

Mongolia and the Philippines join forces towards the elimination of mercury in the Artisanal Gold Mining Sector

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Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, June 21, 2017—Mongolia and the Philippines are taking another major step forward in their efforts to improve the environmental and health conditions of artisanal and small-scale gold miners and start the implementation of the Minamata Convention in both countries. Government representatives will be joined in Mongolia on June 21 and 22 by members of the United Nations Environment, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Artisanal Gold Council (AGC), a Canadian based non-profit organization, and other key partners, to launch preparations for the Mongolian – Philippine GEF GOLD project (part of the Global Environment Facilities’ five year and eight country programme for Global Opportunities for Long-Term Development (GOLD) of the Artisanal Gold Mining Sector).

The AGC will work in collaboration with local miner groups, the Mongolian and the Philippine Governments, through funding from the Global Environment Facility to design a project to eliminate mercury in the Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining sector, “from miners to refiners to consumers”. “Mongolia has a great opportunity to advance health and environmental protection through the GEF GOLD Project. It is a recognition of the work that Mongolia has been undertaking to improve and formalize the sector that the Global Environment Facility together with UN Environment and UNIDO have granted this project to us,” explained Tulga Mendjargal of Mongolia’s Ministry of Environment, Green Development and Tourism.

In both Mongolia and the Philippines, the Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining sector is a major employer for the rural population but because the sector is the largest user and emitter of mercury to the environment, the project will aim to improve jobs and working conditions through strategies that directly reduce mercury use, delivering both local and global benefits.

The launch and meetings of the project partners will seek to expedite and reinforce the existing efforts in making this sector sustainable, socially responsible and mercury-free through supporting formalization, development of financing options, technology enhancement, and knowledge sharing. “The project seeks to create significant economic opportunities for the artisanal mining communities while lowering their environmental impact. The sector is ripe for this novel intervention and the Artisanal Gold Council is proud to have the opportunity to work with the Mongolian and Philippine governments to create a new development approach to rural development,” stated Dr. Kevin Telmer, Executive Director of the Artisanal Gold Council.

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