



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Africa Region Galvanizes Efforts to End Mercury Lighting**

The Africa delegation – representing 39 countries - to the Minamata Convention on Mercury introduced an amendment to phase out all remaining fluorescent lamps.

**WASHINGTON/BRUSSELS (3 May 2023)** - The Zero Mercury Working Group and the Clean Lighting Coalition commend the Africa Region for proposing an amendment to phase out all the remaining fluorescent lamps at the Fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 5) of the [Minamata Convention on Mercury](#) in Geneva.

This amendment complements the [unanimous decision](#) at [Minamata COP4](#) to phase out compact fluorescent lamps (CLFs) by 2025. If adopted in November, the COP5 Amendment will effectively end the manufacture and trade of all fluorescent bulbs globally by 2026.

Phasing out the proposed categories of fluorescent lamps in the timeline proposed in the amendment will cumulatively:

- avoid 3.00 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide;
- save US \$1.26 trillion in electricity costs, and;
- prevent 176 metric tonnes of mercury pollution – including both mercury used in lamps, and the mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants that would be avoided through lower electricity use for lighting.

“The COP5 African Lighting Amendment is the most effective strategy we have to limiting the dangerous health and environmental impacts of mercury-containing fluorescent lighting,” said Elena Lymberidi-Settimo, International Co-coordinator of [the Zero Mercury Working Group](#). “The Africa region, and most regions around the world, do not have the recycling capacity and resources to properly manage the



mercury contents of end-of-life fluorescent bulbs. Widely available LED alternatives mean these exemptions are no longer necessary – there is no justifiable reason to continue manufacturing, importing or exporting harmful fluorescent technologies.”

All fluorescent lamps contain mercury, a neurotoxin that can cause harmful and long-term [health effects](#). Mercury is on the World Health Organization’s [list](#) of the 10 chemicals or groups of chemicals of major public health concern, as it affects the nervous, digestive and immune system. Pregnant people and children are at heightened risk for these health impacts.

When a fluorescent lamp is broken or improperly disposed of, the mercury from the lamp contaminates the atmosphere, land and water – posing a risk to workers and the local environment.

“We applaud the Africa Region for their continued leadership in the transition to more efficient mercury-free lighting,” said Rachel Kamande, Campaign Lead of [the Clean Lighting Coalition](#). “The economic case to phase-out fluorescent lamps is even stronger today because the mercury-free LEDs have become less expensive and energy prices have increased leading to even shorter payback periods.”

LEDs are the most efficient lighting option on today’s market, consuming only half as much energy as fluorescent bulbs and have a lifespan up to three times longer. Due to the reduced energy demand, LEDs bulbs ease strain on the electric grid and have a rapid payback period for consumers. LED retrofits for fluorescents are widely available around the globe, with lamps to fit nearly every need and ballast.

Although some of the world’s largest lighting manufacturers already have plans to fully transition to LEDs in the next decade, many continue to export fluorescents – often to less regulated markets. The Africa region’s Amendment will prime the global LED market for an equitable and economically beneficial transition away from toxic lighting.

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**About the Clean Lighting Coalition:** The Clean Lighting Coalition is a global partnership to capture the health and environmental benefits of eliminating mercury-based lighting. [www.cleanlightingcoalition.org](http://www.cleanlightingcoalition.org)

**About The Zero Mercury Working Group:** The Zero Mercury Working Group is a coalition of more than 110 environmental and health non-governmental organizations from over 55 countries, which strives for zero supply, demand, and emissions of mercury from anthropogenic sources. [www.zeromercury.org](http://www.zeromercury.org)