



"Working to Abolish Mercury Dental Fillings"

Charlie Brown's Opening Statement at the World Mercury Treaty Negotiations

Delivered 7 June 2010 at the first session

Mr. Chairman, I am Charlie Brown, President, World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry, an alliance of many nation-based NGOs. I wish to congratulate the new Chairman, to thank the Swedish government and Swedish people for hosting this conference, and thank the Secretariat for their hard work.

We seek a world ban on amalgam, as several nations have already done.

1st - Amalgam is a primitive, polluting, 19th century product. It began when physicians were sawing off legs. Medicine has since moved forward.

2nd - Amalgam is the most expensive, repeat most expensive, dental material, if you count environmental costs and clean-up costs.

3rd - Amalgam is the number 1 mercury exposure for consumers, says the government of Canada and other sources.

4th - Amalgam is a gigantic pollutant. Dentists are the number 2 buyer of mercury in developed countries, and soon to be number 1 because they have no exit plan. More mercury is in the mouths of people in the United States and Europe than in all products combined.

5th - Amalgam affects every subject area of this treaty. It is a product. Waste - dental offices are first in contributing mercury into the wastewater. Air - Cremation makes it a major source of air pollution in societies which cremate. Mining - Dentists are a source problem.

Dentists are deeply divided. The breakdown is about 50-50 in Europe and North America between the mercury-free dentists and the pro-mercury dentists. Likewise dental societies are on both sides, both mercury-free and pro-amalgam.

Mr. Chairman, tobacco was a 500 year mistake. You will decide if the amalgam mistake continues for a 3rd century. But be forewarned, delegates in low-income nations. The Twentieth Century victims of mercury toxicity from amalgam were children in developed countries. The Twenty-first Century victims of mercury toxicity from amalgam will be children in developing countries.

The World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry salutes Barack Obama, the great President of my nation, for his excellent record on mercury, and Lisa Jackson, his Environmental Protection Agency Administrator, who as an environmental director in a state, New Jersey, ordered dentists

to start switching to alternatives. It would thus be logical for the United States to lead the nations toward a ban on amalgam, and we urge the State Department to do so.

We wish to work with the World Health Organization. What WHO can do today is insist that patients be told that amalgam is 50% mercury. Today, it is deceptively marketed as 'la amalgama plata' in Spanish, as 'l'amalgam d'argent' in French, and as 'silver fillings' in English. That is deceptive.

We wish to work with UNEP and with any and all interested nations to bring in the post-amalgam era for this world. Thank you Mr. Chairman, and I close with this statement - No possible way exists to address man-made mercury without a date certain for the end of amalgam.