



For Immediate Release

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## **Resolve Minamata before global mercury treaty named for victims 55 year-old struggle may provide lessons for Fukushima victims**

(Tokyo, Japan) Expectations are high as the Japanese government holds meetings on 26 June in Minamata to explain why the new mercury treaty should be named the *Minamata Convention*. The planned meeting triggered visits to Japanese embassies in Czech Republic, India, Philippines, and Thailand urging action on the 55 year-old disaster. In addition, more than 200 NGOs from 70 countries signed a statement of solidarity with Minamata victims' groups who insist that the ongoing tragedy must be properly addressed by the Government of Japan and the Chisso Corporation before the global mercury treaty can take the name the *Minamata Convention* in 2013. In 2010, then Prime Minister Hatoyama proposed naming the mercury treaty the *Minamata Convention*, though the proposal was not discussed with Minamata groups prior to its announcement.

As victims of the Fukushima tragedy mount, the Minamata disaster may provide important lessons about compensation, clean-up, and polluter pays; all items that remain unresolved after 55 years in Minamata. In January, Minamata victims and supporter groups released a statement on the tragedy at the global mercury treaty negotiation meeting in Chiba, Japan calling on the government to take authentic steps towards its resolution (see link below).

Civil society groups around the world support the Minamata victims and survivors.

“We call on the Government of Japan to make a public commitment to resolving the tragedy and to take concrete steps toward a genuine resolution of the tragedy before the treaty is finalized in 2013,” said Mariann Lloyd-Smith, IPEN co-chair. “After 55 years of struggling, we stand in solidarity with the Minamata victims' groups in calling for a genuine resolution of the problem.”

“Naming the global mercury control treaty the *Minamata Convention* directly connects the treaty to the tragedy,” said Olga Speranskaya, IPEN co-chair. “If the treaty has this name, then the victims and their legitimate demands must be honored and the lessons of the Minamata tragedy must be applied to the treaty.”

| <http://ipen.org/minamata/>