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MR. ACHIM HAAPAP
INTERIM SECRETARIAT OF THE
MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY
CHEMICALS AND WASTE BRANCH
DIVISION OF TECHNOLOGY, INDUSTRY AND ECONOMICS
UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME/CHEMICALS BRANCH
11-13 CHEMIN DES ANEMONES
1219 CHATELAINE
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

Dear Sir,

Letter of Expression of Interest to Access Funds from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for the Development of a National Action Plan (NAP) for the Artisanal Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) Sector in Support of the Implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury in Ghana

Ghana signed the Minamata Convention on Mercury in September 2014 and is taking steps to ratify it. As a first step towards the implementation of the Minamata Convention, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) is assisting Ghana to ratify the Minamata Convention with funds provided by the Government of Switzerland. A roadmap has been developed for the ratification process.

The Mining industry of Ghana accounts for 5% of the country's GDP and minerals make up 37% of total exports, of which gold contributes over 90% of the total mineral exports. After South Africa, Ghana is the leading gold producer in Africa and Artisanal Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) contributes 23% of Ghana's gold production.

Mercury use is widespread in the informal sector. The ASGM sector is recognized to play a significant role in local development, but at the same time its activities negatively impacts on human health and on the environment due to inappropriate mining practices, the use of toxic chemicals, especially mercury, and the presence of human settlements in sensitive environments.

Currently in Ghana, the impact of gold mining, using amalgamation technique has not been thoroughly investigated. Specifically, the fate of mercury in the environment is virtually unknown, and the total amount of mercury used for the recovery of gold unascertained.

Several research activities in the past provide enough evidence of the presence of mercury in the environmental compartments of air, water, soil and sediments; and biota (including humans).

It is thus clear that there are "more than insignificant ASGM activities in country" for which immediate actions must be taken to address.

In this regard, we would like to indicate our intention to access funds from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) for the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) for the Artisanal Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) sector. The development of a NAP focused on the ASGM sector will enable the country to achieve the goals of the implementation phase of the Minamata Convention.

The efforts made by Ghana, mentioned above, demonstrate that this project is fully in line with the country's goal to map and prevent mercury related environment and health problems in the ASGM sector and invest in technological solutions to fulfill obligations under the Minamata Convention.

Below is the detailed information of the Contact persons for the Minamata Convention on Mercury in Ghana.

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We thank you for the continuous collaboration.

Yours faithfully,

EBENEZER APPAH-SAMPONG
AG.DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (TECHNICAL)
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