

## COP5 - ZMWG Statement on Gender – 1/11/2023

Thank you, Madam President.

I am talking on behalf of Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment and the Zero Mercury Working Group.

Mercury is a dangerous neurotoxin with a detrimental impact on the health of women and children and, through them, future generations. Women and children are exposed directly and indirectly as a result of occupational hazards, food chain contamination or the use of mercury-added products. Women are most vulnerable to exposure during the preconception, pregnancy, and postnatal periods, given that mercury crosses the placental barrier.

We believe that raising public awareness on the gendered and intersectional nature of mercury exposures, production and consumption is necessary for enhancing women's grassroots action and participation in policy discussions. If empowered with gender-sensitive knowledge and skills, women's groups at all levels can become agents of change.

ZMWG therefore welcomes the gender action plan as it identifies the enabling conditions and specific policy and programmatic steps to mainstream gender and empower women and girls within all activities under the Convention. In particular, we welcome the knowledge dissemination activities of the gender action plan on gender-specific topics such as the mercury-added skin lightening creams.

Thank you.