

ZMWG Statement on Cosmetics, 3 November 2025, Geneva Switzerland

Thank you, Mr. President,

I am Lynnette Ouya, from the Centre for Environment Justice and Development, Kenya. I deliver this statement on behalf of Zero Mercury Working Group.

Zero Mercury welcomes the Secretariat's report highlighting the multifaceted challenges of eliminating mercury-added skin-lightening products. We also commend Gabon government for the Libreville Commitment adopted earlier this year, as well as the proposed CRP for this COP, as a strong example of regional leadership from the African region.

Yet, toxic cosmetics continue to be produced, traded, and sold illegally, both on the ground and online. Our recent report on Amazon exposes the online platform's double standards, which is protecting consumers in the US more than elsewhere since a recent ruling, and underscores the critical role of online marketplaces in linking manufacturers with consumers worldwide.

Given these challenges, halting production at its source is more cost-effective and impactful than attempting to control trade and sales afterwards. With our report "Zero Out Toxic Production", published today, including a case study on mercury-added SLPs produced in Pakistan, we are calling for urgent action to stop this toxic production at the source to protect vulnerable populations, particularly women and youth, who are disproportionately affected by these harmful products.

We further comment, all the work from the GEF/ UNEP, WHO and BRI through the different projects and we do appreciate being able to be part of those to assist countries to eliminate mercury added skin lightening products.

To accelerate progress globally, ZMWG recommends that COP-6 adopts a decision strengthening the implementation of the Convention by ensuring that:

- Parties still lacking a strong regulatory setup are identified and supported;
- Manufacturers are identified and relevant countries adopt and enforce regulations, with increased support for customs and surveillance authorities;
- Model demand-reduction strategies are developed and implemented;

The UNEP Global Mercury Partnership and other bodies such as the Implementation and Compliance Committee and others, will be key to support the Secretariat, ensuring a fit and proper implementation and compliance with Article 4.

In conclusion, Mister President, the global ban on mercury in cosmetics is a major achievement. Now, we must ensure it is fully implemented. ZMWG calls on Parties to act with urgency and unity to end this preventable source of mercury exposure once and for all.

Thank you