

Can the Treaty Solve the Problem of Mercury Contamination?

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10th Anniversary of Stockholm Convention

31 May 2011

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Why to develop a treaty?

- Mercury is a global problem
- Many sources of mercury pollution
- Wide range of negative effects of mercury pollution (environmental, social, economic, health,...)



The treaty should:

- Protect human health, wildlife and the environment
- Aim to control all anthropogenic sources of mercury released to the environment
- Eliminate where feasible anthropogenic sources of mercury pollution
- Have a broad scope and address the entire mercury life-cycle
- Recognize particularly vulnerable populations
- Establish adequate transitional mechanisms

Development of the treaty

- **February 2007: initiation, OEWG established**
- November 2007: 1st meeting of the OEWG
- **October 2008: 2nd meeting of the OEWG**
- **February 2009: 25th session of the UNEP GC**
- October 2009: Ad Hoc OEWG
- **June 2010: 1st Session of the INC to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury (INC1)**
- **January 2011: INC2**

Main issues addressed by the treaty

- Supply of mercury
 - Sources;
 - Storage;
 - International Trade
- Use of mercury
 - Mercury-added products;
 - Manufacturing processes in which mercury is used;
 - ASGM
- Releases of mercury to the environment
 - Atmospheric emissions;
 - Water and Land;
 - Wastes;
 - Contaminated sites



Tools

- Bans, Restrictions and Requirements
- Financial mechanisms
- Technical assistance
- Research, development and monitoring
- Information exchange
- Public information, awareness and education
- Implementation mechanisms (committee, plans, reports, evaluation)

Possible synergies and conflicts with other international instruments

- Basel Convention
- Rotterdam Convention
- Stockholm Convention
- UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

Problems 1

- Mercury in products
 - Positive vs negative list
 - „Not allow“
- Manufacturing processes
 - „Not allow“
 - No provisions for establishing a global timeline for the phase out of any mercury-using manufacturing processes
 - Only 2 processes listed
 - NIPs Implementation not enforced
 - Measurements not required
 - Possibility of expanding Hg-using facilities

Problems 2

- Atmospheric emissions & Emissions to water and land
 - Definition of BAT
 - Division of articles
 - Twin tier approach
- Contaminated sites
 - Voluntarity
 - Victims compensation

Next steps

- INC 3 - 31 October to 4 November 2011, Nairobi, Kenya
- INC 4 - June 2012
- INC 5 - early 2013
- Issue specific meetings



Thank you!

Resources:

- <http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/Mercury/tabid/434/Default.aspx>
- <http://www.iisd.ca/mercury/inc1/>
- <http://www.iisd.ca/mercury/inc2/>
- <http://www.ipen.org/hgfree/>
- <http://www.zeromercury.org/>