

IPEN INC6 Priority Action: ASGM (Article 7)

Thank you Mr Chair

I am speaking on the behalf of IPEN – a network of over 700 organizations in 160 countries with the objective of creating a toxics free future. We regard ASGM as a priority issue.

We have the view that the ASGM NAP document developed by the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership is quite long for a guidance document and needs to be simplified and then circulated to delegates from countries who may have significant ASGM activities for further comments, as it will be directly relevant to them during the implementation phase of the Convention. In this sense broad consultation on the development of the NAP guidance needs to be extended beyond the current scope of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership.

It is also important to highlight that the overall use of mercury in ASGM needs to be significantly reduced as the non-mercury alternative methods are already available in the market and the NAP should reflect this.

We would also emphasize the important role of mercury trade and mercury trade controls in ASGM. Specifically the need for greater coordination among customs organizations at national and global level as well as the key role that import/export notifications under the Minamata Convention can play in this work.

The clean up of ASGM related contaminated sites should not be the sole responsibility of small scale miners but requires national level intervention especially in complex, multiple impacted sites and that should be reflected in a country's NAP.

Finally the health aspect of mercury use in ASGM is a most serious issue that remains to be addressed because of its potential for intergenerational impact as we have seen in the tragic case of Minamata Disease. Countries with ASGM must ensure health strategies are fully integrated into the NAP in coordination with other sectors such as the WHO guidance to develop public health strategies for effective implementation.