

ZMWG Statement on Capacity Building, Minamata COP 6, 04 November 2025,
Geneva Switzerland

Thank you, Mr. President,

This year marks 20 years of the Zero-Mercury Working Group. 20 years that we, a network of more than 110 NGOs, are supporting governments for a mercury-free world.

As co-lead of the Global Mercury Partnership on Products, the ZMWG continues to support Parties to implement and enforce the provisions of the Convention. For example, our guide for a roadmap to phasing-out mercury added products is part of the capacity building materials shared with Parties by the Secretariat.

Since the last COP, we have been supporting activities with our NGO partners in 3 African and 3 Asian countries, who have been assisting their respective governments towards eliminating mercury added skin lightening creams and promoting mercury free ASGM.

Our global campaign on skin-lightening creams, including two new reports published this month, has been contributing information via our database with over 1000 creams tested. Results show the ongoing use of mercury in these products, available worldwide, in physical shops and through e-commerce platforms. This campaign would not have been possible without our broad NGO network. We thank our partners for their collaboration and our funders for their continued trust.

We welcome the ongoing capacity building efforts on mercury-added cosmetics under GEF-funded projects. The current UNEP-led project, executed by WHO and BRI on *Eliminating Mercury-Added Skin Lightening Products* in Sri Lanka, Gabon, and Jamaica, is achieving tangible progress, and we welcome being able to contribute, mainly by addressing online sales. We also commend the approval of a new six-year GEF project in 13 African countries, which will further strengthen regional capacity.

Under the third phase of the EU/UNEP African Caribbean Pacific Multilateral Environmental Agreements (ACP MEA III) Programme, we also provided assistance to three Caribbean governments towards phasing-out mercury-added products.

You are welcome to pass by our booth where we can share our experiences and tools towards phasing out mercury added products and in relation to skin lighting creams.

As always, ZMWG stands ready to work collaboratively and assist Parties in building the capacity needed to achieve our shared goal: making mercury history.

Thank you.