



a toxics-free future

23 November, 2018

IPEN Closing statement at COP 2

Delivered by Dr. Tadesse Amera, IPEN Co-Chair

Thank you, Mr President,

As newly elected Co-Chair of IPEN, I would like to thank the Government of Switzerland for hosting this meeting and for their generous hospitality; and I would also like to congratulate Mr. David Kapindula for his election as a president for COP3 of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

At COP2 we have made some progress on technical issues including arrangements for guidance development on waste thresholds, contaminated sites, releases and effectiveness evaluation, with expert groups to facilitate this work. The inclusion of observers is welcome and highlights the importance of the NGO contributions to the Convention. IPEN brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the deliberations of these groups, based on extensive research and grassroots engagement in biomonitoring activities, contaminated sites investigations and mercury pollution source research. We look forward to contributing our expertise to future guidance development as observers.

Global atmospheric mercury emissions rose by 20% between 2010 and 2015, further contaminating oceans, fisheries and those that depend on them for food. The key drivers of ocean mercury contamination and climate change can be traced to the same source – burning coal for energy. Both problems can be addressed by global renewable energy implementation. We should take advantage of the synergies available between the Minamata Convention and the Paris Agreement and seize the opportunity to make large scale global reductions in mercury and carbon pollution. Parties should be bold and go beyond compliance with the Minamata Convention, rapidly replacing coal-powered energy with renewables instead of waiting for marginal pollution reductions under future BAT-BEP implementation for coal burning.

We must also take urgent action on ASGM activity, which is emitting vast amounts of mercury to the atmosphere, only for it to end in ocean pollution and food chain contamination. Again, IPEN encourages Parties to go beyond the requirements of the Convention and **take bold action to ban exports of mercury from their country**. The EU and the US have already taken such action and other countries are following, but we must act collectively. Between now and COP 3 every government represented here must reflect on its own role in this poisonous global trade and should take swift action to end it.

IPEN supports the proposal of the African countries to accelerate the elimination of dental amalgam as it is one of the main sources of emissions and releases to air, water and land from mercury-added products. This should be one of the priorities for the Convention under Article 16. IPEN stands united with the World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry, in the goal to make dental amalgam history.

To conclude, IPEN issues a challenge to all Parties who have not done so, to show further commitment to end the mercury trade and announce that their country has banned mercury exports at COP3.

Thank you Mr. President.