



**Opening Statement of Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG)
Minamata COP 4.2 – 21st March 2021, Bali, Indonesia**

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, members of ZMWG participated on each of the intersessional expert groups – waste thresholds, releases, effectiveness evaluation 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 several webinars on mercury-added products, in these cases focusing on skin lightening creams and lamps.

Our NGO partners have been supporting their respective governments with their ratification and the implementation of certain Treaty provisions, and Mercury-added product phase out work 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, our third, new testing round has been completed with focus on suspect high mercury creams. 271 samples were collected and analysed from 17 countries, from over 40 e-commerce platforms; 129 of those were found to be with mercury over 1 ppm from 30 e-platforms. Consistent findings of high mercury creams in regulated countries indicates the need for online liability reform and effective enforcement as a high priority.

The priorities of this meeting are clear: (1) A decision is needed to create the Effectiveness Evaluation infrastructure so that this process is on track to meet the deadline for the first report, and (2) we need to close the gaps in Convention coverage of products and processes because safer alternatives are clearly available.

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

Thank you.