

HIGH-LEVEL SIDE EVENT

**AT THE CONFERENCE OF
PLENIPOTENTIARIES ON THE
MINAMATA CONVENTION ON
MERCURY**

**Venue: Room HIGO AB
Hotel Nikko
Thursday, 10 October 2013
13:00 – 14:30
Kumamoto, Japan**

Photo credit: Larry C. Price/Pulitzer Center on Crisis

WOMEN AND MERCURY IN ASGM

Impacts on Women's Health and that of Future Generations

In many Artisanal Small Gold Mining (ASGM) areas, women perform the most toxic jobs since they do not require strength. These jobs include pouring the mercury into the ball-mills or mixing the mercury in panning, and burning the amalgam, often with their children or babies nearby. In some countries, women also carry the rocks from the mining sites to the processing plants.

Biomonitoring results from several ASGM countries show alarming concentrations of mercury in hair, urine and blood of children, women and men. There is a rapidly growing body of knowledge in this area, which has also revealed some symptoms similar to Minamata disease and its adverse effects and damage to the developing brain is a particular concern.

This side event will present and discuss the lessons learned from Minamata disease, the case to protect women's health from mercury exposure, present best practices on reducing exposure to mercury in ASGM workers and communities, identify what awareness raising and regulatory measures governments can support and how a successful and meaningful mercury treaty will reduce mercury exposure to women, children and future generations.

Organised
by:



Co-hosted:

Organised in cooperation with the Co-Chair of the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment, Deputy Minister for Water, Environmental Affairs and Tourism of South Africa

We are thankful for the support by :



Danish Ministry of the Environment



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Program: Women and Mercury in ASGM

12:45 –13:00	Registration & Lunch Lunch will be served for participants	
	Opening of the event by IPEN and WECF Welcome speeches	
13:00 – 13:20	<p>H.E. Rejoice Mabudafhasi, Deputy Minister for Water and Environmental Affairs, South Africa - <i>Welcome and perspective from the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment</i></p> <p>H.E. Halima Daud, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Malawi – <i>Welcome and perspectives from the African region</i></p> <p>H.E. Ambassador Annika Markovic, Environment Ambassador, Sweden <i>Preventing the spreading of Mercury, Sweden’s experience with mercury export ban</i></p>	
13:20– 14:00	Speakers and presenters <p>Yuyun Ismawati; IPEN lead for ASGM, BaliFokus, Indonesia: <i>Women and Mercury in ASGM: Local problems, Global Challenge</i></p> <p>Isabella Pagotto, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland: <i>Importance of gender mainstreaming</i></p> <p>Prof. Dr. Med. Toshihide Tsuda, Okayama University : <i>Lessons learned from Minamata disease and reflection to mercury exposure in ASGM</i></p> <p>Dr. Maria Neira, Director, Department of Public Health and Environment, World Health Organization, addressing public health strategies and ASGM</p>	
14.00 – 14:25	Questions & answers <p>The Q&A session will explore the responses and commitment of countries towards the mercury in ASGM and prevent its adverse effect to women’s health and children as well as the population in general including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Applying the lessons of Minamata disease 50 years ago to the next 50 years Impacts of ASGM and mercury on women, reproductive health, intergenerational justice and women's 2. role in development. 3. International community cooperation, monitoring and preventive measures 	
14:30	Closing	

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