

## **WCC-2012-Res-135-EN**

### **Legally binding Global Mercury Treaty to protect wildlife, ecosystems and health**

RECOGNIZING that IUCN helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges;

AWARE of the scientific evidence, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Global Mercury Assessments finalized in December 2002 that evidence:

- a. the global scale and severity of toxic mercury contaminations of life forms and ecosystems in all regions of the planet;
- b. that as a toxic substance of global concern, mercury causes significant harm to wildlife, ecosystems and human health in general and to some populations, and that most notably the foetus and young children are especially susceptible; and
- c. that mercury is a major threat to fish, an all important and valuable nutritious component of the human diet;

RECALLING that the releasing of mercury into Minamata Bay, Japan, has led to severe contamination, the horrific devastation of the environment and a human health tragedy;

APPRECIATING that the concerns, on-going initiatives and efforts of UNEP towards the phasing out of toxic chemicals have led to their elimination, with special attention given to the hazardous pollutant mercury;

NOTING that:

- a. mercury has been on the UNEP Governing Council (GC) Agenda since its 21<sup>st</sup> Session in February 2001;
- b. between February 2001 and October 2008, some milestones regarding mercury have been reached through UNEP Governing Council decisions 23/9 of February 2005 and 24/3 of February 2007;
- c. mercury is a global problem, that current efforts are not sufficient, and that there is a need for further long-term action and the setting up of a process towards a global framework;
- d. UNEP Governing Council decision 25/5 of February 2009 agreed to convene an intergovernmental negotiating committee with the mandate to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, commencing its work in 2010 with the goal of completing it prior to the twenty-seventh regular session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, in 2013; and
- e. the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) has already met four times and further discussion is to be continued on a revised version of the draft text of the comprehensive and suitable approach to a global legally-binding instrument on mercury; and

EXPECTING that the treaty elements will effectively address the rising trend in anthropogenic mercury release levels, thus protecting wildlife, ecosystems and human and animal health;

***The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Jeju, Republic of Korea, 6–15 September 2012:***

1. CALLS on all State Representatives of INC to support:
  - a. a legally-binding global Treaty with an objective to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic release of mercury and its compounds, recognizing particularly the vulnerable populations;
  - b. effective measures to reduce and where feasible eliminate mercury use and releases to air, water and land;
  - c. a National Implementation Plan (NIP) for ensuring effective realization of the Treaty, and civil society's and other stakeholders' active role in the development and implementation of the Treaty;
  - d. adoption of guidance for the identification and characterization of the contaminated sites; and
  - e. adherence to the agreed timetable of the Treaty with effective and enforceable Treaty compliance provisions; and
2. REQUESTS the Director General to work with the IUCN Commissions and membership networks for the promotion of enhanced awareness regarding adverse health effects of mercury exposure and corresponding protective measures.

State and agency Members of the United States abstained during the vote on this Motion for reasons given in the US General Statement on the IUCN Resolutions Process.