

**CANADA, KINGDOM OF DENMARK, FINLAND, ICELAND, NORWAY, RUSSIAN  
FEDERATION, SWEDEN, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**Statement to the Diplomatic Conference on the Minamata Convention on Mercury**

**Oct. 9-11, 2013, Kumamoto, Japan**

Canada, as the current chair of the Arctic Council, on behalf of the Arctic Council States – Canada, Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Russia and the United States – and the six Arctic Council indigenous permanent participant organizations, takes this opportunity to congratulate delegates gathered at the Diplomatic Conference on the Minamata Convention for recognizing the international significance of mercury in the Arctic, as well as its specific effects on Arctic communities.

The Arctic Council States have long been supportive of a global mercury agreement. The Arctic Council's 2004 Heavy Metals Report was instrumental in laying the foundation for current global knowledge of mercury and its effects in the Arctic. The Council's 2011 Mercury Assessment and the 2013 joint technical report with UNEP on global mercury assessment provided further information on mercury and informed the global mercury negotiations. We are pleased that the Arctic Council was able to contribute to a greater understanding of the environmental impacts of mercury, including issues related to food safety.

The Arctic Council States welcome the adoption of the Minamata Convention and look forward to working with all nations so that we may expeditiously experience the health and environmental benefits of this Convention. We therefore support early and effective implementation of the Convention and its rapid entry into force.

At this Diplomatic Conference we have made further progress in laying the groundwork for global reductions of mercury emissions. Arctic Council States urge countries to take necessary steps to ratify and implement the Minamata Convention, including to further assess their national mercury situations in order to understand their key challenges, and to begin planning and implementing effective actions.

As Arctic Council States, we look forward to playing an active role in supporting the Minamata Convention, by implementing national actions and supporting the continuing work of the negotiating committee and future Conferences of the Parties. The Arctic Council will continue to contribute to mercury monitoring and assessment activities.

Earlier this year, the Arctic Council welcomed several new observer States. We are confident in their ability, tools, knowledge and desire to make major contributions to the goal of reducing global mercury emissions.

Finally, we would like to express our thanks to both UNEP and the Government of Japan for their support throughout the process, and for organizing and hosting this successful meeting.

Thank you.

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