

## **Stunning Environmental Victory in Nairobi!**

On Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> February world environment ministers finally agreed the process to establish a global, legally binding international treaty to tackle mercury pollution in Nairobi at the United Nations Environment Program 25<sup>th</sup> Session of Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum.

Mercury is a persistent, bioaccumulative, transboundary pollutant that contaminates air, soil, water and fish and can seriously harm human health and the environment. About half of the 6000 tonnes emitted annually into the atmosphere is from human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels, mining and base metal smelting. Mercury circulates globally and can travel very long distances in the atmosphere often affecting human population (such as the Inuit) where no industrial activity occurs.

Environment ministers agreed that the treaty should include provisions to reduce the global supply and demand of mercury, cut atmospheric emissions, and address mercury-containing waste and the remediation of contaminated sites. It should also provide for "technical and financial assistance" to developing countries to implement their obligations, they said.

Negotiation on the treaty will begin in the second half of 2009 and are expected to conclude by 2013.

### **New Reports on Mercury include:**

#### **Mercury in Fish, a global health hazard**

[http://www.zeromercury.org/International\\_developments/FULL\\_FISH\\_REPORT\\_FINAL+.pdf](http://www.zeromercury.org/International_developments/FULL_FISH_REPORT_FINAL+.pdf)

#### **Mercury Rising-reducing global emissions from burning mercury-products**

[http://www.zeromercury.org/International\\_developments/FINAL\\_MercuryRising\\_Feb2009.pdf](http://www.zeromercury.org/International_developments/FINAL_MercuryRising_Feb2009.pdf)