

IPEN Intervention Section E Products and Processes, Arts. 6 to 8. INC4, Punta del Este, Uruguay, June 29, 2012.

Thank you very much Mr. President:

- IPEN agrees with the arguments put forward by Switzerland, Norway and the Philippines, among others, for the effectiveness of the negative list approach in Annex C. With this approach, products with mercury will be prohibited (except those included in the Annex), with specific exceptions, with deadlines of use, and at times agreed, recognizing regional differences, and with commitment of adequate financial and technical assistance.
- The mercury-added products should include provisions to implement the principle of extended producer responsibility (EPR). This would allow a more efficient collection system for products at the end of their life cycle, increasing recycling and proper treatment. The EPR must include labeling of mercury-added products so that consumers will have clear instructions on what to do with the product when it is obsolete. Particularly in the electronics sector, EPR measurements would reduce the technological transition for mercury-free products and the expansion of the obligations that the main producers have in the first world to the rest of the countries.
- On the issue of mercury in thermometers and instruments for measuring blood pressure, there is already sufficient evidence accumulated in Asia, Africa and Latin America to support a phase-out with specific deadlines of use. This is feasible, cost effective, and technically accurate, as demonstrated by the experiences of the joint global initiative of WHO and Health Care Without Harm (HCWH). While it requires adequate time and technical assistance to achieve the phase-out, we think the public health sector could establish, in the short-term, public mercury-free purchasing policies, as this has already been done in some countries and cities.
- On the issue of amalgam, we support the phase-out. It is a better investment for countries to work on the substitution, with deadlines and adequate technical assistance, than to invest into building a system that includes the associated costs related to adequate environmental protection and the prevention of health risks to dentists and patients.
- On the issue of thimerosal, first of all we express our solidarity with the mothers who have been victims of the harmful effects of thimerosal and are defending their right to have a vaccination service with the least risk, as children receive in the first world. The treaty must have a mechanism to support countries that choose to access thimerosal-free vaccines and establish a transition strategy and a multisectoral mechanism with the participation of WHO, to analyze the economic barriers for the substitution and for an effective transition that highlights the evidence of the efficiency of the alternatives and the impacts thimerosal has on health and the environment throughout its entire life cycle.

PROCESSES

- The agreement should set clear cut off dates to prohibit the introduction of manufacturing processes that use mercury listed in Annex D.
- This limited period of cut off dates of mercury in Annex D processes should be established from the date of adoption of the Convention and not from the date of entry into force of the Convention. Otherwise, allowing the deadline in 2027 will only encourage the expansion of an old technology and the construction of a larger number of industrial facilities that use mercury in countries with less control, creating a bigger problem.
- Finally, it is important that the Convention establishes clear controls of mercury releases to all media during the production of vinyl chloride monomer (VCM), which are available to the public, and it would be useful for countries to receive an update on the mercury-free alternative catalysts.

Thank you very much for your attention

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