



**a toxics-free future**

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## **International SAICM Implementation Project (ISIP)**

In 2010, in an effort to demonstrate SAICM implementation via IPEN Participating Organizations, IPEN launched an International SAICM Implementation Project, also known as ISIP. ISIP aims to mobilize resources for initial enabling activities pertaining to national priorities, in keeping with the work areas set out in the strategic objectives of section IV of the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy.

In particular, the ISIP supports the Governance objective of SAICM's Overarching Policy Strategy paragraph 26, which calls for enhanced "cooperation on the sound management of chemicals between Governments, the private sector and civil society at the national, regional and global levels."

In addition, ISIP builds on the 2008-2009 Global SAICM Outreach Campaign to raise awareness about SAICM and strengthen collaboration among the public interest, health and labor sectors.

### **ISIP Objectives**

ISIP's four objectives include:

- Promoting the need for sound chemicals management
- Advancing National SAICM Implementation
- Promoting global SAICM implementation by global civil society
- Building capacity among NGOs developing countries and countries with economies in transition

**Title of activity:** "Be conscious of mercury effects"

**NGO:** Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement Côte d'Ivoire

**Country:** Côte d'Ivoire

**Date:** 14 November, 2010

### **Elements of SAICM Covered:**

Promote reduction of the risks posed to human health and the environment (57); Help develop comprehensive national profiles or country situation reports about mercury (1, 166); Programs to monitor mercury to assess exposure (66, 82); Promote the development and use of products and processes that pose lesser risks (44); Take immediate action to reduce the risk to human health and the environment posed on a global scale by mercury in products and production processes (59); Participation in activities related to the negotiation of a legally binding instrument on mercury

### **Description of mercury that is available in the market:**

The most common forms of mercury available to the public are: medical goods (thermometers, mercury sphygmomanometers), dental amalgams, artisanal gold mining, cosmetics, e-wastes (TVs, computers, etc...), and waters.

#### **Description of the most common forms of mercury exposure:**

The most common forms of mercury exposure in the country are:

- Using of medical goods containing mercury
- Having dental fillings with mercury
- Consuming contaminated foods and water
- Living in areas where e-wastes are burnt
- Working on e-wastes machines
- Using cosmetics containing mercury

#### **Description of human sources of mercury:**

In our country, human activities that release mercury into the environment are mining effluents, the burning of e-wastes and medical wastes, and the use of cosmetics containing mercury.

#### **Description of the levels of mercury release and exposure:**

At the national level, there is no data or information available. UNIDO commended a study three years ago about artisanal gold mining in the north of our country to evaluate the level of mercury exposition in this region. But due to political situation, funds have not been given to continue this study.

#### **Description of the damage caused by mercury:**

Mercury threats that are reported are its implication in Alzheimer disease, its implication in some cancers (liver, kidney, blood, skin or brain).

Mercury has caused damage to the public especially by the increasing number of people suffering from Alzheimer due to dental amalgam, the increasing number of people suffering from skin problems by using cosmetics containing mercury, and the death of artisanal gold miners due to liver or kidney cancers.

Groups that are particularly vulnerable to mercury exposure are children and pregnant women having dental problems where mercury fillings will be used, people working in artisanal gold mines, people living near the places where wastes are dumped and burnt, and people using lightning products containing mercury.

#### **Description of the laws currently regulating mercury:**

Until now, there are no laws limiting or banning the use of mercury in specific practices and/or products in our country. One text has been written this year to regulate hazardous chemicals but it has not been introduced in the parliament. We are all waiting for the normalization of the political situation to have a regulating instrument for mercury and others hazardous chemicals.

#### **Description of the efforts to deal with mercury:**

To reduce mercury exposure, the government has forbidden the use of mercury in industrial gold mining. Apart from that, nothing had been done to reduce mercury exposure.

#### **Description of what forces support and oppose the Mercury Treaty, the public participation consultation process, and the level of public awareness of the treaty process:**

Apart from the public that have been made aware of the treaty by our NGO, and a few others composed of students in chemistry, medicine, and dental care who have information about mercury, the whole population has no information about mercury. Thus, after our awareness campaign, all the population is favorable to this treaty and wants it to ban mercury in medical care and cosmetics and limit its use in products where it cannot be substituted.

