



PT NEWMONT  
MINAHASA RAYA

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## **Press Release**

### **NO FISH COMMONLY CONSUMED IN BUYAT CONTAINING ARSENIC AND MERCURY EXCEEDING THE THRESHOLD**

(Manado, 23 June 2006). Today the criminal case trial of PT Newmont Minahasa Raya (PTNMR) presented two experts and fact witnesses in the toxicology and marine biology fields from the Centre for Environmental Health of Australia and University of Sam Ratulangi (UNSRAT) Manado respectively. Both experts have been involved in the research and review of scientific studies on the condition of marine water ecosystem and public health in Buyat conducted by both national and international institutions including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Environment, the North Sulawesi provincial independent team, JICA, the Minamata Institute of Japan and UNSRAT.

In her testimony Dr Inneke presented: “Based on the study on the biotic and abiotic interaction in the marine ecosystem in the Buyat and Totok bays, already presented in both national and international scientific seminars (Brazil, the Phillipines and Japan), it can be concluded that there is no single species of fish commonly consumed in Buyat containing arsenic and mercury levels exceeding the threshold value (the maximum permitted concentration is 0.5 ppm). And, based on the results of several studies conducted, the marine ecosystem in Buyat Bay is in good condition.”

DR. Inneke Rumengan is also a member of the Peer Review representing the provincial government of North Sulawesi and the Integrated Team established by the Ministry of Environment in 2004. DR. Inneke, on behalf of the provincial government of North Sulawesi made a dissenting opinion (letter of objection) on the conclusion of the November 2004 Integrated Team report, as the conclusions are different from the conclusions of *the Peer Review team made during the meeting held on October 18, 2004.*

The second witness, Dr Keith Bentley, focused on the topic of heavy metals and public health in Buyat Bay. As a member of the *International Program for Chemical Safety (IPCS)* and a toxicology expert, Dr Bentley was commissioned by the Ministry of Health (MoH) to interpret the data collected by the MoH-led independent team on the condition of the local villagers of the Buyat village.

Dr. Bentley said: “The review on all data published on the levels of mercury and arsenic concentrations in Buyat Bay water conducted by both national and international institutions such as the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Health/Minamata Institute, WALHI (study in 2001 on total arsenic in blood), UNSRAT, Police (Puslabfor) and CIDA (study in 2000 by Canora, Asia Inc on mercury in hair of villagers of Ratatotok village) on the basis of the laboratory samples for sea water, blood and hair (data collected from 1991 to 2004), conclude that the mercury and arsenic concentrations in Buyat Bay and local villagers are far below the level that can cause hazard to human health recognized by WHO IPCS and US Center for Disease Control Agency for Toxic Substances”.

For further information, please visit our website [www.newmont.co.id](http://www.newmont.co.id) or [www.BuyatBayFacts.com](http://www.BuyatBayFacts.com)  
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During the trial, one fact was disclosed with respect to the testimonies made by a Public Prosecutor witness on the report of the 2004 MoE Integrated Team. In response to the testimonies made today, Richard B. Ness said, “The witnesses have confirmed that the MoE Integrated Team, including its chairperson (one of the minister deputies in the MoE), issued a report on Environmental Quality Analysis in Buyat Bay and Totok Bay on October 14, 2004, and even the graphs of the report were discussed by the team in their November 2004 report.” The chairperson of the MoE Integrated Team during her testimony in court admitted that she had never read the October 14, 2004 MoE Integrated Team report.

Rick Ness added, “The November 8, 2004 MoE Integrated Team Report constituting a revised version of the October 14, 2004 report contains manipulated data, the scientific formula have been used inappropriately and have also been used as a wrong assumption ground –for example an individual eats 10 times a day, consuming ½ kg of fish for each meal. Therefore, an individual is assumed to eat fish 5 kg daily or more than 1 ton per person annually.”

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**Note:**

The two witnesses during the trial today are :

- **DR. Inneke Rumengan, MSc** – Head of the Marine Biotechnology Laboratory, Faculty of Fishery and Marine Science (FPIK) UNSRAT (1998 – present); Head of the Marine Science Laboratory, FPIK UNSRAT (1993-1998).
- **DR. Keith Bentley** - *Principal Technical Advisor, Centre for Environmental Health, Australia (1998-present); Regional Advisor in Chemicals and Hazardous Waste the World Health Organization (WHO), Western Pacific Office between 1986 and 1990; Team Leader, Environmental Health for WHO Country Office in Indonesia (1998-1999); Acting Regional Advisor for Food Safety and Food Contamination for the Southeast Asia Office of WHO (SEARO) (2003)*