

Good morning all,

First I want to thank UNEP for allowing my group to respond to Per's synopsis of the international negotiations on chemicals management, particularly on Mercury, and outline the NGOs expectations from the GC25/GMEF.

- Before I respond to Per's analysis I would just like to introduce the group I work with
- The **Zero Mercury Working group** is an international coalition of more than 75 public interest NGO's from around the world, formed in 2005 by the European Environmental Bureau and the Mercury Policy Project/Ban Mercury Working Group.
- Members include IPEN and HCWH with an additional broad base membership

- The aim of the group is to continually reduce emissions, demand and supply of mercury, from all sources we can control, with the goal of eliminating mercury in the environment globally.

- We agree entirely with Dr. Steiners assessment on mercury that this is our time to finally address mercury globally.
- We cannot leave this GC meeting without significant progress!
- Further delay is unacceptable, given the Global Mercury Assessment triggering this process was completed over six years ago and progress to reduce global mercury pollution since then has been extremely limited.

The GC 25 decision on mercury should contain two important elements.

The first element is the formation and associated mandate for an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (an INC) to prepare a free standing legally binding instrument (LBI) for mercury.

The second element is the mandate for a **near term program of action** to be immediately implemented while the INC is underway.

The INC should begin its work as soon as possible, rather than wait two or more years as proposed in UNEP/GC/25/5.

While several issues may require more time than others to resolve, this should not delay the start of INC deliberations on the remaining majority of issues.

- The Elements of a Comprehensive Mercury Framework developed by the Open Ended Working Group on Mercury last October provide a solid foundation on which to begin the INC deliberations.
- In particular, the elements related to, supply (including storage and trade), emission reductions (through the use of BAT/BEP or otherwise), and product/process phase-outs will benefit from a LBI

- Furthermore we have to accept that financial and technical resources are an important consideration in this process
- In the short term a program of action is needed including:
 - facility surveys
 - BAT guidance development for priority air emission sources
 - reduce global mercury supplies
 - storage of mercury
 - capacity building related to fish sampling
 - reduce mercury use in small-scale mining

So, what can Civil Society do?

- Lobby your governments that the time for a LBI addressing the global mercury issue is now at this GC meeting!
- The workplan to address mercury globally requires immediate action and UNEP must be given the mandate to do this.

Response to waiting & near term work program

- We cannot wait for the LBI to enter into force to begin serious efforts to address the global mercury pollution problem.
- We need to specify a clear, substantive, and immediate program for action. The Governing Council mercury decision should contain specific instructions to UNEP identifying immediate priorities for mercury activities, in addition to providing support to the INC, as well as commitments to provide UNEP with the resources to implement this program.

Mandate for an INC

The mandate of the INC must be established at this GC meeting

The first INC meeting should convene by the end of 2009

The framework established at the OEWG2 can provide a starting point for discussions of the INC

Global Mercury Policy Framework: Specific Actions

1. Reduce the supply of mercury
2. Reduce the demand for mercury in products and processes
3. Reduce international trade in mercury
4. Reduce atmospheric emissions of mercury
5. Achieve environmentally sound management of mercury-containing wastes
6. Find environmentally sound storage solutions for mercury
7. Address remediation of existing contaminated sites
8. Increase knowledge