



MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY

TEXT AND ANNEXES



UNITED NATIONS

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www.mercuryconvention.org

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FOREWORD FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

BAN KI MOON

The Minamata Convention on Mercury is an important advance in global environmental stewardship. This multilateral agreement addresses the devastating effects of mercury through practical actions that will reduce global levels while promoting sustainable development.

I thank the representatives of government, civil society, industry and international organizations for their contributions to the successful conclusion of the Convention. The participation of all stakeholders demonstrates the power of a broad coalition to forge effective solutions to global problems.

It is fitting that this Convention is being opened for signature near Minamata, a site that has endured – and worked to overcome – the taint of mercury poisoning. I urge all governments to demonstrate their commitment to addressing the problem and avoiding any such calamities in the future by signing the Convention and moving immediately to become Parties to it.

The Minamata Convention will protect people and improve standards of living for millions around the world, especially the most vulnerable. Let us strive to achieve universal adherence to this valuable new instrument, and advance together toward a safer, more sustainable and healthier planet for all.

FOREWORD FROM UN UNDER-SECRETARY AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNEP

ACHIM STEINER

The Minamata Convention on Mercury is now open for signature on the occasion of this Conference of Plenipotentiaries. The text comprises the final results of negotiations of governments, a culmination of five meetings of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury.

The fact that nations are at this juncture owes much to their hard work and enthusiasm for this treaty and its many ambitious targets to guide the work on mercury over the coming years and provide a solid, legally binding framework to tackle this substance of global concern. The fact this goal, set by governments in 2009, has been reached is a clear indication of the commitment to address what continues to be a major global, regional and national challenge and a threat to human health and the environment.

Through the measures under this Convention, we hope to see decreasing levels of mercury emitted to the atmosphere and released to land, water and the oceans. Activities such as artisanal and small-scale gold mining will be supported to move to more sustainable and less environmentally damaging practices, resulting in a decrease in mercury poisoning of miners and their families, as well as decreased levels of mercury in the environment. Phasing-out of mercury-containing products has already begun and now has a legal backbone to increase its momentum; likewise for processes using mercury. Current activities to convert to alternative technologies that do not use mercury have been catalyzed by the negotiations, and the awareness that phase-out dates will be applied. There is every reason to conclude that the goals established in the Convention will be able to be reached.

Controls on the movement of mercury, as well as limitations on the use of mercury from primary mining, will support the above activities through controlling supply and limiting access to mercury. Cooperative actions will assist to address issues of waste mercury, including the sound management

of mercury in the short term until final disposal. Specific actions relating to the provision of health services are included, as well as many activities to support research and sharing knowledge. The provision of directed capacity building and technical and financial assistance through this Convention makes the benefits accessible to all. The Convention will drive concerted international action to control mercury with rapidly accruing benefits occurring if there is early ratification that brings into force the Convention and catalyzes even greater commitment to the work ahead.

Implementing the obligations of the Convention, once it enters into force, will also be supported through a mechanism that will include, innovatively, a specific international programme to support capacity-building and technical assistance. In addition, robust provisions for information exchange and public awareness as well as measures to govern compliance have been well negotiated and included in the text to assist in implementation of the Convention.

UNEP is supporting the efforts towards an early entry into force of the Convention and towards the implementation of its provisions. Together we will be able to address the risks mercury poses to our environment and to the health of humans and that of biodiversity everywhere. By committing to the Minamata Convention on Mercury governments will contribute to a transition to a Green Economy and a sustainable century.

INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE TO PREPARE A LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT ON MERCURY

FERNANDO LUGRIS

It has been my honour and privilege to chair the process of developing the text you now have in front of you, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, a result of more than three years of intensive work after 5 negotiations starting in 2010, concluding our mandate from the decision 25/5 of the UNEP Governing Council in 2009

Since being selected as the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiating committee my focus has been on a successful conclusion to the negotiations, and on the development of a solid text, which will meet the needs of all who participated in the negotiations for years to come.

While leading this process, I relied on all of the participating Governments for their constructive contributions, flexibility, and grueling work to ensure we completed the task we had set for ourselves. I also greatly appreciated the contributions of representatives of civil society, including both environmental and health related non-governmental organizations and industry that provided information, assistance and encouragement throughout the process.

I have had the honour to see at first hand how Governments pull together to produce a meaningful and practicable text and to note the

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