

June 25 2009

Civil Society Organizations Joint Statement Japanese Government Needs to Enact Mercury Export Ban Act

We, civil society organizations concerned about world-wide mercury pollution strongly request the Japanese Government to enact a Mercury Export Ban Act at the earliest possible time.

At the 25th session of the Governing Council of the UN Environment Programme at Nairobi in February 2009, governments unanimously decided to launch negotiations on a legally binding international mercury treaty to deal with world-wide emissions and discharges of a pollutant that threatens the health of millions, from fetuses and babies to small -scale gold miners and their families.

They also agreed that the risk to human health and the environment was so significant that an accelerated action under a voluntary Global Mercury Partnership is needed whilst the treaty is being finalized.

The eight -point partnership plan includes:

- Boosting the world-wide capability for nations to safely store stockpiled mercury
- Reducing the supply of mercury from for example primary mining of the heavy metal
- Carrying out awareness-raising of the risks alongside projects to cut the use of mercury in artisanal mining where an estimated 10 million miners and their families are exposed
- Reducing mercury in products such as thermometers and high-intensity discharge lamps to processes such as some kinds of paper-making and plastics production

At the Asia Mercury Storage Inception Workshop held at Bangkok in March 2009, all Asian countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations who participated confirmed the necessity of safe permanent storage of excess mercury in the Asian region as one of the tools necessary to further cut mercury supply.

In the autumn of 2008, the European Union (EU) and then late in the year, the United States enacted mercury export bans and took related actions to promote safe storage of excess mercury. The rationale for putting up the EU and US export bans is the evidence showing that in many developing countries and countries with economies in transition, majority of mercury imported from the EU or the US ends up being used unsustainably.

However, although Japan has the tragic history of Minamata with mercury, unfortunately Japan export mercury more than 100 metric tons per year mainly derived from nonferrous metal smelters and recycling of mercury containing wastes to some developing countries and countries with economies in transition, resulting in putting re-circulation of the mercury into the global marketplace.

As a major trading giant in the world with powerful influence and also as a country with Minamata experience, we believe that Japan should become the third global power to ban mercury export following the EU and US. We are certain that the mercury export bans in concert with the EU, the US and Japan will have a big impact on the movement toward mercury export bans and mercury reduction worldwide, and will surely contribute to accelerate the promotion of the effective international mercury treaty to be set up by UNEP in the immediate future.

We strongly request the Japanese government to take the following action immediately.

- 1.To enact a Mercury Export Ban Act.
- 2.To safely place in long-term storage all surplus mercury produced in Japan
- 3.To show good leadership to realize the International Mercury Treaty, increased effort to create mercury storage capacity for Asia and the Global Mercury Partnership.

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Signatory Organizations (As of August 31,2009)

(1) Japanese organizations: 54

(2) Overseas organizations: 60

PAN AP, Asia and the Pacific

Susana Muhlmann, Architect, Argentina

Asociacion Argentina de Medicos por el Medio Ambiente (AAMMA), Argentina

National Toxics Network (NTN), Australia

News Network, Bangladesh

European Environmental Bureau (EEB), Belgium

Environment Protection Association (APROMAC), Brazil

Association of Combat against Pollutants (ACPO), Brazil

It's Not Garbage Coalition, Canada

Centre national d'information independante sur les dechets (CNIID), France

Asia Monitor Research Center (AMRC), Hong Kong

Society for Direct Initiative for Social and Health Action (DISHA), India

Vettiver Collective, Chennai, India
Corporate Accountability Desk of The Other Media, Chennai, India
Community Environmental Monitoring, Chennai, India
Bhu Bhadratha, India
BALIFOKUS Foundation, Indonesia
Center for Non-proliferation and Export Control, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic
Donat Anthony Theseira & Mylene Ooi, Malaysia
Sahabat Alam Malaysia (Friends' of the Earth Malaysia), Malaysia
Consumers' Association of Penang, Malaysia
Association of Doctors for the Environment "MADE", Republic of Macedonia
Ban Toxics!, Philippines
Ecological Society of the Philippines, Philippines
Global Alliance for Incinerator Alliance (GAIA), Philippines
Sagip Sierra Madre Environmental Society, Inc. (SSMESI), Philippines
Mother Earth Foundation, Philippines
BUKLOD TAO, INC, Philippines
Sining Yapak (SIYAP), Philippines
SOLJUSPAX, Philippines
Waste Prevention Association 3R, Poland
Indaloyethu Environmental Cooperative, South Africa
groundWork- Friends of the Earth SA, South Africa
Korean Zero Waste Movement Network, South Korea
ECOLOGISTAS EN ACCION, Spain
Ecologistas en Accion de Navarra, Spain
MERCURIADOS patients's association, Spain
Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), Sweden
International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE), Switzerland
Yufeng Wong, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan
Greenpeace Southeast Asia, Thailand
Ecological Alert and Recovery - Thailand (EARTH), Thailand
Raks Thai Foundation, Thailand
Dr. Arpa Wangkiat, Rangsit University, Thailand
Ecological and Cultural Study Group, Thailand
Udon Thani Environmental Conservation Group, Thailand
Public Policy for Mineral Resources (PPM), Thailand
Uganda Network on Toxic Free Malaria Control (UNETMAC), Uganda
National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE), Uganda
pro-biodiversity Conservationists in Uganda (PROBICOUG), Uganda

United Kingdom Without Incineration Network (UKWIN), United Kingdom
Environmental Health Fund, USA
American Environmental Health Studies Project, USA
Green Science Policy Institute, USA
Mercury Policy Project (MPP), USA
Basel Action Network (BAN), USA
Pacific Environment, USA
Clean Production Action, USA
Texas Campaign for the Environment, USA
Rainforest Action Network (RAN), USA