

Global Mercury Treaty May Include Ban on Mercury in Medicine

SILVER SPRING, Md., August 1, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ – **CoMeD** – On Friday, July 22, 2011, the [United Nations Environment Programme](#) (UNEP) distributed a [revised text for its comprehensive global treaty on mercury](#). Advocates for mercury-free drugs were gratified to see pharmaceuticals listed in “Annex C (Mercury-added product not allowed)” of the proposed treaty.

The [Coalition for Mercury-free Drugs \(CoMeD\)](#) helped [initiate this addition through its advocacy efforts at the United Nations \(UN\) negotiations held in Chiba, Japan in January 2011](#). CoMeD President Rev. Lisa Sykes, the mother of a son diagnosed with vaccine-related mercury poisoning, [described to representatives of over 150 participating nations how](#): “... unnecessarily injecting mercury into pregnant women and children, as part of a vaccine or other drug, is an ongoing and often unrecognized crisis.”

Thimerosal (49.6% mercury by weight), [still used as a vaccine preservative and in-process sterilizing agent](#), is an unnecessary, and sometimes undisclosed, component in many vaccines. Its use is associated with [neurodevelopmental disorders](#), [cancer](#), [birth defects](#) and [miscarriage](#). Those harmed most by Thimerosal in vaccines are the [unborn and newborn](#).

[Addressing the diplomats attending the UN meeting in Chiba, Dr. Mark R. Geier of CoMeD observed](#): “For this treaty to be fully effective, it must make clear that the intentional exposure of humans, especially pregnant women and young children, to mercury, will not be tolerated.”

Dr. Geier’s comments were especially well-received by the diplomats from developing nations. CoMeD representatives met with regional working groups in closed-door sessions and [explained the feasibility of using 2-phenoxyethanol](#), a much less toxic alternative to Thimerosal, in vaccines and other drugs.

[Dr. Geier challenged the inequity of providing wealthy nations with vaccines having reduced levels of mercury while poor nations still receive vaccines containing dangerously high levels of mercury](#): “Children around the world, no matter their place of birth or their income level, deserve safe mercury-free vaccines. The practice of providing mercury-reduced and mercury-free vaccines to developed countries while insisting that developing nations take mercury-containing ones is wrong.”

By the end of negotiations in Chiba, diplomats from developing countries requested the Secretariat to assess the safety of mercury in drugs.

A team of scientists and advocates from CoMeD will attend the next [treaty negotiation in Nairobi, Kenya from October 31 through November 4, 2011](#), to support keeping this global ban on mercury-containing drugs in the finalized UN treaty.