



**Opening Statement of Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG)  
Minamata COP 4.1 – 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021, online meeting**

Thank you, Mrs. President,

My name is Elena Lymberidi-Settimo and I am speaking on behalf of the Zero Mercury Working Group, an international coalition of over 110 public interest NGOs from more than 55 countries.

We would like to thank the Government of Indonesia as well as UN Environment, the Bureau and the Secretariat for all their work in preparation for this meeting; and congratulate all governments that have ratified the Convention this last year.

To promote the Convention's implementation, we participated on each of the intersessional expert groups – waste thresholds, releases, and review of the annexes A and B, and provided input.

Earlier this year, under the Global Mercury Partnership on Products, we were involved in the preparation of two webinars namely on medical measuring devices and cosmetics; currently we are also assisting in preparing one on mercury in lighting.

In parallel, our NGO partners have been supporting their respective governments with their ratification and implementation of certain Treaty provisions, and mercury added product phase out work which has been ongoing in Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Bangladesh, India, and the Philippines. Under the third phase of the EU/UNEP African Caribbean Pacific Multilateral Environmental Agreements (ACP MEA III) Programme, assistance is also being provided to the governments of Trinidad and Tobago, St. Kitts and Nevis and Antigua and Barbuda.

Under our global skin lightening cream campaign, a new third testing round has been initiated, with focus on suspect high mercury creams. Samples are being collected and analysed from 18 countries. Consistent findings of high mercury creams in regulated countries indicates that the need for effective enforcement is a high priority, on which we are also trying to assist.

While we greatly welcome all preparatory work and acknowledge the technical difficulties with this virtual COP, we are hopeful that the restriction of observers' participation will be limited to this one meeting. We would welcome the opportunity to participate in the pre-COP 4.2 regional meetings, and we hope that regions are allowed to come to Bali earlier for regional consultations.

COP4.1 is needed to advance discussions on the Programme of Work and Budget so the Convention work can continue uninterrupted. National reporting is also crucial to better evaluate the Treaty's effectiveness, and good quality data from Parties will be necessary. In terms of the effectiveness evaluation process, we welcome mechanisms and work proposed to ensure oversight by the COP at all critical steps in the process.

As always, we look forward to working collaboratively and where appropriate assisting Parties towards our common goal – Making mercury history.

Thank you.