

Intervention on Gender

Thank you, Madam President.

I am speaking on behalf of IPEN and ESDO.

To address the continuous global mercury crisis emanating from Skin Lightening Products, we support the proposed amendment by the African Region to strengthen the existing provisions within the Convention. These products are mainly used by women and girls and therefore this issue is highly relevant to gender.

First, concerning amending Annex A, Part I, the amendment proposes to replace the existing ban on the manufacture, import, and export of cosmetics “over one ppm mercury” with prohibiting “mercury-added” cosmetics, starting in 2025.

By eliminating the mercury threshold, Parties can more effectively conduct market surveillance by utilizing simple, cost-effective handheld testing devices that preclude the need for lab testing.

Second, concerning amending Annex A, Part II, proposed measures include the following:

- Setting national objectives to phase out sales and offering sales is necessary.
- Coordinating and collaborating on phase-out initiatives inter-ministerially bilaterally and/or regionally.
- Raising public awareness about the hazards of SLP use among physicians, dermatologists and beauty centres, as well as consumers and family members.

Above all, COP-5 should initiate activities to “evaluate whether the trade in specific mercury compounds compromises the objective of this Convention and considers whether specific mercury compounds” should be subject to trade restrictions, following Article 3, Paragraph 13 of the Convention.

Along with this, ESDO and IPEN support the amendment in Annex A for dental amalgam, which is phasing out the use of dental amalgam by 2030, discourage use in pregnant women and children and the overall phase out dental amalgam from 2023, that is already enforced. We believe endorsing this amendment is achievable, as they can be implemented without compromising dental care requirements, given the global availability, efficacy, and affordability of mercury-free alternatives.

The first step is to assess the global supply, trade, and use of mercury compounds.

I thank you, Madam President

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