



Photo Credit: Larry C. Price/Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, 2013

**HIGH-LEVEL SIDE EVENT**  
*at the Conference of Plenipotentiaries  
 on The Minamata Convention on Mercury*

## “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 lessons learned from Minamata, protecting women’s health from mercury exposure, best practices to reduce exposure to mercury in ASGM workers and communities, awareness raising and regulatory measures governments can support, and the ways in which a successful and meaningful mercury treaty will reduce mercury exposure to women, children and future generations.

The side-event is co-hosted by the Ministry of Mines of Ethiopia, the Ministry of Health of Indonesia and will be chaired by the Co-chair of the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment, H.E. Rejoice Mabudafhasi, Ministry of Water and Environmental Affairs of South Africa, co-organized with WECF International, IPEN, the Women’s Major Group at UNEP, and with the support of Danish Ministry of the Environment and the government of Switzerland.

**Venue: Room HIGO AB,  
 Hotel Nikko, Kumamoto**

**Thursday, 10 October  
 2013, 13:00 - 14:30,  
 Kumamoto, Japan**

**ORGANIZED BY:**



**WECF** | Women in Europe for a Common Future  
 Women International for a Common Future | **WICF**



**CO-HOSTED WITH:**

Ministry of Mines of Ethiopia  
 Ministry of Health of Indonesia

**Organized in cooperation with the Co-Chair of:**

The Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment, Minister for Water and Environmental Affairs, South Africa



**WE ARE THANKFUL FOR THE SUPPORT OF:**



Danish Ministry of the Environment



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
 Confédération suisse  
 Confederazione Svizzera  
 Confederaziun svizra

# Program: Women and Mercury in ASGM

12:30 – 13:15	<p>Registration &amp; Lunch</p> <p>A light lunch will be served for participants (outside of the room)</p>	
13:15 – 13:25	<p>Opening of the event by the organiser</p> <p>Welcome speech</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">Photo Credit: Larry C. Price/Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, 2013</p> <p><b>H.E. Rejoice Mabudafhasi</b>, 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><b>H.E.</b> (from co-hosting ministry, tbc) - <i>Welcome and country perspective</i></p>	
13:25 – 13:45	<p>Introduction and keynote speaker</p> <p><b>Yuyun Ismawati</b>; IPEN lead for ASGM, Goldman Environmental Prize Awardee: <i>Why we need to make it a priority to reduce women's exposure to mercury in ASGM communities worldwide</i></p> <p><b>Prof. Dr. Med. Toshihide Tsuda</b>, Okayama University, leading epidemiologist and co-author of "Minamata disease: a challenge for democracy and justice" with Takashi Yorifuji and Masazumi Harada: <i>Lessons learned from Minamata disease and reflection to mercury exposure in ASGM</i></p>	
13:45 – 14:15	<p>Panel session</p> <p><b>H.E. Sinkinesh Ejigu</b>, Minister of Mines, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, addressing the gender policy in ASGM and policy on ASGM formalization in Ethiopia</p> <p><b>H.E. Dr. Nafsiah Mboy</b>, Minister of Health, Indonesia, addressing lessons from the impact on women and children of mercury exposures in ASGM sites in Indonesia and the national strategy</p> <p><b>Dr. Maria Neira</b>, Director, Department of Public Health and Environment, World Health Organization, addressing public health strategies and ASGM</p>	
14.15 – 14:25	<p>Moderated dialogue</p> <p><b>Open dialogue with representatives of member states and other participants</b> (Denmark, Colombia, tbc) - moderated by <b>Sascha Gabizon</b>, Executive Director, WECF/WICF</p> <p><b>The Q&amp;A session will</b> 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"> <li>1. Applying the lessons of Minamata disease 50 years ago to the next 50 years</li> <li>2. Impacts of ASGM and mercury on women, reproductive health, intergenerational justice and women's role in development.</li> <li>3. International community cooperation, monitoring and preventive measures</li> </ol>	
14:30	<p>Closing by the chairs</p>	

## Contacts:

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