

ZMWG Awareness Raising, Information Collection and Scientific Information Exchange intervention, 10 June 2010

Thank you Mr. Chair

We would like to address awareness raising, information collection, and scientific information exchange.

Awareness Raising

Public awareness is essential for all stakeholders, particularly so for vulnerable communities such as women, children, Indigenous Peoples, consumers of fish, occupationally exposed workers and the least educated. For this purpose a global monitoring network of fish and marine mammal is required not only to understand the extent and spread of the problem but also to provide advice to populations regarding the consumption of aquatic food sources and for monitoring treaty effectiveness. Outreach and education is required for the consumers and users of products and their effects on the environment and human health.

Chair, we would also like to emphasize Awareness Raising in ASGM communities

The toxic effects of mercury are not well understood by ASGM communities. Even when general information is provided, mining communities often remain skeptical. This is due, in part, to the absence of direct evidence of exposure. These communities would greatly benefit from local measurement of atmospheric mercury that could be used as the basis of a public awareness tool. Knowledge of their exposure levels will encourage ASGM communities to move away from mercury use voluntarily, however this will have to be supported by social capacity development programmes. Further, monitoring will provide a basis to identify successful interventions in these communities.

Information Collection in ASGM

Additional research on alternative technologies for ASGM is needed to accelerate the creation, availability, and adoption of accessible, alternative non-mercury approaches. Although there are currently some alternatives to mercury use in ASGM, there are opportunities and a need to innovate more alternatives and improvements through research. Given the tools, mining communities are great innovators, and so much of this innovation can be achieved locally in collaboration with mining communities and their governments through financial support and technical assistance.

Finally, Scientific Information Exchange

It is essential that the information gained through these programs are collected, documented, reported and most importantly shared. We recommend the development of a clearing house for information to facilitate the sharing amongst all nations.

Thank you Mr. Chair