



## Health sector roles in the Minamata Convention on mercury

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### Artisanal and small scale gold mining: health impacts and public health strategy

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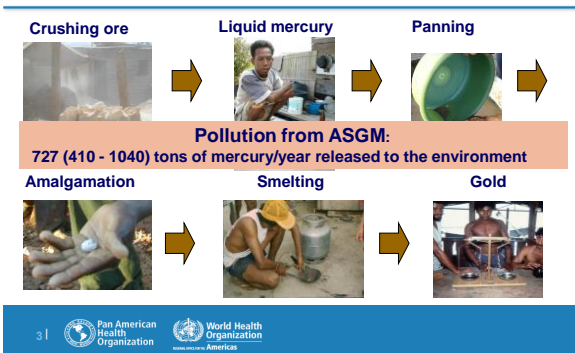


## Overview

- Health hazards in ASGM
- Mercury exposures
- Public health strategy guidelines



## Mercury exposures in ASGM



## Environmental impacts

- Release of waste materials from extraction process
  - Impacts on quality of air, water and soil
- Magnitude of land use changes
  - impacts on local ecosystems
  - water resources
  - biodiversity
  - availability (and utility) of land for agriculture



## Metallic mercury health effects

- Metallic mercury - Hg<sup>0</sup>
  - Inhalation
  - Central Nervous System - Tremor, nausea, irritability (had matter), skin & eye effects, gingivites
- Inorganic mercury - Hg<sup>++</sup>
  - Kidneys functions

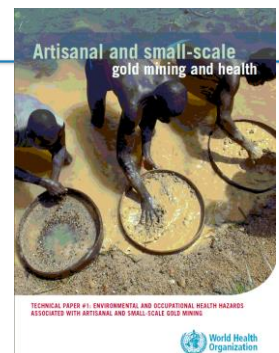


## HEALTH HAZARDS

- Chemicals
- Biological
- Biomechanical
- Physical
- Others

Men, women and children

Capacity building health personal





## WHO guidance and technical materials (ASGM)

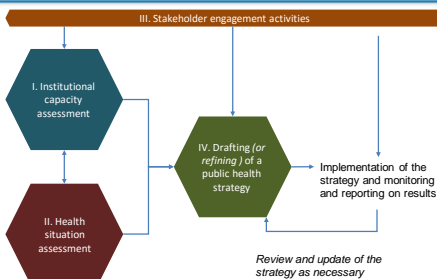
- Requirements under Article 7 and Annex C of the Convention
  - Item (h) - development of a public health strategy on the exposure of ASGM miners and their communities to mercury as an integral part of the National Action Plan
  - This is to include *inter-alia*:
    - Gathering of health data
    - Training of health care providers
    - Awareness raising through health facilities

- Initial elements of WHO toolkit on ASGM and health:**
- Guidance on developing a public health strategy
  - Conducting a health situation assessment
  - Training materials for health care providers

## WHO Guidance Public Health Strategy on ASGM<sup>1</sup>

- Developing a public health strategy on ASGM<sup>2</sup>;
- Training of health providers<sup>3</sup>;
- Human biomonitoring on ASGM related context
- Health hazards associated with ASGM<sup>4</sup>.

## Model process and inputs



## Required Health Sector Actions

Core competencies of health care providers at local level, i.e. where mercury exposure is taking place;

Access to appropriate interventions to reduce/prevent and support mercury poisoning symptoms;

Adequate information systems (to support clinical and laboratory data);

Global good practice standards/references.



## Public Health Strategy Guidance for National Action Plans on ASGM

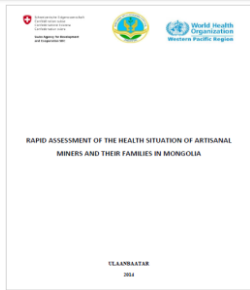
- Focuses on the process (steps and inputs involved) and provides suggestions on areas for intervention
- Aims to provide guidance to support the development of Public Health Strategies, in the context of the Convention
- Adjustments on the Public Health Strategy Guidance to the National Action Plans being developed through the Global Mercury Partnership group on ASGM

## Recommended intervention areas strengthening health systems

- Training of health care providers
  - Occupational health and safety;
  - Identification and management of poisoning;
  - Environmental health in ASGM;
  - Health promotion in ASGM communities
  - Inter-sectoral engagement;
  - Responding to needs of special groups, e.g. children, pregnant women, others.
- Strengthening of core functions and systems
  - Access to Public Health units;
  - Laboratory resources;
  - Toxicology and poison control centre capabilities;
  - Emergency preparedness, prevention and response, in the context of the International Health Regulation;
- Setting reduction target with monitoring, information technology and reporting.

### Health assessment among ASGM communities

- Intended to inform design and selection of themes to be included in the public health strategy
- Focused on:
  - Identification of main health issues
  - Health-seeking behaviour
  - Health systems readiness to address ASGM-related health issues



### Collaborative efforts

- Development health documents compatible with those under work by the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership with the Natural Resources Defence Council;
- Collaboration with major NGOs working in related areas, such as Health Care Without Harm and Artisanal Gold Council;
- Implementing partners with UNDP, UNEP and UNIDO on several GEF funded projects;
- Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), including sub-group on ASGM and Minamata Initial Assessments.

### Resources on WHO website

[http://www.who.int/ipcs/assessment/public\\_health/mercury/en/](http://www.who.int/ipcs/assessment/public_health/mercury/en/)

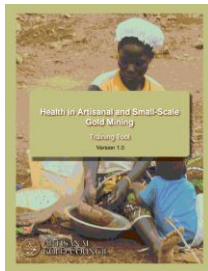
- Short information documents
- Tools for action
- Norms & guidance
- Educational & Training
- Burden of disease estimates
- Fact sheets & QA



### PAHO/WHO training resources



### Artisanal Gold Council, Canada



**Évaluation objective (Health in ASM)**  
 L'objectif principal de l'évaluation objective est de fournir des données factuelles et objectives sur la situation de santé des travailleurs et des communautés locales des mines artisanales et à petite échelle.  
 L'évaluation objective est un processus qui vise à identifier les problèmes de santé les plus importants et à évaluer les besoins en matière de services de santé.  
 Les données collectées sont utilisées pour élaborer des stratégies de santé et de sécurité au travail adaptées aux besoins des mines artisanales et à petite échelle.



### Thanks for your attention boischoia@paho.org

