

June 29, 2012  
Punta del Este, Uruguay

**Rev. Lisa K. Sykes of the Coalition for Mercury-free Drugs (CoMeD, Inc.)  
Addresses the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee  
of the United Nations Environment Programme  
on Mercury in Medicine**

Honorable Chair Lugris, Distinguished Members of the INC, and our most hospitable and gracious host nation of Uruguay, my deepest thanks for a precious opportunity to address you and this distinguished body today.

When a ship sinks, morality demands that the most vulnerable be rescued first. Spaces in the life rafts have traditionally been given first to women and children. Yet, as Thimerosal becomes a sinking ship, the means of rescue from it: stocks of mercury-free vaccine, are being given first, not to children and pregnant women, but to the wealthy—predominately wealthy, western nations. This de facto, economic prioritization of mercury-free vaccines for wealthy nations, while developing nations and especially the women and children who live in them, receive mercury-containing ones, constitutes a double standard in vaccine safety. This disparity must be corrected rapidly but responsibly, and preference in production must shift to mercury-free vaccines globally, if we hope to avoid accusations of discrimination based on economics or nationality, in regard to global immunization policy.

No vaccine should be used as a delivery system for an undisclosed poison, for this is a denial of the right of informed consent and of the medical directive to do no harm. This practice is even more egregious when we consider that Thimerosal failed the United States' and European Union's pharmacopeia[1] test[s] for an effective preservative. No nation should be faced with the choice of a mercury-containing vaccine or no vaccine at all. Such a choice is no choice; it is only passage on a sinking ship.

Efforts to shore up Thimerosal are full of holes! Among the recent flood of studies showing harm from Thimerosal, is one by Dr. Ida-Eto et al, funded by the Japanese Government, which states, (quote) "...embryonic exposure to Thimerosal produces lasting impairment of the brain ... thus every effort should be made to avoid the use of Thimerosal" (endquote). This and many other studies can be found as **CoMeD** submissions on the INC4 Civil Society webpage.

When I spoke to INC 2, I introduced myself as Rev. Lisa Sykes, President of the Coalition for Mercury-free Drugs. Today, let me simply refer to myself as a victim, one who was injected with Thimerosal without informed consent when I was 28 weeks pregnant with my second son Wesley. This prenatal exposure, along with further exposure to mercury from many Thimerosal-containing vaccines after his birth, disabled my son and deprived him of a voice. Lifetime care for my son is estimated to be 20 million dollars. This is but one of the unspoken costs of not switching away from Thimerosal in vaccines and other drugs.

In the United States, statistics show, in my son's generation, which received vaccines containing over 100 times the maximum safety exposure limit for mercury, 1 in every 6 children is affected by a behavioral or neurodevelopmental disorder, and 1 in every 88 children has autism.

Thimerosal is a gender-specific poison, explaining why 4 times more boys than girls are affected by autism.

Based on careful study of science and ethics, the United Methodist Church, representing 11.5 million members, passed a global resolution four years ago calling for a ban of mercury from human pharmaceuticals. Now, 20 million members of the US Health Freedom Congress support this effort also, and their resolution has been uploaded to the INC intranet.

My question for you is not whether Thimerosal is toxic; it is!

My question is not whether we can switch to a better, safer vaccine preservative globally, — we can!

Alternative preservatives work better than Thimerosal, even in warm climate.

My question for you is whether the nations here can summon the boldness to demand equally safe vaccines for all persons! The rare potential of this global legally-binding instrument on mercury is to affirm that —

- All persons deserve mercury-free pharmaceuticals, and
- Non-toxic manufacturing practices and informed consent in regard to vaccines are human rights!

Let us seize this opportunity to do good and rescue all, but most especially the world's children, from Thimerosal.

Thank you.