

For Immediate Release

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New UN treaty on mercury requires countries to phase down amalgam

Geneva--While no phase out date was set, just completed negotiations by the Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee this morning at 7 AM Geneva time have resulted in many important provisions to reduce and eliminate mercury release and exposure, including binding requirements for countries to phase down dental amalgam. The final text from the new UNEP treaty on mercury is provided below.[1]

“This is the beginning of the end of dental amalgam globally,” said Michael T. Bender, director of the Mercury Policy Project, a US-based NGO, and co-coordinator of the Zero Mercury Working Group, who is attending the mercury treaty talks. *“We applaud the leadership role the US played in jump-starting support for a phase down in 2011 along with the concrete steps of the Nordic countries, Switzerland and Japan took in phasing out dental amalgam.”*

“Countries that have phased out amalgam recognize that mercury-free dental fillings are readily available, affordable and effective,” said Charles G. Brown, Esq., World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry, a global coalition of NGOs, dentists and consumers from over 25 countries. *“This pushes the reset button on dentistry. Now the rest of the world can benefit from the experience of those countries.”*

Endnotes

[1] UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/INC.5/CRP.46
18 January 2013

Article 6, Annex C, Part II

Dental amalgam

Provisions

Measures to be taken by a Party to phase down the use of dental amalgam shall take into account the Party's domestic circumstances and relevant international guidance and shall include two or more of the measures from the following list:

- (i) Setting national objectives aiming at dental caries prevention and health promotion, thereby minimising the need for dental restoration;
- (ii) Setting national objectives aiming at minimising its use;
- (iii) Promoting the use of cost-effective and clinically effective mercury-free alternatives for dental restoration;
- (iv) Promoting research and development of quality mercury-free materials for dental restoration;
- (v) Encouraging representative professional organisations and dental schools to educate and train dental professionals and students on the use of mercury-free dental restoration alternatives and on promoting best management practices;
- (vi) Discouraging insurance policies, and programmes that favour dental amalgam use over mercury-free dental restoration;
- (vii) Encouraging insurance policies and programmes that favour the use of quality alternatives to dental amalgam for dental restoration;
- (viii) Restricting the use of dental amalgam to its encapsulated form;
- (ix) Promoting the use of best environmental practices in dental facilities to reduce releases of mercury and mercury compounds to water and land.