The REALITY of Mercury Management

Mercury is a chemical of global concern owing to its long-range atmospheric transport, its persistence in the environment once anthropogenically introduced, its ability to bioaccumulate in ecosystems and its significant negative effects on human health and the environment.

**Mercury** is considered by WHO as one of the top TEN chemicals or groups of chemicals of major public health concern.¹

35% of mercury releases result from gold mining.²

Mercury is most harmful to the development of the child in utero and early in life.¹

The consumption of fish containing high levels of mercury, in particular those high on the food chain as mercury bioaccumulates, can have serious health consequences.

As of March 2001, 2,265 victims had been officially recognised as having Minamata disease (1,784 of whom had died)³ and over 10,000 received financial compensation⁴ because of their potential exposure to mercury.

Mercury releases from products and waste streams.

Phasing-out the use of non-essential mercury-containing products for which cost-effective alternatives exist is the most effective way to reduce releases from products and waste streams.

Among selected subsistence fishing populations, out of 1,000 children, between 1.5 and 17 showed cognitive impacts caused by the consumption of fish containing mercury.⁵

Power generation is responsible for the emission of 475 tonnes of mercury each year (24% of total emissions).²