



## ***SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (SEDI)***

### **A communique Issued at the Stakeholders' Workshop on Phase down of Dental Amalgam in Edo State – Tuesday 31 October, 2017**

The Sustainable Environment Development Initiative (SEDI Nigeria) under the auspices of *World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry*, organized a workshop on Phase-down of Dental Amalgam Use in Edo State at the WHARC Event Centre, Benin, Edo State, Nigeria on 31 October 2017.

The forum brought together over 59 participants drawn from Government, Dental practitioners, Dental students, Dental surgery technicians, Academia, Media and civil society groups among others, and deliberated on issues bothering on the phasing down of the use dental amalgam in Edo State.

During the meeting participants **observed** the following:

1. Mercury is a chemical of global concern owing to its long range atmospheric transport, its persistence in the environment once anthropogenically introduced and its ability to bio-accumulate in ecosystems.
2. Exposure to mercury can harm the brain, heart, kidneys, lungs, cardiovascular system and immune system, particularly in women, unborn children and infants.
3. Low level of awareness among Nigerians on the dangers of mercury in dental amalgam.
4. Dental amalgam is still widely used and is the most affordable dental filling material serving the restorative health needs of Nigerians.
5. The limited availability of oral health manpower, service facilities and materials for dental restoration, and the high cost of dental restorative treatment.
6. Limited number of dental clinics and centres to provide services for the Nigeria's teeming population.
7. Recognition of the negative impacts of mercury on people's health and the environment led to the adoption and signing of Minamata Treaty by over 128 nations of the world on the 10th October, 2013 at Minamata, Japan. Nigeria has signed but is yet to ratify and become a party to the convention. However, there are efforts to initiate programmes that will ensure significant reduction in mercury use.
8. The convention entered into force on 15th August, 2017 having been ratified by 84 countries.
9. Alternative direct restorative materials such as composites, compomers and ceramics can be used for restoration of carious and non-carious cavities involving anterior and posterior teeth based on specific selection criteria and indications.

10. Aware that the Federal Ministry of Environment, Federal Ministry of Health, UNIDO and other stakeholders have completed the Nigeria Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA) report to usher the national implementation of the convention.

### **Recommendations**

1. In compliance with the provisions of the Minamata convention, government should initiate a coordinated multi-sectoral approach for an effective phase down of use of dental amalgam in Nigeria.
2. Updating dental schools training curriculum to emphasize mercury-free dentistry.
3. Implementation of a phase down work plan. This must also include legislative review and development of guidelines, gathering baseline data and developing the national overview.
4. Initiation of demonstration projects and application of best available technology and environmental practice in the management of dental amalgam.
5. Promotion of alternatives/transition to alternatives by a concession for imported alternative restorative materials.
6. Engaging the public and media as well as other stakeholders in awareness creation on the health impacts of mercury in dental amalgam and the need for prevention of caries.
7. An urgent need for Nigeria to domesticate the Minamata convention as soon as possible.

### **Edo State Resolution to End Dental Amalgam for Children in 2018**

Assembled this 31 October 2017, we the stakeholders of Edo State:

Call for the end of dental amalgam use in children under 16, pregnant and breastfeeding women as of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018.

Urge the Federal government, other States of Nigeria, and all nations of Africa to end amalgam use in children under 16, pregnant and breast feeding women as of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018.