



SPEECH

Remarks by Koichiro Matsunaga, Minamata Disease victim

Geneva, 25 November 2019

Hello. My name is Koichiro Matsunaga. I am Minamata Disease patient. I was born 1963, June 29. 56 years old. I came here to protect future children.
Mercury affects brain.

I was exposed to mercury and got Minamata disease when I was in my mother's womb. My physical condition has been getting worse, so I started to use my wheelchair 9 years ago. Many of my friends, fetal Minamata disease patients, cannot speak well like me and cannot move well like me. So, I am here on behalf of them to tell our story and request.

Four years before my birth, both the government and the company knew that the cause of Minamata disease was mercury in the factory waste water. However, they did not stop the drainage. Economy was prioritized over human life. I am so frustrated whenever I think that I might not have received any damage, if only they had stop it before I was born.

I know that we, human being, make mistakes. But we have to have a strong will to stop making mistakes when we realize it. Many children in the future will suffer like me if we fail to take appropriate control on mercury now.

Please do not repeat what happened in Minamata in your country.

Please do not repeat what happened to my body to anyone else.

Please protect children. No more Minamata disease.

Thank you very much.

Koichiro Matsunaga
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