

Submission of the information regarding Asian Center for Environmental Health's initiatives and achievements to end dental amalgam in Asia that demonstrate the availability and feasibility of mercury-free dentistry

By:

The Asian Region/The Asian Center for Environmental Health

To:

The Secretariat, Minamata Convention on Mercury

Summary: The Asian region has been devoted to banishing dental amalgam from the continent almost for a decade. The nation moved forward with the common goal building a unique network of Asian Center for Environmental Health. As of now, the countries have taken remarkable initiatives to adopt effective amalgam phase out strategies. The Asian nations have already come up with some major achievements that are focused here. The Asian Center for Environmental Health was founded on 28 December, 2013 with its headquarters in Dhaka, Bangladesh. It aimed to meet the emerging need of an institution to work on Environmental Health in Asia Pacific as well as Pacific Islands and facilitate the expertise to, and cooperation with governments in Asia Pacific to protect environment and public health.



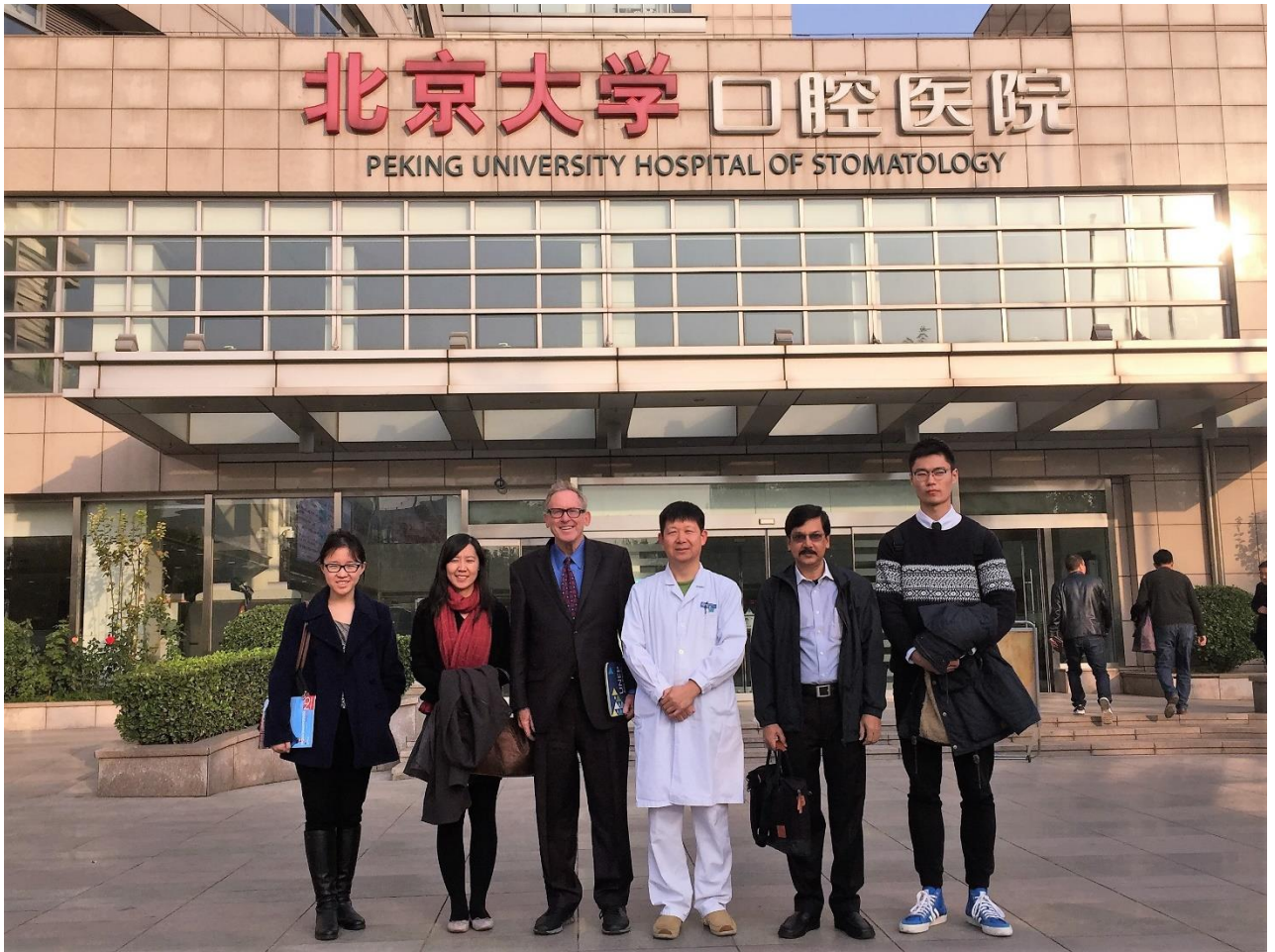
Asian Workshop on 'Successful Strategies to Phase Down Amalgam Use towards Mercury-Free Dentistry' organized jointly by Asian Center, WA and UN Environment at Bangkok in 2016

Asian Center believes that the Asian nation's efforts and achievements regarding mercury-free dentistry play a critical role in protecting the environment and human health from mercury pollution in Asia – and prove that mercury-free dentistry is available and technically and economically feasible. As such, the Center upholds the major successes of these nation herewith.



