

Statement of NRDC/ZM WG on Proposed Amendments to Annex A and B

Thank you Madam President I am speaking on behalf of NRDC and the Zero Mercury Working Group. Since it's the first time we are taking the floor, we wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Indonesia and the Secretariat for all your efforts to make this meeting happen.

We urge the Conference of the Parties to take decisive and ambitious actions at this meeting, to close the gaps in Convention coverage of mercury products and processes, so that these uses are phased out and thereby removed from global commerce. The mercury products and processes to be discussed at this meeting have viable and safe non-mercury alternatives, as demonstrated by the transitions already undertaken or completed by policymakers and/or producers. We recognize the timing of the transition matters, and we pledge to work with you on a timetable that is both expedited and appropriate, taking into account the Convention architecture already in place under Article 6 and elsewhere.

Recognizing other NGO speakers will be addressing dental amalgam and lamps, we join with them in urging that Annex A should be revised so that a timetable for phasing out the manufacturing and trade is established for these products.

We also wish to highlight the importance of addressing the use of mercury as a satellite fuel. This is a use which essentially ended in the 1970s, and thus non-mercury alternatives clearly exist since satellites have used other fuels since then. But now the use has surfaced again because a private company thinks they can earn higher profits by bringing this use back. The company's goal is to deploy thousands of satellites using mercury as a fuel, which would result in significant atmospheric emissions and pose safety concerns during launch.

The Conference of the Parties can stop this use before it starts again and gains momentum. We know satellite companies are looking for launch sites near the equator throughout the world. This is a global concern, because both the potential launch sites and the resulting emissions have a global reach.

We have a duty to future generations to phase out unnecessary mercury uses, and to stop adding to global mercury contamination. Let's do the very best we can under these challenging circumstances and revise Annex A to prohibit mercury in satellite or rocket fuel.