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IPEN intervention on environmentally sound interim storage intervention

Given by Yuyun Ismawati

Thank you, Mr. President.

IPEN welcomes the guidance document on the environmentally sound interim storage of mercury other than waste mercury.

Interim storage of mercury is focused on Environmentally Sound Management for the commercial storage of mercury in global trade and as such, facilitates the trade and use in mercury.

In the absence of guidance on establishing the long-term storage, interim facilities may be used for both purposes without adequate design considerations. Additionally, there is a need to address the transition status of elemental mercury confiscated from illegal use from ASGM sites, including confiscated cinnabar ores, before the court has decided the form of its end-of-life. Some countries might have court decisions to destroy confiscated mercury as the evidence of crime. However, the term “destroyed” for mercury will not be appropriate as it is elemental.

The COP should direct resources to guidance on long-term mercury storage facilities to ensure that interim storage is not overwhelmed by large quantities of mercury or cinnabar that has been removed from the market.

Interim storage facilities should be assessed upon closure consistent with identification procedures for suspected contaminated sites as well as added products or processes allowed under the Convention.

IPEN recommends to add a section in the guidance document, on options to manage the interim storage facility to ensure the stockpiles of mercury are securely and safely managed by a responsible agency or qualified third party.

The emergency plan should also take into account natural disasters, such as earthquakes and tsunamis, follow by guidance to conduct measures to handle mercury-contaminated debris.

In the event that a facility is mercury contamination-free, a jurisdictional validation certification should be issued to ensure such a status is recorded.

Thank you, Mr. President.