

7 October 2013

Petition to All Governments Concerning the Minamata Convention on Mercury

It has been 57 years since the official confirmation of the outbreak of Minamata Disease. Forty-one years have passed since Minamata Disease victims issued their appeal, "Never repeat the tragedy of Minamata Disease," at the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, Sweden.

We have the expectation that this long-awaited convention on mercury will finally be the start of a worldwide framework for the reduction of mercury. At the same time, it is also a reality that this convention will not signify that mercury contamination will immediately come to an end.

We are deeply grateful to the many people who have worked toward the realization of this convention, and at the same time, we petition the following of governments worldwide in order that this convention will lead to a genuinely effective reduction of mercury.

- 1. Promptly ratify, accept, approve the Minamata Convention on Mercury**
The treaty states, "This Convention shall enter into force on the ninetieth day after the date of deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession" Please take action promptly to legally ratify and otherwise process this treaty.
- 2. Establish a society that is free from mercury pollution based on the lessons learned from Minamata Disease.**
Despite the fact that fifty-seven years have passed since the official confirmation of Minamata Disease, neither full revelation of the true extent of damage, provision of relief to victims, nor decontamination of the site of the pollution has been undertaken sufficiently. Please do not underestimate the extent of the damage Minamata Disease has wrought, please learn from the bitter lessons that it presented, and immediately undertake measures in order to assure that damage to human health from mercury will never again take place.
- 3. Re-examination of the Scope of the Measures to be Undertaken and Strengthening of the Regulations**
Many of the measures to be taken in many of the articles are not mandatory but voluntary. Who is responsible for what is not made precise. In future deliberation, do not underestimate the damage from mercury. Strengthen the restrictions on mercury.
- 4. Terminate all mining of mercury as rapidly as possible, ban all uses of mercury, end export of mercury for the purpose of recycling, retrieve all mercury, and establish a comprehensive long-term storage regime. And, within each country, establish a program to reduce the use of mercury.**
- 5. Decontamination of Polluted Sites**
In every country, including Minamata Bay in Japan, there are sites contaminated by mercury as a result of pollution. Undertake measures to contain and decontaminate these sites.

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