**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE (HUMAN RIGHTS DIVISION)**

**Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes**

 ***“Mercury, artisanal and small-scale gold mining and human rights”***

**1. Minamata Convention on Mercury**

The State of Mauritius is a party to several multilateral environmental agreements relating to climate change, chemicals, biodiversity, marine, atmosphere and associated challenges, such as the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Mauritius ratified the Minamata Convention on Mercury on 21 September 2017. It is to be noted that artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) is not undertaken in Mauritius.

Moreover, there is an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) / Preliminary Environment Report (PER) Monitoring Division under the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change since 2013. Its main objective is to ensure compliance with the conditions imposed in Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Licences and Preliminary Environment Report (PER) Approvals so as to avoid any potential adverse impacts during the whole life-cycle of a particular project. The Division is also responsible for the implementation of two conventions namely: (i) The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs); and (ii) The Minamata Convention on Mercury.

**2. Controls on Mercury**

As per the Minamata Initial Assessment Report 2018, no elemental mercury was imported for the inventory carried out in for the year 2012 and 2014.

Moreover, import of mercury and mercury compounds is severely restricted in Mauritius since 2004 as permit has to be sought from the Dangerous Chemicals Control Board (DCCB).

Mercury and Mercury compounds are restricted and prohibited chemical under the Dangerous Chemicals Control Act.

Only batteries containing mercury is a prohibited item under the Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) Regulation 2017 at import.

**3. Policies and legislation in place to ensure minimal exposure to mercury through fish and fish products**

The 2000 Food Act (Seventh Schedule, regulation 62(2) (a)), has an action level for mercury of 1 ppm in fish. For assessing mercury levels in fish and fish products, Regulation (EC) 1881/2006 is used by the Competent Authority – Seafood Unit (CASFU) of the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping.

As per Section 16 (1) of the Fisheries and Marine Resources (Import of Fish and Fish Products) Regulation 2016, the level of residues and contaminants in fish shall be monitored by the Competent Authority of the Exporting Country to ensure safety of the product.

As per Section 16 (2) of the Fisheries and Marine Resources (Import of Fish and Fish Products) Regulations 2016, the fish shall comply with the maximum level of contaminants provided for by Codex Alimentarius.

The "*Guidelines for coastal water quality" [General Notice No. 620 of 1999]*have been published for the information of the public with regards to coastal water quality requirements for various activities around the Republic of Mauritius.​  It provides, among others, maximum levels for Mercury contamination in coastal waters intended for various category of activities including Fisheries (Category C).

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