## **Project Outcome:**

### **Description of the activity conducted:**

The activity conducted took place in three phases:

Firstly, we met with our target population to discuss with them the objectives of the project and the means used for its realization. Thus, we met with the authorities of the Environment Ministry, dentists, chemists, medical doctors, miners, paints and cosmetics workers, electronic and IT workers, and students in medical sciences, environmental sciences, chemistry, and natural sciences. Due to the fact that the sensitization will be done with young people, we encountered the leaders of youth associations, especially, leaders of our National Boy Scout Association (ASCCI).

Secondly, we organized a training course for people who are in contact with mercury in their jobs. This training took place the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2010 at the African Management Center located in the University of Abidjan – Cocody. We debated about 7 topics during this training, especially, those dealing with the sources of mercury contamination in Côte d'Ivoire, the effects of mercury on health, ecological management of mercury wastes, methods of mercury substitution in process and products, and creation of a network of mercury elimination. We also undertook three exercises to resume all the topics debated and have a strong understanding of mercury effects.

Thirdly, we had sensitization campaign in seven towns: Maféré – Aboisso, Lopou – Dabou, Issia, Daloa, Adiaké, Jacqueville and Abidjan. The sensitization campaign took place from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2010. During this activity, we had in our program discussions with the population about mercury, film projection, leaflets distribution, a quiz on mercury contamination sources and effects on human body, tee shirts distribution and others gadgets made to inform the population. This campaign permitted us to educate children, young people and adults about mercury effects on health and the environment.

Fourthly, we organized a press conference at conference hall of the Ministry of Environment in order to give the results of the awareness campaign on mercury organized in the country. It was held the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2010, in the presence of our National SAICM Focal Points, the governmental one: Mr. DAKOURY Zadi Raphaël and the NGO one, BIBI Samuel. Also present were participants from NGOs of environment preservation, medical workers, public and private press, factories workers, miners, students, youth association leaders, etc...

### **Impact on target groups:**

All targets groups engaged in this project participated in all activities from the training to the press conference. After the training, all target groups spread information received in their own activity field. Thus, we can estimate that more than 10 000 people received direct information about mercury from target groups. We are still in contact and exchanging information with them.

### **Impact on target policies:**

The target policy used for the project was the creation of several groups which would receive information about mercury. After they had been trained, they would spread information in the place where they live.

This policy given to us attended results seeing the number of people directly touched by the target groups. Also, the communication policy, using public and private press institutions and written and audiovisual press institutions, permitted us to spread information to an important rate of the population.

### **Outreach to stakeholders:**

In this activity, NGOs of environmental protection, lawyers, dentists, the Ministry of Environment, cosmetics manufacturers, students representatives, youth organizations, the Trade Ministry, National Army, journalists, medical doctors, and chemists were all engaged. They wanted, at the end of this campaign, for us to continue our cooperation by creating a network of mercury elimination in which we could share all information about the advancement of the mercury treaty and the potential elements to reduce the risks of mercury exposure in this country. Thus, this network has been created since the training and all members of this network are always aware of all public information in our possession.

**Deliverables, outputs and/or products:**

As outputs from the activity, we produced leaflets, tee shirts with the awareness campaign title, posters, CDs of the campaign, banners, etc.

**Communication efforts:**

About communication, this activity had been covered by our national television, another TV channel broadcasting via internet, and national written press. We also gave an interview to a Radio Station (UN Operations for Côte d'Ivoire Radio Station). We could send you the scanned articles of newspapers and the links broadcasting on Internet.

**SAICM National Focal Point:**

Our National SAICM focal point is M. DAKOURI ZADI RAPHAËL. His contacts are: +225 06 17 27 99, [zadi\\_raph@yahoo.fr](mailto:zadi_raph@yahoo.fr); [zadid@aviso.ci](mailto:zadid@aviso.ci).

**Recommendations, from a public interest, NGO perspective, on reducing and eliminating human sources of mercury:**

JVE Côte d'Ivoire made the following recommendations:

- These involve three levels:
  - At the government level:
    - Disseminate information on mercury and its harmful effects to the entire population through extensive information campaigns and awareness-raising.
    - Create a legislative and regulatory framework to regulate imports and use of mercury and products containing it.
    - Create a legislative and regulatory framework for a rigorous application of methods of treatment of mercury waste.
  - At the level of NGOs:
    - Create a synergy of information and awareness on the issue of mercury.
    - Develop policies monitoring and evaluation of campaigns.
  - At the population level:
    - Take the time to learn about mercury and its effects as well as products containing mercury.
    - Limit use of products containing mercury.
    - Take precautions for efficient handling of products containing mercury.

Sort household waste prior to removal.