



U.S. Department of Labor supports UNDP and its partners in efforts to end child labor in Madagascar's mica mining

Antananarivo, February 19th, 2021 - The United States Department of Labor (USDOL) announced this month a US\$4.5 million cooperative agreement with the United Nations Development Programme in collaboration with UNICEF, Terre des Hommes and the Responsible Mica Initiative to end child labor practices in Madagascar's mica mining sector.

This joint project will target three mica producing communities in the southern Anosy region of the country: Ranopiso, Tranomaro and Ambatoabo. It will involve national and local authorities and communities throughout its 54-month implementation period.

US Department of Labor cooperative agreements are awarded annually by the agency based on a competitive assessment of the applications it has received.

This project aims at combating child labor in the mica supply chain through strengthening the resilience of vulnerable households in mica-producing communities, building the capacity of the government, and increasing the engagement of other stakeholders involved in mica supply. 1,575 households will receive livelihood services and 3,380 children will benefit from educational and vocational training services.

Under the project, UNDP will support strengthening of the mica regulation system and including through reviewing frameworks and policies. UNDP will also support advocacy for the integration of natural resource management into the mining code. Capacity building of national institutions to adopt and implement responsible mining activities that integrate biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources will be enhanced. In addition, the sensitization of companies to demonstrate due diligence in mica mining will be carried out with all project stakeholders.

UNICEF will provide expertise in children's rights and child protection, undertake capacity building for adolescents and promote positive parenting and prevention of exploitation and abuse in mica mining communities. UNICEF will also promote social protection efforts, while strengthening community and government child protection systems.

Terre des Hommes Netherlands will lead actions to facilitate access to alternative livelihoods for vulnerable adults, improve the health and nutrition of children and vulnerable households and work to contribute to increasing access to early childhood education (ECE) and education for older children. Civil society will be mobilized to advance children's rights and to monitor the mica supply chain. TDH will also map the current legal framework of mica production in Madagascar.

The Responsible Mica Initiative (RMI) will support the restructuring of artisanal and small-scale mining operations by promoting the adoption of responsible workplace practices that will eliminate the use of child labor, provide more safe and equitable workplaces for adult workers and address the environmental impact of the sector. Building on its experience in India's mica sector, RMI will promote the application of a Global Mica Workplace Standard among mica mine operators and processors in Madagascar. An analysis of the socio-political economy and a mapping of the mica supply chain and stakeholders are also planned to demonstrate the importance of the sector and build multi-stakeholder support for reform.

In Madagascar, mica exports account for about seven percent (or US\$6,500,000) of the global mica trade. The income potential of the sector, although low, attracts poor and vulnerable families. Consequently, domestic mica extraction operations present substantial risks of perpetuating child labor and exploitation of vulnerable households in southern Madagascar.

Worldwide, mica is used in a wide range of industries that benefit from the mineral's diverse attributes. The cosmetics, automotive coatings and printing ink industries utilize mica's visual properties. Mica is a natural insulator used throughout the electronics industry, serves as a filler in plastics and construction materials and is used as a lubricant in the oil and gas-drilling sector, among other applications

The joint implementation of this project will contribute to eliminating child labor in mica operations in southern Madagascar while promoting responsible and environmentally sensitive mica mining and improving households' living and working conditions. Funding is provided by the United States Department of Labor under cooperative agreement number IL-35869. 100% of the total costs of the project or program is financed with USG federal funds.

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