

Main Elements of a Global Mercury Treaty: (Tuvalu Contribution)

The main elements of a Global Treaty on Mercury should:

- Have, as its objective, to protect human health, wildlife and the environment from mercury by eliminating where feasible anthropogenic sources and releases of mercury;
- Recognize particularly vulnerable populations such as children, women of child bearing age, indigenous peoples, Arctic communities, island and coastal dwellers, fisherfolk, small-scale gold miners, the poor, workers, and others;
- Have a broad scope and address the entire mercury life-cycle;
- Aim to control all anthropogenic mercury sources and all human activities that release significant quantities of mercury to the environment;
- Establish an adequately funded and predictable financial mechanism with new and additional resources sufficient to enable developing countries and countries with economies in transition to fulfil their treaty obligations without compromising their poverty reduction goals;
- Use elimination-based control measures subject to possible limited, time-bound exemptions to phase-out all products and processes that contain or use mercury, and in the interim, establish standards and controls for those products and processes that remain;
- Reduce and minimize global commercial demand for mercury;
- Reduce global mercury supply by banning primary mercury mining; mandating permanent, secure, monitored storage for existing mercury stockpiles and all mercury that is recovered from chlor-alkali plants; and restricting the trade of mercury generated from remaining sources;
- Establish effective controls on international trade in mercury and mercury-containing products;
- Mandate environmentally sound solutions for the management of wastes that contain mercury and mercury compounds including measures to prevent mercury from entering municipal, medical and industrial waste streams;
- Address the remediation and reclamation of existing mercury-contaminated sites;
- Expedite the phase-out of mercury use in the healthcare sector;
- Promote alternatives to the use of mercury dental amalgams with the aim of eventually eliminating this practice;
- Ban mercury-containing pesticides;
- Establish Best Available Techniques (BAT) for coal-fired power plants, cement kilns, and other combustion processes that release mercury to the environment with an agreed schedule for its phased-in application; aim to phase-out any of these sources when good alternatives are feasible, available and affordable;
- Promote the use of renewable, alternative energy sources as a substitute for coal-fired power plants that release mercury to the environment;
- Institute effective measures to reduce and eliminate where feasible the use of mercury in gold mining;
- Minimize the use of mercury in laboratories, schools and other institutions; prohibit inappropriate uses; and incorporate information on mercury toxicity and proper techniques for handling mercury in school curricula;
- Prohibit new uses of mercury;

- Promote research and development on sustainable, non-toxic, alternatives to products and processes that contain or use mercury with special emphasis on addressing the needs of developing countries and countries with economies in transition;
- Ensure that developing countries and countries with economies in transition do not become dumping grounds for mercury wastes and excess mercury supplies;
- Establish mechanisms for capacity-building and technology transfer;
- Require each Party to establish and implement a National or Regional Treaty Implementation Plan; include in the plans inventories of mercury supplies, sources, wastes and contaminated sites;
- Ensure that civil society has an active role in the development and implementation of the treaty including the opportunity to participate in the development and implementation of National or Regional Implementation Plans;
- Establish mechanisms to improve, provide and exchange knowledge and information about:
 - Mercury emissions, supply and use;
 - Human and environmental mercury exposure;
 - Environmental monitoring data;
 - Socio-economic impacts of mercury use, emissions and controls; and
 - Alternatives for mercury uses in products, processes and other sources;
- Ensure that all scientific information about mercury is regularly updated and is made available and easily accessible to the public in a timely manner and in appropriate formats and languages;
- Establish a reporting mechanism that requires Parties to periodically update their national mercury inventories and report on progress in implementing National or Regional Implementation Plans and treaty obligations;
- Establish mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of the treaty including global monitoring of mercury in the environment and in humans;
- Establish and maintain a global fish monitoring network to assess progress in reducing the quantity of mercury circulating in the global environment and to gather the information necessary to enable government health agencies to carry out effective risk communication and outreach strategies to populations that consume fish;
- Establish effective and enforceable treaty compliance provisions.



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