Global Workshop on Promoting Dental Amalgam Phase Down Measures Under the Minamata Convention and Other Initiatives, For “Especially Women, Children, and, Through Them, Future Generations” Coordinated by UN Environment, World Alliance and Asian Center at Bangkok in 2018

- a. **China:** China ratified the Minamata Convention on Mercury in 2016 whereas dental amalgam has been listed as a promoted category according to the Guiding Category List for Industrial Structure Adjustment 2011 by National Reform and Development Commission. Also, dental amalgam has been listed as a high-risk and polluted product according to the ‘Comprehensive Product Category List for Environmental Protection 2014’ by Ministry of Environmental Protection. In addition, Peking University Dental College and Hospital have mercury-free academic set of courses and they provide mercury-free treatment.



Visit of World Alliance and Asian Center to Peking University Hospital of Stomatology in Beijing in 2016

- b. Toxics Link, India:** The organization in India is pushing for a policy to ban the use of dental amalgam in children and women. Major successes include that they ended amalgam use in the armed forces while the other dentists and dental chains are moving towards mercury-free dentistry. India also moves forward with changes in dental curriculum. Earlier, Indian Railway Hospitals scaled down the use of dental amalgam by 90%.



Minamata Regional Meeting in Bangkok, Asian Center supports African amendment proposal for COP3

- c. **NEXUS3 FOUNDATION, Indonesia:** The country stopped paying for amalgam in public health dentistry program and switched entirely to composite and glass ionomers. NEXUS3 FOUNDATION works from private sector in this issue in Indonesia.
- d. **Centre for Environmental Justice, Sri Lanka:** Ministry of Health agreed to send out a circular limiting the use of amalgam and discussing legal provisions. Centre for Environmental Justice takes initiatives from private sector of the country.
- e. **Center for Community Health and Injury prevention (CCHIP), Vietnam:** In Vietnam, non-mercury alternatives to amalgam are widely available. As such, the Ministry of Health Service Administration Department advised its provinces and its dental offices to stop using amalgam for children under 15, pregnant women, and lactating women by April 1st, 2019. It further called for a roadmap to stop using amalgam in dentistry. The goal is to end amalgam use in Vietnam in 2021. CCHIP and Vietnam Odonto Stomatology Association (VOSA) are

intensely involved in the mercury phase out program in the country.



Visit of World Alliance and Asian Center to Vietnam in 2019 regarding Mercury-Free Dentistry campaign

- f. **Japan:** Dental treatment in Japan has long been virtually mercury-free.
- g. **Singapore:** Singapore ratified the Minamata Convention on Mercury on 22 September 2017. Singapore's instrument of ratification was deposited by Singapore Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan at the 2017 United Nations (UN) Treaty Event in New York. The country also announced prohibition on import of products that contain mercury, after it ratified the Minamata Convention.
- h. **Thailand:** The Government of Thailand deposited its instrument of ratification on 22 June, 2017, thereby became the 66th future Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury.
- i. **New Caledonia:** A self-governing French territory in the Pacific, New Caledonia ended all amalgam use as of 16 September, 2019.
- j. **Environment and Social Development Organization-ESDO, Bangladesh:** ESDO collaborated with the Bangladesh Dental Society – BDS with a view to phasing out the toxic mercury amalgam from the dental sector of the country. In Bangladesh, non-mercury alternatives are available in both urban and rural regions. Alternatives of mercury dental amalgam are GIC, and Composite has been already popular, available and affordable. More

than 75% dentist use Composite and the rest are using GIC and compomer in Bangladesh. With collaboration of ESDO and BDS in line with the mercury-free dentistry initiatives, BDS stopped using amalgam in children under 15, pregnant women, and lactating women from 30 June 2018. It further called for to stop using amalgam in dentistry. The goal is to end amalgam use in Bangladesh by 2020 and push forward to import ban on dental amalgam.



Asian Center and ESDO launched the booklet entitled Mercury-Free Dentistry towards Toxic Free Oral Health and Environment in 2018

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Army Dental Corps is also working simultaneously to indicate their solidarity with this worldwide movement. As a result, Bangladesh Army, NAVY and Air force have combined phase out of dental amalgam in 2018.



