

Invitation to October 8th Side Event

Time: 13:00-14:30 (Lunch will be provided)

Room: Aso D (within the Diplomatic Conference, Kumamoto, Japan)



Honoring Minamata: Lessons Learned from Minamata Disease and the Mercury Treaty

Background

The Minamata Convention carries the name of the world's most famous mercury poisoning – a tragedy that caused profound irreversible impacts and focused the attention of the world on the harms caused by mercury. Delegates negotiating the treaty recognized the importance of this name by agreeing to highlight the importance of learning from the Minamata tragedy. The preamble of the treaty states, *“Recognizing the substantial lessons of Minamata Disease, in particular the serious health and environmental effects from the mercury pollution, and the need to ensure proper management of mercury and the prevention of such events in the future.”* This side event will cover the past, present, and future with an emphasis on learning lessons from Minamata as the treaty is implemented. In particular, the event will focus on the need for practical measures to implement the precautionary approach as decisions are taken about how to ratify and implement the treaty. The event will feature a combination of disciplines and experiences; medical experts and community members, on precaution and highlight the need for international and national commitment to ratify and implement the mercury treaty, with the aim to prevent harm to human health and the environment from mercury.

Aim of the Side Event

- Raise awareness of delegates about Minamata Disease to increase understanding and vigilance for possible new appearances of Minamata Disease
- Motivate commitments from all stakeholders to utilize the precautionary approach to prevent harm from mercury as they fully implement the Mercury Convention
- Call upon countries to ratify the Mercury Convention

Speakers & Presentations

Moderator: Mr. Manny Calonzo, IPEN CoChair

Opening Message

Ms. Shinobu Sakamoto, a victim of Minamata Disease

Introduced by Mr. Yoichi Tani, Supporter to Minamata Victims Groups

Presentations

1) **Minamata today**: Over 60 years from when the mercury contamination began: What Lessons should the world learn from the Minamata victims
Presenter: Yoichi Tani, working for Minamata victims for more than 40-years and a key resource person to victims' support groups
(10 minutes)

1) **Minamata Disease**: A challenge for democracy and justice
Presenter: Dr. Toshihide Tsuda, Okayama University
(15 minutes)

3) **Looking Forward**: How can mercury contamination harm the next generation and the need for precaution
Presenter: Dr. Philippe Grandjean, University of Southern Denmark
(15 minutes)

5) **Questions & Answers**
Moderator: Mr. Manny Calonzo, IPEN CoChair
(30-40 minutes)

References

Grandjean P (2013) Science for precautionary decision-making; Late Lessons from early warnings: science, precaution, innovations. European Environmental Agency
<http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/late-lessons-2/late-lessons-chapters/late-lessons-ii-chapter-26/view>

Yorifuji T, Tsuda T, Harada M (2013). Minamata Disease: a challenge for democracy and justice; Late Lessons from early warnings: science, precaution, innovations. European Environmental Agency. <http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/late-lessons-2/late-lessons-chapters/late-lessons-ii-chapter-5>

The Blue & Orange Ribbon: In an effort to elevate awareness and show solidarity with the Minamata community, IPEN distributed several hundred orange and blue ribbons for delegates to wear throughout the treaty negotiations. The **blue** represents the seaside community of Minamata, which depends on the sea for its livelihood, and the **orange** represents the warning signs. The orange-colored "no fishing" signs were posted to warn the Minamata community of dangerous mercury levels in the water.
Learn more at: <http://www.ipen.org/projects/honoring-minamata/global-solidarity-statement>



Organizers



化学物質問題市民研究会

Citizens Against Chemicals Pollution (Japan)
<http://www.ne.jp/asahi/kagaku/pico/>



a toxics-free future

IPEN www.ipen.org/

Contact persons

Takeshi Yasuma, CACP Coordinator
email: ac7t-ysm@asahi-net.or.jp
Citizens Against Chemicals Pollution (CACP), Japan
TEL/FAX +81-3-5836-4358

Björn Beeler, IPEN International Coordinator
email: bjornbeeler@ipen.org
TEL: + 46 31 799 9474
Twitter: @ToxicsFree