LOCAL INSIGHTS INTO THE INFORMAL GLOBAL MERCURY TRADE

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A just world that values and conserves nature.
MERCURY & ASGM

Figure 3.4 Proportions of global emissions of Hg to air from different anthropogenic source sectors in 2015.
Official data vs reality

1. Import/Export discrepancies
2. Discrepancies of data and on ground realities
3. Most data on ASGM and mercury based on estimates
East Africa: Tanzania, Uganda & Kenya

Guyana & Suriname
Bolivia

Burkina Faso

Philippines

East Africa: Tanzania, Uganda & Kenya
KEY OBJECTIVES

1. understanding Hg flows, trade hubs & key players

2. enhancing governance of Hg in ASGM

3. showcasing that it’s a global issue

Photo credit Bram Ebus
East Africa

- Most imports into Kenya (for industrial use) -> informally diverted to ASGM
- Cross-border trade common and easy
- Trade flows depend on supply, demand and price
- Cartel-like structures that operate in secrecy
- Mercury trade is lucrative
- Gold traders are controlling mercury trade
Philippines

- Only very small amounts of formally imported mercury
- Strong link between gold & mercury trade
- Miners often have no choice but to keep using mercury
KEY FINDINGS

- Factors hindering understanding:
  - Little hard data on ASGM (informality of the sector)
  - Large discrepancies in reporting of mercury imports & exports
  - Informality of trade (cartel-like structures)

- Factors contributing to Hg use
  - “Tradition”
  - Poverty
  - Market & Supply chain mechanisms -> gold/mercury trade

- Driving force are not miners but actors higher in the supply chain
- Governance issues
How to tackle the problem?

• formalize the ASGM sector
• increase enforcement, strengthen border controls & train custom officials
• clarify laws and regulations & create a licensing and monitoring scheme for domestic mercury trade
• create appropriate, environmentally sound interim storage facilities for confiscated mercury
• increase collaboration between regional, national and international agencies

• strengthen linkages with formal gold and mercury markets
• improve economic opportunities for miners
• support the transition to mercury-free technologies with institutionalized, long-term support
Global mercury report available in English, Spanish and French

Additionally:
In depth country/regional reports for all focus countries

Online platform on mercury trade in Guiana Shield:
https://mercurio.infoamazonia.org/en/

www.iucn.nl/mercury