

Joint statement: FDI World Dental Federation and International Association for Dental Research

WHO side-event, 22 September 2017: For Health, Make Mercury History

Distinguished Chair and Guests,

We thank the WHO for giving FDI World Dental Federation (FDI) and the International Association for Dental Research (IADR) the opportunity to make this joint statement.

FDI is the largest not-for-profit membership-based dental organization in the world. It is the principal representative body for over one million dentists worldwide.

IADR is a non-profit membership-based professional association, dedicated to advancing research and increasing knowledge for the improvement of oral health worldwide.

Both FDI and IADR participated as NGOs in the INC process leading to the Minamata Convention and have expressed support for the final treaty and in particular Annex A, Part II, of Article 4 on Mercury-added products and dental amalgam. The Annex stipulates that the measures to be taken by a Party to phase down the use of dental amalgam shall take into account the Party's domestic circumstances and relevant international guidance and shall include two or more of the nine provisions listed.



As organizations representing practicing dentists and dental researchers, we have paid close attention to these negotiations since INC-1 as they relate to the availability of dental restorative materials and the health of our patients.

Our position has always remained that a phase-down of dental amalgam can only be accomplished with a greater emphasis on prevention, increased research on amalgam alternatives, and best management practices for amalgam waste.

Since the Minamata Convention opened for signature in 2013, FDI and IADR have actively supported its implementation and invested resources in educating its members globally on the implications of the Convention at a national level and the need to work with Member States to formulate action plans. This has included pilot projects with UNEP-WHO-IDM, capacity building workshops, scientific sessions, toolkits and publications to help dentists, national dental associations, researchers and governments implement the Convention's provisions on dental amalgam.

Work is continuing in the area and The U.S. House of Representatives, in its FY2014 appropriations language, called upon the National Institutes of Health Director to make the development of alternative dental restorative materials a high priority based upon the ongoing UNEP negotiations on mercury. The NIH's National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research funds dental restorative research, including, but not limited to, research funded from a call in 2013 for the "Design and Development of Novel Dental Composite Restorative Systems". This research is leading to improved dental restorative materials that do not contain or use amalgam.

Regarding managing amalgam waste, the United States Environmental Protection Agency issued a regulation on June 9, 2017, governing the management of dental amalgam discharges into sewer systems, requiring most dental offices to install amalgam separators.

FDI and IADR also note the Regulation of the European Parliament that "the use of dental amalgam should therefore be phased down in accordance with the [Minamata] Convention. . .".

FDI and IADR stand ready to support WHO and Member State efforts in the implementation of Resolution WHA67.11 adopted at the 67th World Health Assembly.



Finally, we would like to emphasize that amalgam phase down can only be a reality if access to safe, effective, affordable alternatives, specifically in LMICs is made a priority together with financial support. The phasing down of amalgam before the availability of affordable alternatives would negatively impact oral health both from an individual and population perspective. We therefore, call on WHO to update its 2009 publication “WHO Guideline on Future Use of Materials for Dental Restoration.”, with the latest scientific evidence to help support Member State activities at a national level.

We look forward to COP1 and learning how funding will be made available to help countries in the successful implementation of the Minamata Convention.

Thank you.