



IPEN Minamata Declaration on Toxic Metals

October 1, 2013

Statement of IPEN Participating Organizations agreed in Minamata, Japan on the occasion of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Mercury Treaty in October 2013

The Participating Organizations of IPEN hereby stand in solidarity with Minamata victims' groups in agreeing that Minamata is not just a name, a place or a disease. It is more. It is also pain, corporate irresponsibility, loss, and discrimination. Minamata is about people and community. It is about their struggle to survive, and their determination to live. This is the real Minamata;

As IPEN Participating Organizations, we declare our firm resolve and our expanded commitment to work toward ensuring that toxic metals such as mercury, lead and cadmium no longer pollute our local and global environments, and no longer contaminate our communities, our food, our bodies, or the bodies of our children and future generations.

Furthermore,

We welcome the global consensus that mercury pollution is a serious threat to human health and the environment and that action is needed to minimize and eliminate mercury emissions and releases in order to reduce this threat;

We stress that mercury is a chemical of global concern owing to its long-range atmospheric transport, its persistence in the environment, its ability to bioaccumulate in ecosystems and the food chain, and its significant negative intergenerational effects on human health and the environment;

We highlight the health impacts of mercury on vulnerable populations, such as women, children, and, through them, future generations especially in developing and transition countries;

We recognise the serious and long lasting injury to ecosystems and human health that mercury can cause in communities both near source locations, and also in distant regions;

We stress the particular vulnerabilities of Arctic ecosystems and Indigenous Peoples due to biomagnification of mercury and contamination of traditional foods;

We acknowledge the well-established scientific evidence of the harm caused by mercury in seafood, affecting many communities dependant on fish and seafood as their primary source of protein; and we note the special concerns about mercury accumulation in all living organisms, including humans;

We acknowledge and support the demands and struggles of workers, women and children, Indigenous Peoples, miners, fishers, Arctic communities, island and coastal dwellers, small-scale gold miners, the poor, and all other social groups that are affected by exposure to mercury. We call for solidarity and support to all impacted groups in the exercise of their right to a healthy environment, worker protection, right to know, fair compensation, medical treatment and environmental justice;



We emphasize the need for greater commitment to mandate action on artisanal small-scale gold mining to facilitate miners' access to effective and appropriate technologies that minimize or, where feasible, avoid the use of mercury, to stop the mercury trade and supply in ASGM areas, remediate contaminated sites and ensure their rehabilitation, and create programs to assist miners in securing alternative livelihoods;

We emphasize the need for rigorous control measures to reduce and eliminate mercury releases from large-scale mining operations, to protect air and water quality and prevent soil contamination;

We emphasize the need for rigorous control measures to reduce and eliminate mercury pollution from coal-fired power plants while promoting the use of renewable, safe, alternative energy sources;

We highlight the need for the environmentally sound management of mercury during interim and long-term storage and disposal and for a low-mercury limit protective of human health;

We urge strengthening obligatory measures to address mercury releases to land and water and urge rigorous and rapid actions to identify, reduce, and eliminate these releases, including from contaminated sites;

We call attention to mercury releases from manufacturing processes including vinyl chloride monomer production, and call on the private sector to reduce and eliminate releases and take every measure to introduce mercury-free production methods;

We call upon governments to rapidly ratify the mercury treaty and rigorously implement its objectives and provisions so that total emissions and releases of mercury are reduced and eliminated;

We are determined to take ongoing action to highlight the damage caused by toxic metal pollution to human health and the environment and to foster international support for further national and global governance measures to reduce, and where possible eliminate, sources of toxic metal pollution such as mercury, lead and cadmium;

We note the need to reduce and eliminate exposure to toxic metals such as mercury, lead, cadmium, arsenic and others in the lifecycle of a variety of products including consumer, medical and dental products, pesticides, and others.

We call on the private sector to take responsibility to rigorously reduce use and releases of toxic metals and to take responsibility for cleanup and compensation;

We recognise and reaffirm the precautionary principle and principles of right to know, intergenerational equity, environmental justice, polluter pays, and liability and compensation.