A close-up photograph showing a person's hands over a metal pan filled with water and sediment. The person is holding a small, irregular piece of gold in their palm. The background is slightly blurred, showing a brown shoe and some dry leaves on the ground.

National Action Plans for Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining (ASGM)

Susan Keane, Senior Direct, Natural Resources Defense Council

Co-lead, Global Mercury Partnership ASGM Area

PAHO Webinar: WHO Guidance Document on the Development of Public Health Strategies in the Context of the Minamata Convention

October 21, 2021

ARTISANAL AND SMALL-SCALE GOLD MINING



Produces up to **20% of world's gold**



Employs **15 million people** typically in remote **rural areas**



Involves **4 to 5 million women and children**



Takes place in **70 countries** and often in areas where there is **limited economic opportunity**



Releases **35% of all mercury** pollution to the environment



Is often considered as **informal sector**



Mercury in ASGM

Where and why?

WHY IS MERCURY USED IN ARTISANAL AND SMALL-SCALE GOLD MINING ?



Amalgamation is **cheap, fast
and easy** to put in place



Widely available



**Little or no awareness
of the risks of mercury**



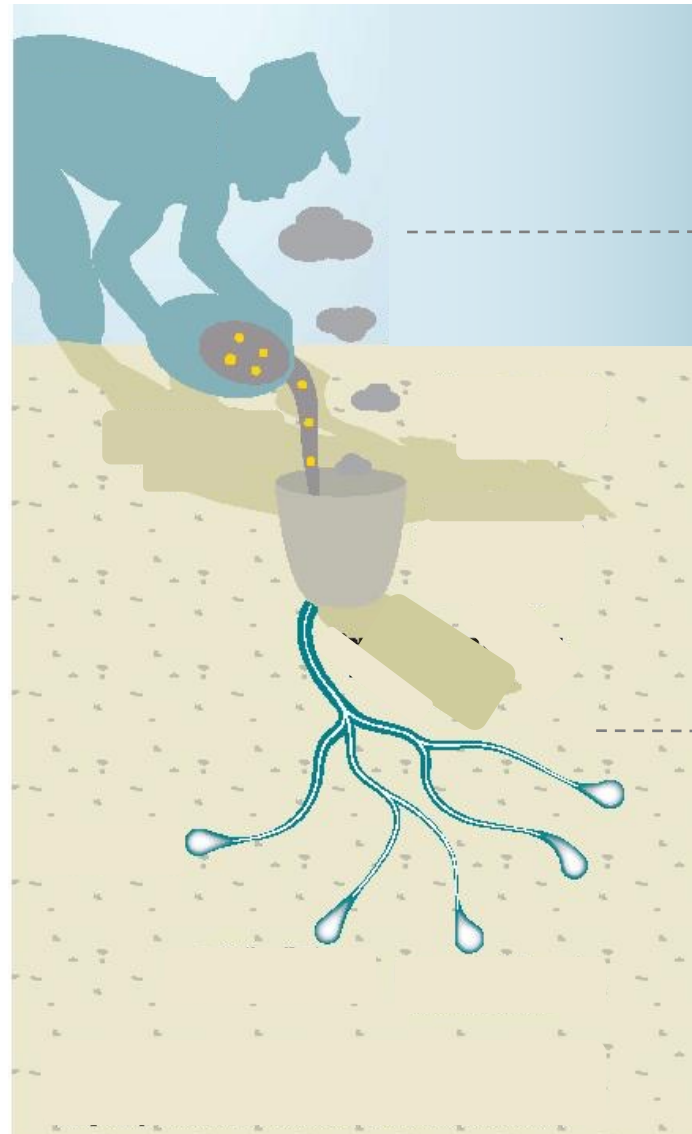
**Gold traders supply mercury
to the miners – miners then sell
the gold back to the traders**



