



For Immediate Release

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Mercury Treaty Legitimizes Increased Mercury Pollution

(Punta del Este, Uruguay) – Although two-thirds of delegates engaged in international negotiations for a proposed mercury treaty support language that would help protect human health and the environment, a small group of developed countries appears to oppose public actions to prevent and reduce exposure to mercury

“Allowing the importation and use of mercury in artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) will create new contaminated sites, and more mercury polluted communities and suffering in ASGM countries,” said Yuyun Ismawati, BALIFOKUS, Indonesia.

“We are deeply concerned that, with current text, the treaty may actually legitimize increased global mercury releases to protect short-term economic interests. The price tag may appear to be “cheap” but the cost of inaction on mercury pollution will be huge,” said Joe DiGangi, IPEN Scientific and Technical Advisor.

“Developed countries should not stand in the way of the rest of the world on the issue of including health on international environmental agreements,” said Eric Uram, The Sierra Club. “Everything in nature is connected, and people and the environment cannot operate on separate planes protecting the health of the planet in an international agreement.”

“We heard strong advocacy against obligatory National Implementation Plans in the negotiation,” said Shahriar Hossain, ESDO, Bangladesh. “In most countries if there is no plan, there is no action; this could effectively sabotage implementation of the treaty.”

“Mercury pollution will continue to rise, as major loop-holes will enable the localization of mercury pollution and perpetuate rising global mercury pollution,” said Imogen Ingram, Island Sustainability Alliance, the Cook Islands.

“The treaty creates no obligation for responsible parties to pay for mercury pollution cleanup or provide compensation for victims,” said Jindrich Petrlik, Arnika Association, Czech Republic. “This lack of action runs contrary to the treaty objective.”

The meeting this week marks the fourth of five intergovernmental negotiating meetings, which should culminate in a diplomatic conference in 2013 to sign the treaty. The negotiation is being coordinated by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

For more information about mercury, please see:

http://www.ipen.org/ipenweb/documents/book/ipen%20mercury%20booklet_s.pdf

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