

OEWG 12 - IPEN intervention on Mercury waste technical guidelines

Thank you Chair

I speak on behalf of IPEN and would like to express our appreciation for the work done by the Small Intersessional Working Group on the update of the Technical Guidelines addressing mercury wastes.

The review of the guidance comes at a critical time as the implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury starts to accelerate. Specifically, it is important for parties to be able to access guidance that is synchronised between the Basel and Minamata conventions to ensure the efficient and environmentally sound management of mercury waste. Volumes of mercury waste will increase significantly in the next 12 months as parties implement the phase out of mercury added products by 2020. This will generate large stockpiles of mercury waste requiring safe storage and treatment.

A key issue for both parties to work together on, is the definition of mercury waste as it will determine what types of waste are subject to the guidance being developed or reviewed under both conventions. Currently the expert group of the Minamata convention is still deliberating over the threshold concentration of mercury that will be used to define what is to be deemed 'mercury waste' in terms of waste contaminated with mercury and therefore subject to treatment, recovery or other forms of environmentally sound management. IPEN would therefore urge the Basel Convention Small Intersessional Working Group and the Minamata Convention Mercury Waste threshold expert group to cooperate closely to ensure consistency between the two guidance documents.

Thank you Chair