No formal training

Mercury in ASGM

Environmental and
Health Impacts



**Mercury emissions
to the atmosphere**
*Direct consequences
for the miners*

**Releases of mercury
to soil and
groundwater**
*Contamination of
soil, water and food
chain with mercury*

Article 7

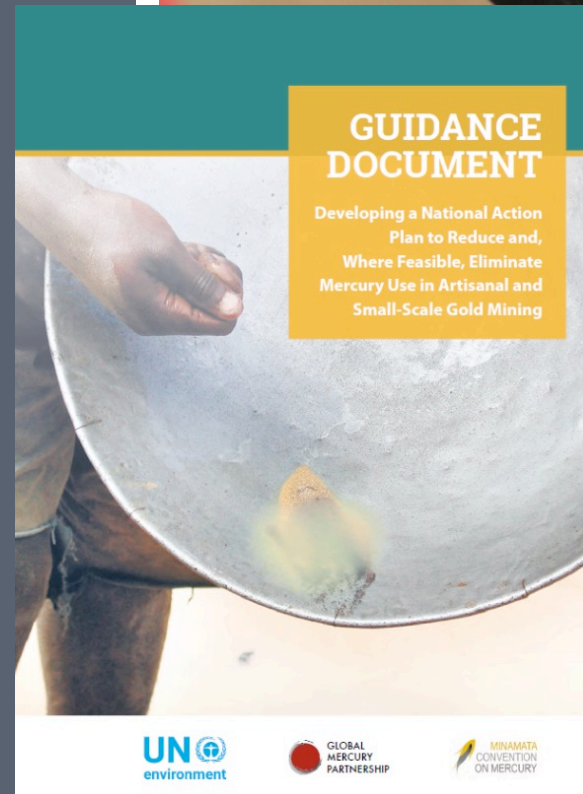
Under the Minamata Convention, ASGM countries “shall take steps to reduce, and where feasible eliminate, mercury” in ASGM



NAP

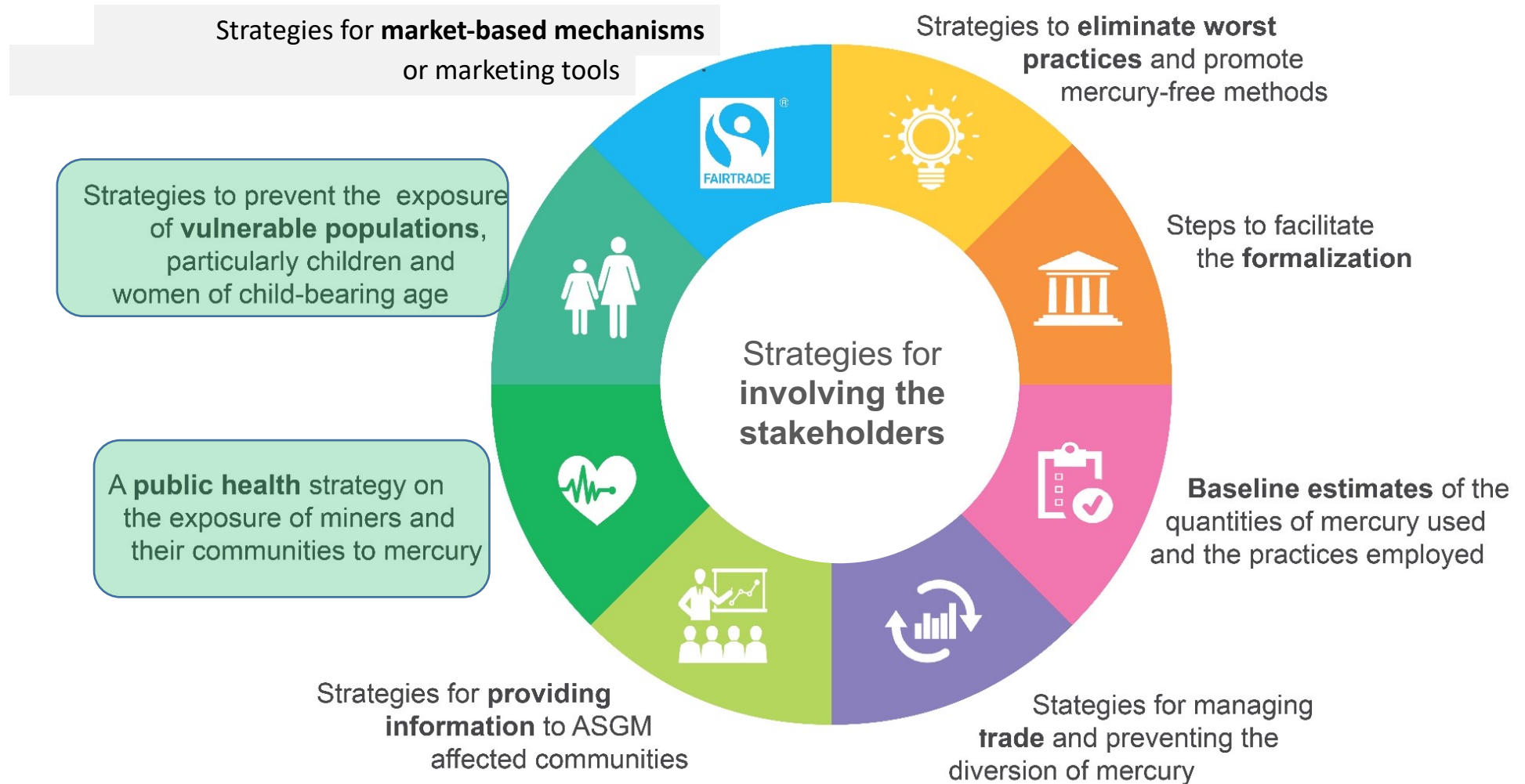
National Action Plan

Development of NAP is an obligation for each country that determines that ASGM in its territory is “more than insignificant”



NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

Strategic Content according to Annex C



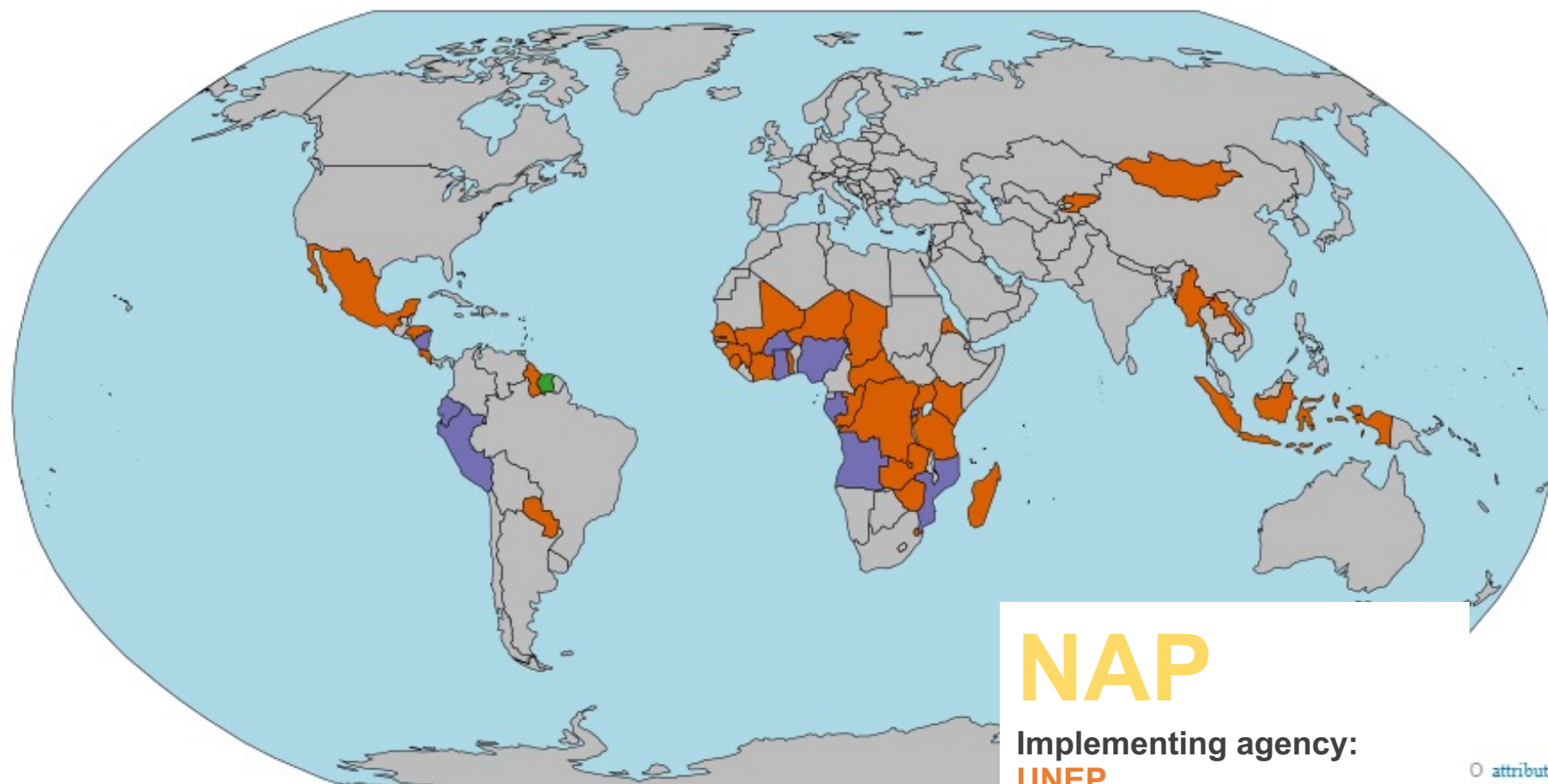
Annex C: Public Health Strategy for ASGM

- Public Health Strategy to include:
 - Gathering of health data
 - Training of health care providers
 - Awareness raising through health facilities
- Related requirement: prevent exposure of vulnerable populations
 - Women of child-bearing age, especially pregnant women
 - Children (as part of PH strategy, or other policy tools – eg, child labor laws)

