

**The Intergovernmental negotiating committee
to prepare a global legally binding mechanism on Mercury (INCI),**

Based on the UNEP GC decision 25/5 paragraph 27, and subject matters which were discussed at INCI in Sweden, Sri Lanka would like to provide our concerns which need to be addressed when developing the proposed instrument.

It is noted that Sri Lanka is neither a mercury producing country nor a highly mercury consuming country. Our usage of Mercury is very limited. However, we have mercury containing products and service such use of CFL bulbs, batteries, electronic equipment, and health services mainly in dental care, jewelry industry, education and indigenous medicinal practices.

However it is necessary to carry out a stock taking exercise to list out the mercury usage, and disposal of mercury containing products. Such an exercise would enable us to work out suitable strategies for safe usage, storage and disposal.

2 Carry out a proper awareness and capacity building program to educate the public

Capacity Building

As a country which is a party to all the important Environmental Conventions related to MEAs such as Basel Convention, Stockholm Convention, Rotterdam Convention, etc. Sri Lanka supports the negotiation process for a legally binding mechanism which is practical and implementable for the betterment our future.

However, we have to educate our communities regarding the possible harmful effects due to the improper usage of mercury containing equipment and services.

In this regard Sri Lanka is of the view that through the proposed instrument should have provisions that will allow capacity building and awareness creation as the first step in the proposed instrument. It should also cater to easy transfer of technologies. However, there should be sufficient financial resources allocated for this purposes.

Hg Contaminated sites

These products of mercury containing waste are mainly in used flour cent lamps, CFL bulbs, small button batteries and other related electronic equipment. But at the moment these waste are collected with the municipal solid waste and finally end up in waste dumps since Sri Lanka do not possesses hazardous waste disposal facilities.

At the moment Sri Lanka is making arrangements to establish e waste collection and disposal mechanism with the technical and financial support of the Secretariat of the Basel Convention.

However Sri Lanka need extended technical support to segregate mercury containing waste from the other e waste stream.

It is also important to obtain the commitment of the producers of mercury containing products to convert their products to mercury free products at affordable prices to our countries and I repeat mercury free products at affordable prices. These could be incorporated into the proposed instrument. The mechanism would be either the polluter pays principle or through the principles of producer extended responsibility.

Supply and Storage

In our indigenous medicinal practices especially in Ayurveda Medicine and Homeopathy Medicine treatment, mercury is used for the curing of many acute illnesses. In these indigenous health practices, mercury is used with giving specific attentions to its toxicity. Therefore, the instrument should have relevant provisions to safeguard such practices and industries which have a national interests.

In this regard Sri Lanka is of the view that through the proposed supply and storage capacity on mercury should have special arrangements to cater to countries with national interests where mercury is required and supplied based on country's demands.

Environmentally Sound Storage

The instrument itself should define on how to carry out environmentally sound long term storage where Best Available Techniques (BAT) & Best Environmentally Technologies (BET) are being followed and it is important to develop the instrument together with a criteria for long term storage of mercury.

Atmospheric Emissions of Mercury

Sri Lanka is in the process of establishing coal based thermal power plants for power generation. These plants will be in operation by 2013. However, it is noted that additional technical and financial resources are needed to establish the necessary precautionary measures to control atmospheric emissions of mercury from these power plants. These will create additional burdens for developing countries like Sri Lanka. Therefore these mercury control measures could be voluntarily implemented without binding targets.

Further the instrument should incorporate provisions where developing countries like Sri Lanka will be able to access best available technologies (BAT) and best environmental practices (BEP) at reasonable and affordable prices enabling us to establish atmospheric emission control measures on mercury, voluntarily by countries itself.

