

## **IPEN Statement on ASGM**

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Mercury use in artisanal and small scale gold mining is not simply a technical issue. It is a complex issue with poverty at its heart. The mercury treaty should protect miners' health and livelihood by approaching the ASGM issue comprehensively within the context of sustainable development.

For many reasons, most artisanal and small scale gold miners prioritize extraction over health- and environmentally-friendly technology. Methods for extracting gold without mercury are available but they require higher capital investment and increased capacity and knowledge.

Any program that aims to reduce and eliminate mercury use should involve access to technology and also microfinance for miners to switch to non-mercury technologies. Formalizing the sector is another key aspect to improve their practices as well as better community organizing, social and livelihood issues. To move towards this vision, we will need capacity building for local authorities, transparency, monitoring and enforcement.

Financial and technical assistance will be necessary for non-mercury techniques and good practices. Pilot projects could be very helpful to identify best practices in mercury-free ASGM within the implementation of non-mercury technique framework.

ASGM is a cross-cutting issue that will require an effective ban on trade and use of mercury along with operational standards and incentives for miners to shift toward non-mercury techniques. ASGM leaves behind terribly contaminated sites which will also have to be addressed.