World Alliance and Asian Center made courtesy visit to the Director General Medical Services of Bangladesh in 2016

For modification in dental curriculum, the proposal has been submitted, and five dental colleges have already revised and initiated this particularly adding a new chapter on alternative of dental amalgam theory and practical method. More than 90% registered dentists are practicing mercury-free dentistry in Bangladesh whereas more than 4000 have self-declared Mercury Free Dental Surgeons. In addition, more than 500 dental chambers/clinics in Dhaka city have been recognized as Mercury Free chambers. ESDO is focused to phase out dental amalgam in Bangladesh and trying hard to make the destination.



Recognition of Major General of the Bangladesh Army Dental Corps, Dr. Golam Mohiuddin Chowdhury's dental chamber as Mercury-Free Dental Clinic in 2018

- k. Center for Public Health and Environmental Development (CEPHED), Nepal:** The organization started working for mercury-free dentistry in Nepal from private sector. Government of Nepal, Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) has made two very progressive decisions in different points of time related to Dental Amalgam and Mercury Added products. Likewise Nepal Dental Association (NDA) and Metropolitan City has also made declaration to adopt mercury free dentistry policy and made the city mercury free. Government of Nepal on 21st August 2019 through the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health and Population (MOHP) level decision has decided on banning use of mercury dental amalgam in children, pregnant & breast feeding mothers; for other group it should be phased out within five year up on availability of alternatives; and universities were directed to improve dental curriculum and stop using mercury dental amalgam in practical exercises. Nepal Dental Association (NDA) and its branches offices have also adopted the Mercury Free Dentistry policy and practices throughout the country. Also, Government of Nepal, MOHP taken decision of banning Import, Purchase and Use of all kinds of mercury based equipment's from health sectors of Nepal, effective since July 17, 2013. Mercury Free Metropolitan City has been declared and endorsed along with the high level of commitment

and decision of going mercury free from all private hospitals, public hospitals and Dental Doctors/Clinics on March 19, 2019. Kathmandu University (KU) with 6 dental colleges in Nepal have already revised their dental school/college curricula whereby it is not compulsory to teach and use the mercury dental amalgam anymore. Already adopted and implemented from its graduates program since 2019.



Mercury-free dentistry campaign in Nepal in 2015

- l. Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Pakistan:** Several Pakistani hospitals (in $\frac{3}{4}$ of its provinces) ended amalgam use for children, pregnant and breastfeeding women. SDPI works as a private sector to end amalgam in the country.
- m. BANTOXICS, Philippines:** The Philippine Department of Health issued Administrative Order 2020-0020 (AO20) on 14 May 2020, adopting a national phase-out of dental amalgam. The Order provides for a three-year phase-out period from the affectivity of AO20, after which the use of dental amalgam shall no longer be allowed in the Philippines. Critical provisions of AO20, which are immediately executory upon its affectivity are the following:
 - a) ban on the importation of liquid mercury for use in dental restorative procedures and dental amalgam and its capsules; and
 - b) ban on the use of dental amalgam and its capsules for children fourteen (14) years old and below, pregnant women and nursing mothers.BAN Toxics believes that the step taken by the Philippine government in issuing AO20 is critical in protecting the health and environment of Filipinos. While not yet a party to the

Convention, AO20 establishes the country's good faith in supporting the Convention it signed in 2013. BAN Toxics wishes to inform the Minamata Secretariat of AO20, as other countries similarly situated as the Philippines may find a value in the approach our country has taken.

- n. **PULAU-PINANG, Malaysia:** PULAU-PINANG works for phase out dental amalgam in Malaysia. The country is yet to ratify the Minamata Convention.



World Alliance and Asian Center paid a visit to PULAU-PINANG to extend the Mercury-Free Dentistry campaign in Malaysia

The non-mercury alternatives are composite, compomers and glass-ionomer materials. Composite is the material most used as a replacement to dental amalgam in adults while compomer, a cross between composite and glass-ionomer, and glass ionomers tend to be used more in first or deciduous teeth in children. These materials were introduced in the 1960's and have since become commonplace. There has been significant progress made in the development of all these materials and at the Stockholm meeting of the Minamata Convention in the Swedish Chemical Agency stated the alternatives to dental amalgam are available, affordable and effective. Mercury-free alternatives to dental amalgam are freely available and offer advantages in methods of challenging situations.¹ Hence, the complete phase out of mercury amalgam is feasible to implement.

¹http://www.mercuryconvention.org/Portals/11/documents/meetings/COP4/submissions/WAMFD_Comparison_report_DentalAmalgam.pdf

Thank you in advance for giving us the opportunity to present the Asian success under the Asian Center for Environmental Health to the Secretariat.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Siddika', written in a cursive style.

Siddika Sultana

Director

Asian Center for Environmental Health