

# IOMC



INTER-ORGANIZATION PROGRAMME FOR THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS

A cooperative agreement among FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, UNITAR, WHO, World Bank and OECD

## Protecting People and the Environment in Artisanal and Small Scale Gold Mining (ASGM)

### IOMC Assistance to Governments and Communities



With the new Minamata Convention on Mercury, the IOMC organizations have increased their efforts to help countries address the health and environmental problems associated with ASGM, where primitive and dangerous methods can result in high exposures to mercury and other toxic chemicals.

Together, the IOMC organizations are:

- helping countries conduct a Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA) of mercury emissions and develop a National Action Plan (NAP) for ASGM
- introducing safer ASGM mining and processing technology and practice
- introducing less-toxic alternatives to mercury amalgamation in the gold extraction process
- raising awareness and helping communities to improve mining conditions and miner health
- initiating training in mining communities and among health workers
- developing tools for gathering and reporting ASGM-related poisonings and incidents and for assessing health systems' readiness to respond
- carrying out programmes to help countries remove children from mining and get them into schools and local youth clubs

**The International Labour Office** is focusing on child labour in ASGM, in keeping with its 2005 Call to Action to stop child labour in mining and its application on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) Convention and the ILO-EU programme on the elimination of child labour. In collaboration with worker and employer organizations, ILO is working to change attitudes, mobilize communities, train and equip institutions, create jobs, improve livelihoods, and initiate youth programmes in ASGM communities.

**The United Nations Development Programme** is working on ASGM under its broader mission to help countries meet their obligations under chemicals-related MEAs as well as to reduce the risks and realize the benefits of resource extraction. Building on the MIAs and NAPs, UNDP will help countries reduce the use of mercury by introducing better technologies and practices and by addressing socio-economic issues in ASGM communities, creating economic incentives, providing policy and regulatory support, and building capacity to sustain mercury reduction in the long term.

**The United Nations Environment Programme** will be serving as the Interim Secretariat for the Minamata Convention as well as for the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership, which helps governments set national objectives and targets for ASGM, works to eliminate the worst ASGM practices, and is exploring innovative market-based approaches to enable the transition away from mercury. For the Minamata Convention, UNEP will be assessing worldwide mercury emissions due to human activity and helping countries to identify and quantify mercury releases.

**The United Nations Industrial Development Organization** is working in countries to promote technological solutions and improved practices that significantly reduce mercury emissions and exposure in industrial processes and applications. In addition, UNIDO is the co-lead of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership Area on ASGM. In this programme, UNIDO is designing and introducing mercury-free gold extraction techniques, training local trainers, carrying out awareness campaigns, and introducing Fairtrade&Fairmined standards to facilitate market access.

**The United Nations Institute for Training and Research** is helping countries to ratify the Minamata Convention and identify early action for implementation. UNITAR will also be working with other IOMC organizations to assist countries with their national mercury management profiles and mercury inventories. In support of these activities, UNITAR hosts Mercury:Learn, a knowledge-sharing platform developed in collaboration with UNEP.

**The World Health Organization** is helping countries develop public health strategies on ASGM that can be incorporated into wider NAPs. Support is being provided for gathering needed health data and for implementing measures such as health worker training, awareness raising, and strengthening of poison centres and incident response. WHO is developing technical guidance, tools, and case examples to support country activities and to harmonize health activities related to ASGM among countries.

**The World Bank** is providing technical assistance aimed at reforming the mining sector, notably by helping countries to set up a framework for investment as well as mechanisms to improve the livelihoods of ASM miners, strengthen governance and transparency, strengthen the capacity of the mining ministry, improve environmental management and cadastral information, and stimulate investment by strengthening geological information.

**The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development** is working to create trade opportunities for ASGM communities in conflict-affected and high-risk areas, as a way to support their economic development and contribute to the restoration of peace and elimination of human rights abuses. To this end the OECD promotes knowledge sharing, good mining practice and elimination of child labour in ASM, and works with industry to foster international market acceptance of responsible ASGM production.