



International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination 2025



HOW ELIMINATING SKIN-LIGHTENING PRODUCTS CONTAINING MERCURY HELPS COUNTER RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

As the world observes the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on **21 March 2025**, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention and the Secretariat of the Global Mercury Partnership, are releasing a set of messages for public use and engagement that highlight the urgent need to stop the production and use of skin-lightening products containing mercury and other hazardous substances. [Read the full technical highlight](#).

SHARE OUR SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

#MercuryFreeCosmetics #SayNoToHate #FightRacism

Find your favorite quote against colorism or highlighting the dangers of the skin-lightening products hidden ingredients, and share it on your social media.



ROBERTA ANNAN
UNEP Advocate for sustainable fashion

“We are all beautiful in our own right. As a child, people would tell my mum to bleach my skin because I was, I am, so dark. Later, I was teased at school and in high school.

Now, I am successful in my own right and have embraced my own skin. So, we all just have to embrace that culture and identity. **Beauty is who you are.**”

#MERCURYFREECOSMETICS

UN environment programme MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY GLOBAL MERCURY PARTNERSHIP



Mercury

Blocks the production of melanin, leading to a lighter skin tone.

Potential harm: environmental pollution, kidney and liver damage, neurological problems, and childhood developmental issues.



UN environment programme GLOBAL MERCURY PARTNERSHIP

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RECENT EVENTS



Unmasking Mercury and Colorism in Cosmetics [webinar](#) on 5 March 2025 co-organized by the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Global Mercury Partnership and the Geneva Environment Network featured leading voices to highlight the need of addressing the underlying socio-cultural norms that surround skin-lightening products.



The **third meeting** of the Eliminating Mercury Skin Lightening Products project stakeholders group took place on **30 January 2025**. The event provided an opportunity to share updates and lessons learned from the project, to present draft report on Cosmetics Listed in Part I of Annex A to the Minamata Convention on Mercury and to hear from stakeholders regarding their experiences. Presentations and recording are on the [event page](#).

The Libreville commitment on the elimination of mercury-containing skin-lightening cosmetics in Africa [was presented](#) on 22 January 2025. This engagement is expected to stimulate productive discussion at the next Minamata Convention COP-6 in November to accelerate the elimination of mercury-added cosmetics from the market. [Read](#)



[the French version of the Declaration.](#)

NEWS



[New York City Health Department Warns New Yorkers About Skin Lightening Products That Contain Dangerous Amounts of Mercury](#)



[Amazon to block sales of skin lightening creams containing mercury in response to lawsuit under Proposition 65's Toxic Enforcement Act](#)

RESOURCES



This **educational video** was created by youth leaders involved in Beautywell's Young Women's Wellness and Leadership Initiative, the Youth Advisory Board, and young women leading community initiatives. Its purpose is to mobilize youth and raise awareness about colorism, skin-lightening practices, and chemical exposures within the youth population.

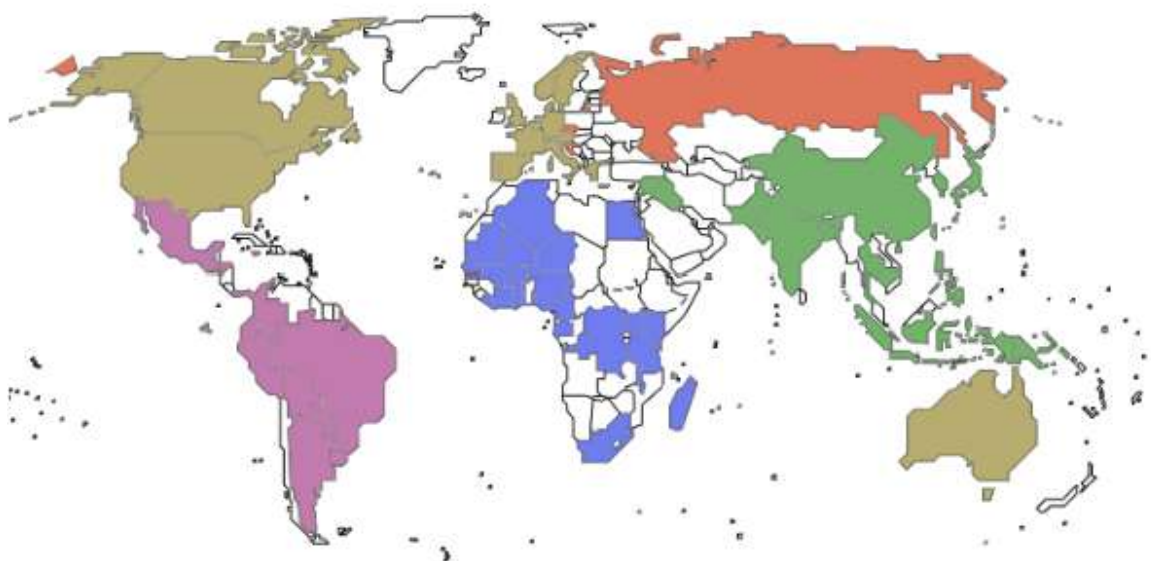
ELIMINATING

MERCURY SKIN-LIGHTENING PRODUCTS

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Mercury supply and storage

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**Mercury releases from
the cement industry**

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