

Delhi Declaration on Mercury-Free Health Care

6th December 2008

Aware that Mercury is a global toxicant that poses an immediate threat to health care workers and patients, and a long-term threat to community health and the global environment;

Understanding that healthcare contributes to this threat through broken and discarded mercury containing medical devices and health care products, as well as through their production;

Appreciating Efforts by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme to promote mercury-use reduction including the elimination of mercury in the health care sector;

Noting that mercury-based medical devices have been or are being phased out in many countries in all regions of the world;

Noting further successful local initiatives in the South Asian region to phase out mercury containing devices, including by the Delhi state government; and

Comforted by the fact that affordable, effective and accurate mercury-free alternatives are available.

We, the participants in the First South Asia Conference on Alternatives to Mercury in Health Care, commit ourselves to

Raise awareness about the impacts of mercury and the need to replace it.

Work for the phase out of mercury-based medical devices and health care products in health care institutions and at the local, state and national level through voluntary measures and, eventually, through regulation, legislation and enforcement.

Help develop plans and procedures for cleaning up mercury contaminated areas in healthcare institutions and then moving up to develop local, state and national plans.

Create networks and working groups in the South Asian region for mercury-free initiatives to integrate with existing regional bodies, as well as for sharing knowledge, experiences, technologies and expertise. Engage ourselves in continuous progress toward mercury-free health care by passing on our experiences to the young, new health care providers, and contribute to sustainable development.

Advocate for the protection of patients' and workers' environmental and occupational health, as well as for the incorporation of environmental health into health-related education curricula at all levels, including education and training on mercury-related issues.

Promote the establishment of the necessary infrastructure and standards by governments and international organizations to adequately manage and dispose of mercury waste, including procedures for handling segregation, collection, storage and disposal.

Promote the development of an industry that produces affordable, accurate and reliable mercury-free medical devices, and the establishment of national standards and certification for such devices.

Be it resolved that we, the participants of the first South Asian Conference for Mercury Free Healthcare, gathered in New Delhi, India on December 6, 2008 will work together toward achieving the aspirations of this declaration.