

ZMWG Storage Intervention

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Thank you very much, Chair, for the opportunity to speak on mercury storage.

Storage of surplus elemental mercury is a very important issue as it underlies all of the issues that we are discussing on mercury today from emissions reduction to waste. Development of storage capabilities is a critical element of a near-term elemental mercury demand reduction strategy aimed particularly at small scale gold mining but impacting other sectors as well. If we want to reduce global elemental mercury demand, we are going to need to safely store elemental mercury soon.

To facilitate the storage and sequestration of elemental mercury, UNEP has made substantial strides to engage countries in the discussion of long-term storage, and in elaborating long-term storage options for countries, as illustrated by the regional long-term storage initiatives that have been conducted in the Asia-Pacific and Latin American regions.

As the INC embarks on the discussion of storage from a global perspective, we need to bring all of the countries up to speed in order for the INC to chart a path forward for the global coordination required. As a first step, we need a common understanding of the facts and the policy choices. To achieve this common understanding, UNEP should undertake the following activities in advance of INC 2:

1. Develop a common set of definitions for the terms used in the discussion of storage to facilitate understanding is essential. What is storage? What is the difference between long-term to short-term storage, what is interim storage, etc.
2. Summarize the results of the Asian and LAC initiatives in a way that will be easily understood and shared with the rest of the regions. The summary should address issues discussed in the initiatives such as, costs, regulatory and technical issues, political responsibility on the long term custody and control, and of equal importance environmental and social issues of particular importance namely community acceptance and political stability of the region or country.

In the regional processes underway, we encourage the continued engagement with all stakeholders, in a transparent and participatory manner. .

Having a common understanding of the basic issues and options is critical to facilitate our work here at the INC.

Another critical component of the storage issue is the role of the private sector in the stewardship of their mercury, and the financial and technical mechanisms that may be necessary to create and/or access storage especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. As the INC reviews and grapples with the concepts and options for storage it is of utmost importance that a simultaneous discussion of how to operationalize the storage of surplus mercury from the basic village unit all the way to the regional and international level is undertaken.

In closing, we are encouraged to see the great interest expressed at this meeting on this issue and as lead in the Storage Partnership the Zero Mercury Working Group call on interested governments to become more engaged and lend their expertise and resources to finding a sustainable solution for permanently taking mercury out of the biosphere.

Thank you very much.