



*The only kind of world worth passing to our  
children is toxics-free.*

26 Matalino St., Suite 320 Eagle Court  
Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines 3018  
Telefax: + 63 02 929 1635

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### **Local Group Praise US Call for Treaty on Mercury**

17 Feb 2009; Nairobi, Kenya – A Philippine environmental group, Ban Toxics, lauded the current US pronouncement calling for a treaty on mercury. Ban Toxics is part of the global non-governmental organization contingent participating at the ongoing 25<sup>th</sup> Governing Council meeting of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

“This a complete 180 degree turn for the United States, and is reflective of the change Pres. Obama has brought into the US’s environmental policy,” stated Atty. Richard Gutierrez, Executive Director of Ban Toxics. “For 8 years we have butted heads with the US on this issue, and it is a relief to have them sitting on the same side of the negotiating table.”

The global debate on mercury pollution started in 2001 when UNEP launched a global assessment on mercury, where experts and various stakeholders were asked to contribute to a global understanding of the sources of mercury and its impact on human health and the environment.

The conclusion of UNEP’s global mercury assessment that there is sufficient evidence of significant global adverse impacts of mercury that warrant further international action to reduce the risks to human health and the environment from the release of mercury to the environment has spurred ongoing negotiations on how to best deal with mercury at the global level.

The debates are coming to a head this week, and increasing the stakes, UNEP’s Exec. Director, Dr. Achim Steiner, indicated in his opening speech that one of the five success indicators of the 25<sup>th</sup> Governing Council of UNEP is how it will decide on address the global threat posed by mercury.

“The current US position has really changed the landscape of the debates here in Nairobi,” explains Gutierrez. “We are optimistic that when the week is over, the world will move one step closer to a legally binding treaty on mercury when a mandate is issued for an international negotiating committee.”

- END -

Contacts:

Richard Gutierrez, Ban Toxics!, mobile: +254 716 804 135 (in Kenya), e-mail: [rgutierrez@ban.org](mailto:rgutierrez@ban.org)