Article 6

Exemptions available to a Party upon request

1. Any State or regional economic integration organization may register for one or more exemptions from the phase-out dates listed in Annex A and Annex B, hereafter referred to as an "exemption", by notifying the Secretariat in writing:

(a) On becoming a Party to this Convention; or

(b) In the case of any mercury-added product that is added by an amendment to Annex A or any manufacturing process in which mercury is used that is added by an amendment to Annex B, no later than the date upon which the applicable amendment enters into force for the Party.

Any such registration shall be accompanied by a statement explaining the Party's need for the exemption.

2. An exemption can be registered either for a category listed in Annex A or B or for a sub-category identified by any State or regional economic integration organization.

3. Each Party that has one or more exemptions shall be identified in a register. The Secretariat shall establish and maintain the register and make it available to the public.

4. The register shall include:

(a) A list of the Parties that have one or more exemptions;

(b) The exemption or exemptions registered for each Party; and

(c) The expiration date of each exemption.

5. Unless a shorter period is indicated in the register by a Party, all exemptions pursuant to paragraph 1 shall expire five years after the relevant phase-out date listed in Annex A or B.

6. The Conference of the Parties may, at the request of a Party, decide to extend an exemption for five years unless the Party requests a shorter period. In making its decision, the Conference of the Parties shall take due account of:

(a) A report from the Party justifying the need to extend the exemption and outlining activities undertaken and planned to eliminate the need for the exemption as soon as feasible;

(b) Available information, including in respect of the availability of alternative products and processes that are free of mercury or that involve the consumption of less mercury than the exempt use; and

(c) Activities planned or under way to provide environmentally sound storage of mercury and disposal of mercury wastes.

An exemption may only be extended once per product per phase-out date.

7. A Party may at any time withdraw an exemption upon written notification to the Secretariat. The withdrawal of an exemption shall take effect on the date specified in the notification.

8. Notwithstanding paragraph 1, no State or regional economic integration organization may register for an exemption after five years after the phase-out date for the relevant product or process listed in Annex A or B, unless one or more Parties remain registered for an exemption for that product or process, having received an extension pursuant to paragraph 6. In that case, a State or regional economic integration organization may, at the times set out in paragraphs 1 (a) and (b), register for an exemption for that product or process, which shall expire ten years after the relevant phase-out date.

9. No Party may have an exemption in effect at any time after 10 years after the phase-out date for a product or process listed in Annex A or B.

Article 7

Artisanal and small-scale gold mining

1. The measures in this Article and in Annex C shall apply to artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing in which mercury amalgamation is used to extract gold from ore.

2. Each Party that has artisanal and small-scale gold mining and processing subject to this Article within its territory shall take steps to reduce, and where feasible eliminate, the use of mercury and mercury compounds in, and the emissions and releases to the environment of mercury from, such mining and processing.