

**Switzerland – UNIDO side event
at the second conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on mercury,
Geneva November 2018**

Title:

**Phasing out mercury from the global market
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Benefits of regional and comprehensive approaches**

Objective of the event

- Present the outcomes of two UNIDO projects funded by Switzerland, one in the ASGM the other Waste management sector
- Present the existing support material for environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes including mercury waste which were developed under Basel Convention.
- With these projects results and the presentation of the BRS Secretariat the benefits of a regional and comprehensive approach in the Implementation of the Minamata Convention will be showcased.

Programme

Topic	Speaker
Introduction	Stephan Sicars (UNIDO) and Franz Perrez (Switzerland)
UNIDO, Switzerland and Mercury / hazardous chemicals management	Smail Alhilali UNIDO
ECOWAS study on Hg and gold flows and regulations	Marcena Hunter Global Initiative
Results of the Expert Group Meeting on mercury waste management in Vienna, September 2018	Gabi Eigenmann UNIDO
Initiatives, tools, manuals, and practical guidance relevant for the mercury waste management developed under the Basel Convention	Susan Wingfield BRS Secretariat (tbc)
Conclusions	

Some more information

This side event aims to present benefits of regional and comprehensive approaches in the implementation of the Minamata Convention. This will be showcased by the outcome of two projects funded by the Government of Switzerland, one in the ASGM sector (a) and one in the area of waste management (b). In addition an overview will be given on the existing tools, manuals and other practical support material on sustainable management of hazardous wastes developed under the Basel Convention.

a) Curbing Illicit Mercury and Gold Flows in West Africa: Options for a Regional Approach

As one of the world's most gold-rich territories, ASGM is conducted in nearly every ECOWAS Member State and gold is a major regional export. Mercury plays a key role in the sector, used by the majority of the region's estimated 2-3 million miners to extract gold from ore. Most, if not all, mercury is imported into the ECOWAS region. Perpetuating the use and spread of mercury are informal and illicit gold flows. Often mercury is supplied to upstream partners as a way of securing

gold flows. As such, efforts to reduce mercury use and trade in West Africa require not only an understanding of mercury flows and trade regulations, but also those related to ASGM gold production.

On the request of the countries from the ECOWAS region UNIDO commissioned the Global Initiative to conduct a study on the mercury and gold flows in the region was conducted.

The results of the study clearly confirm the regions assumption, that due to the region's porous borders, which facilitate the movement of people and goods, only a regional coordination in gold and mercury trade will transform the ASGM sector in more sustainable mining sector. The study further concludes that to curb mercury use in the ECOWAS region, meeting the relevant Minamata Convention obligations, greater cooperation and harmonization of regulatory frameworks and coordination between relevant government bodies is necessary, both at the regional and domestic levels.

At the side event the main outcome of the study will be presented including the recommendations that build the bases for the follow up UNIDO project with the ECOWAS region.

b) International Expert Group Meeting on mercury waste management, 10-11 September 2018

In September 2018 UNIDO organized with support from the Government of Switzerland and Japan an International Expert Group Meeting on mercury waste management. The meeting was arranged in cooperation with Nomura Kohsan and the Minamata Convention Secretariat.

The Meeting brought together more than 75 participants from the private sector, Member States, international organizations, academia and the general public to discuss the management of mercury waste. The meeting covered three key topics: interim disposal, mercury waste treatment and final disposal. The discussions had three aims: to present the current status of mercury waste management; to facilitate an exchange of knowledge and technology transfer between stakeholders; and to begin to build a roadmap for an integrated approach to mercury waste management.

The experts achieved a clear conclusion that a regional but as well a comprehensive approach for hazardous waste management would be the most efficient and effective way forward.

Other outcomes of these deliberations in Vienna will be presented at the side event.