Minamata National Action Plans

Global overview

41 countries have started developing their NAP for ASGM



NAP

Implementing agency:

UNEP

UNIDO

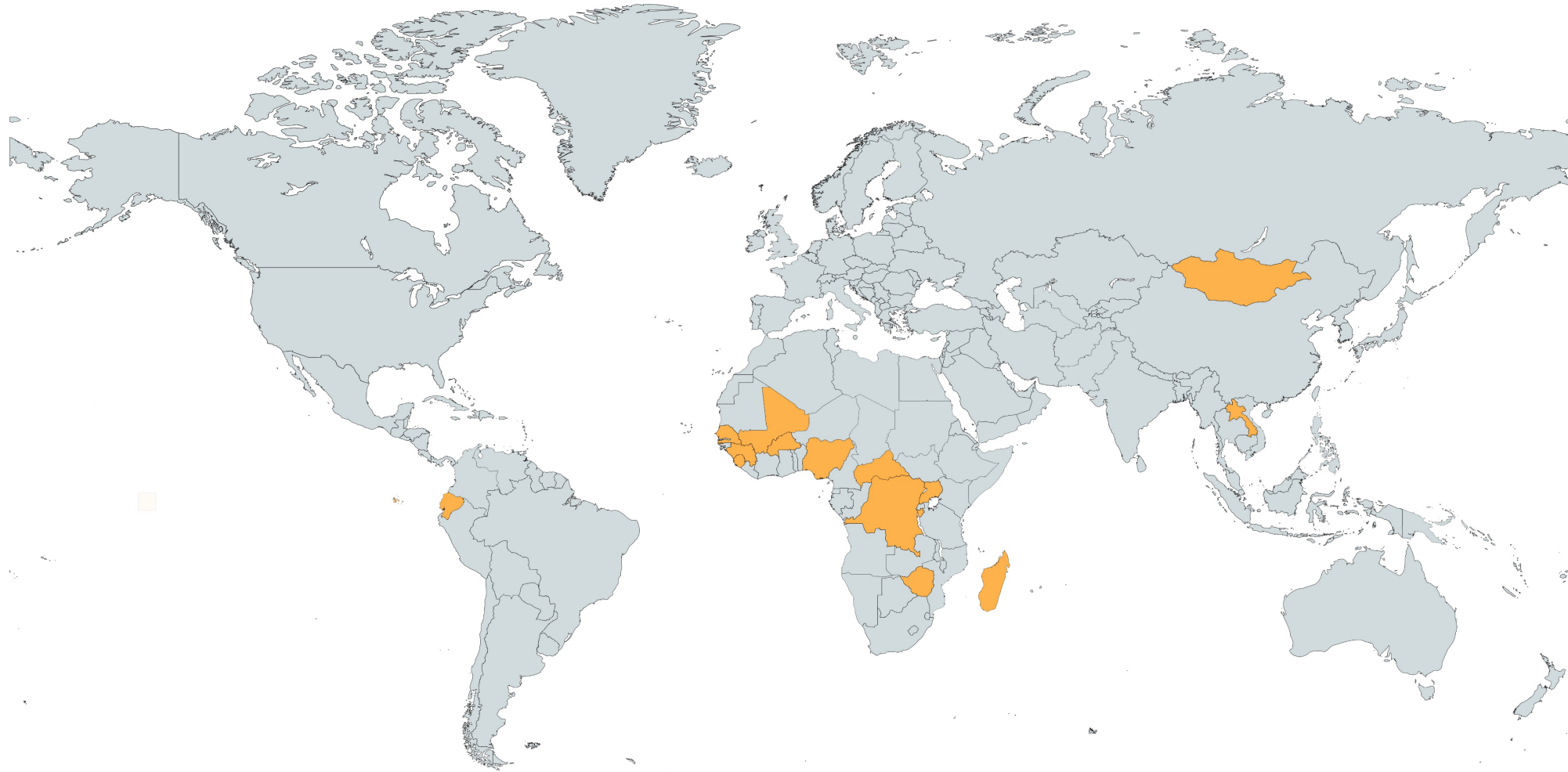
UNDP

attribution, © CARTO

Minamata National Action Plans

Submitted
NAPs

16 countries submitted their NAP to the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention



Available Resources

Dedicated site for NAP guidance:

<https://www.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/our-work/artisanal-and-small-scale-gold-mining-asgm/national-action-plans>

Resources on Health and ASGM on the planetGOLD Knowledge Repository:

<https://www.planetgold.org/curated-collections>



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GLOBAL
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PARTNERSHIP

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