 countries were collected and tested. 10% of the samples had mercury concentrations well above the Convention's 1 ppm threshold, ranging from 93 to over 16,000 ppm. We also lab tested products marketed on the internet and found many high mercury products. The results, including the executive summary of the global report are available at our booth.

For COP2, an important question is how to best translate the Convention's requirements into an effective operational framework, resulting in measurable and substantial reductions in global mercury use, trade and emissions. These structural issues are important in determining the future impact of the Convention.

We are looking forward to participating in these discussions.

Thank you.