Health issues in Artisanal and Small-Scale gold mining

UNIDO's journey and position
Health issues – the basis for early interventions

1994 – UNIDO 1st ASGM project (Tanzania)
• Focused on technology transfer.
• Project concluded that more needed to be done to raise awareness on the health effects of mercury use

1998 – UNIDO 2nd ASGM project in the Philippines
• Specifically developed to assess health and environment contamination

2002 – UNIDO 3rd ASGM project in Ghana
• Assess mercury contamination and introduce technologies
Health issues – Results in Ghana

- Water is not contaminated but sediments are.
- In all fish sample, the mercury content is higher than the WHO toxicity standards.
- Other food tested (plantain, cassava, chicken) not containing much Hg.
- The whole mining community is affected by mercury intoxication.
- 50% of miners and 25% of non-miners are considered as heavily intoxicated.
Health issues – a main part of the UNIDO - GMP

- One of the project’s 7 components
- 20% of the total budget allocation
- Baseline information collected in 8 project sites
- Production of guidelines for Health and Environmental Assessments
Health issues – a reason for the Minamata Convention?

- Health (and environmental) effects of mercury were the basis for the development of the Convention.
- However, until INC5, there was no specific article on health.
- UNIDO GEF-V projects on ASGM (3 approved) all contain health components:
  - Awareness raising campaign for Francophone Africa (with AGC)
  - Baseline information in Ecuador-Peru
  - Monitoring together with the Department of Health of the Philippines
Health issues – The way forward

Collaboration with WHO key to successful intervention on health
Pipeline project in Indonesia
- Finalisation of the National Action Plan (UNIDO – Balifokus)
- Awareness raising campaigns and trainings on mercury risks (WHO) and better techniques (UNIDO)
- Promotion and replication of mercury-free gold extraction techniques (UNIDO - Balifokus)
- Establishment of a mercury intoxication baseline (WHO)
- Establishment of a mercury programme in the Ministry of Health (WHO)
Thank you for your attention