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University Public Opinion Institute *iudop*

Vice rectory of Social Outreach

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Among those polled:

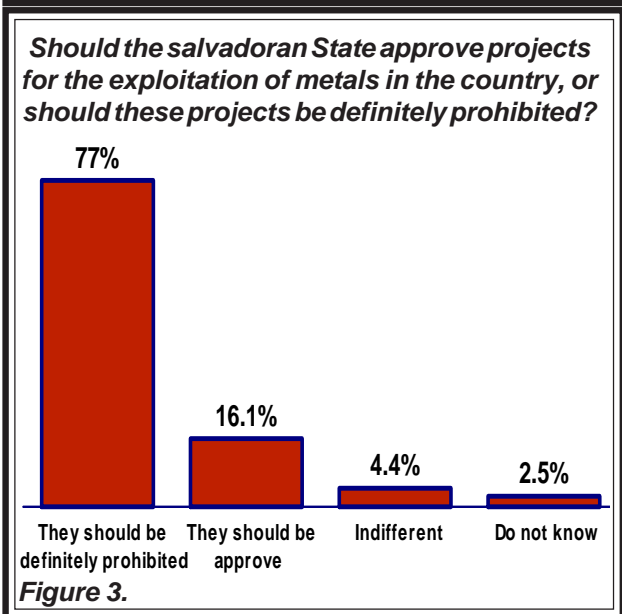
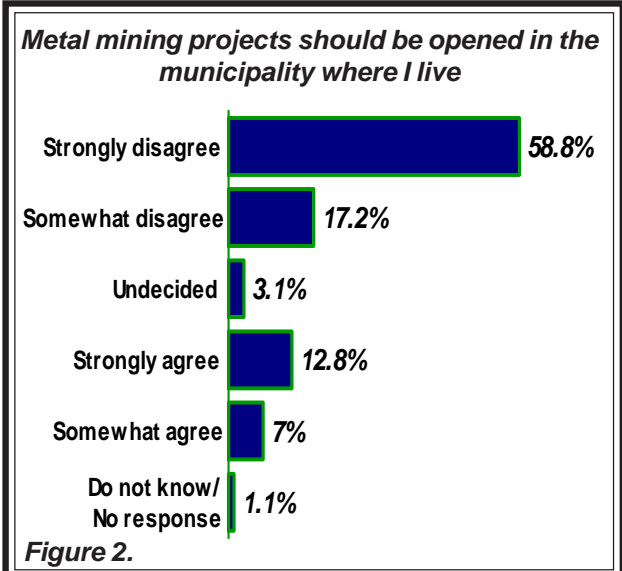
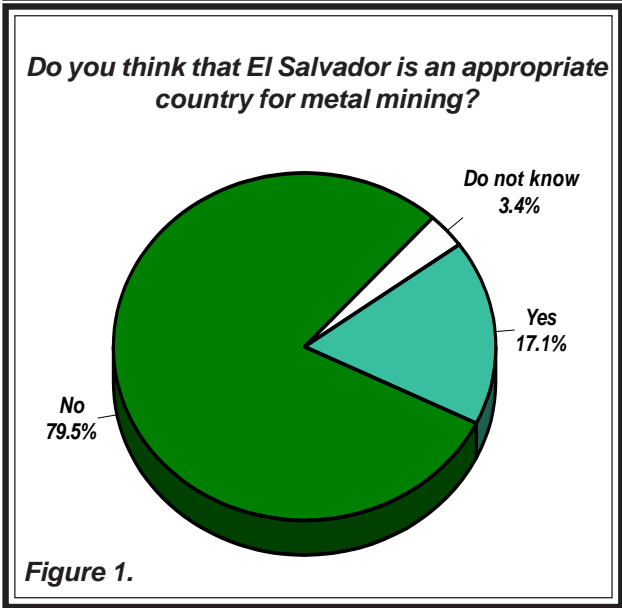
- **79.5% consider that El Salvador is not an appropriate country for metallic mining;**
- **76% disagree with the aperture of mining projects in their municipality;**
- **77% consider that the salvadoran State should definitively prohibit metallic mining in the country;**
- **89.9% consider that metallic mining would have a grave impact on freshwater resources;**
- **Eight out of ten persons think that agriculture, cattle-raising and fishing would be affected in their municipalities as a consequence of metallic mining;**
- **Among those who knew of the legal suit for more than \$300 million brought by mining company, Pacific Rim against El Salvador, 92.8% expressed opposition to foreign companies obliging the country to extend permits for mineral exploitation.**

Opinions and perceptions towards metal mining in El Salvador

According to a recent poll conducted by the University Institute on Public Opinion (Iudop), of the Central American University "José Simeón Cañas" (UCA), 79.5% of the population potentially threatened by metallic mining in El Salvador considers that the country is not appropriate for this industry. The poll, designed and conducted with the objective of giving voice to rural and urban populations potentially affected by metallic mining in El Salvador, was carried out between the 17th and 26th of April of the current year among a sample of 1,220 adults residing in 23 municipalities where permits to explore for metallic minerals had been extended to transnational mining corporations. The majority of municipalities are located in the watershed of the Lempa River. The population polled is representative of the municipalities in question with a sampling error of plus or minus 2.8%. This is the second poll Iudop has conducted in an effort to identify and analyze perceptions on the theme of metallic mining in El Salvador.

Results indicate that only 17.1% of those consulted consider El Salvador to be an appropriate country for metallic mining while 3.4% did not respond to the question. The principal reasons given by respondents who considered the country inappropriate for this industry included the destruction and contamination of the environment that metallic mining would generate (35.7%) and the country's small physical size (30.1%). Other reasons given, with less frequency, included the scarcity of natural resources and high population density.

Respondents who believe that El Salvador is appropriate for metallic mining based their opinion



on economic factors, like the generation of employment and the economic development that mining could bring to the country.

Consistent with the majority of people who think that the country is not appropriate for this activity, 76% of those polled expressed disagreement with the opening of mining projects in their municipality. Only 19.8% expressed agreement and 4.2% either did not respond or expressed indecision.

According to the respondents, this broad based rejection of metallic mining is associated, in large part, with the negative impact that metallic mining would have on the environment and on natural resources. Of those consulted, 89.9% expressed the view that mining would have grave effects in terms of water contamination, 85.1% expressed the same view with regards to air contamination; 88.3% consider that mining would have a grave impact on the destruction of forests and green areas, 88% consider that metallic mining would affect the life of wild animals and 79.1% believe that mining would deteriorate the scenery.

These opinions demonstrate the perceptions of the surveyed population regarding the impact of mining on the environment. As a likely result of these perceptions, slightly over three fourths of the population polled (77%) expressed the opinion that the salvadoran State should definitely prohibit metallic mining in the country.

On a related theme, 71.5% of those polled were not aware of the existing legal suit against El Salvador, brought by mining company Pacific Rim in response to being denied a license to mine gold in the country. However, of those who were aware of the case, 92.8% expressed disagreement with foreign corporations obliging El Salvador to issue permits and licenses for metallic mining, with only 6.1% in favor and 1.2% with no response.

The effect of metallic mining on the economic activity of the municipality

In order to identify and understand the perceptions of the population related to the economic impact of metallic mining in the targeted municipalities, a variety of questions were asked. When consulted about the contribution of metallic mining to the economic development of the municipality, 63.1% of

those polled indicated that it would make little or no contribution, while 36.8% expressed the opinion that it could contribute partially or greatly.

Concerning the possible generation of employment as a result of metallic mining projects, six of every ten persons interviewed considered that employment opportunities would increase little or nothing.

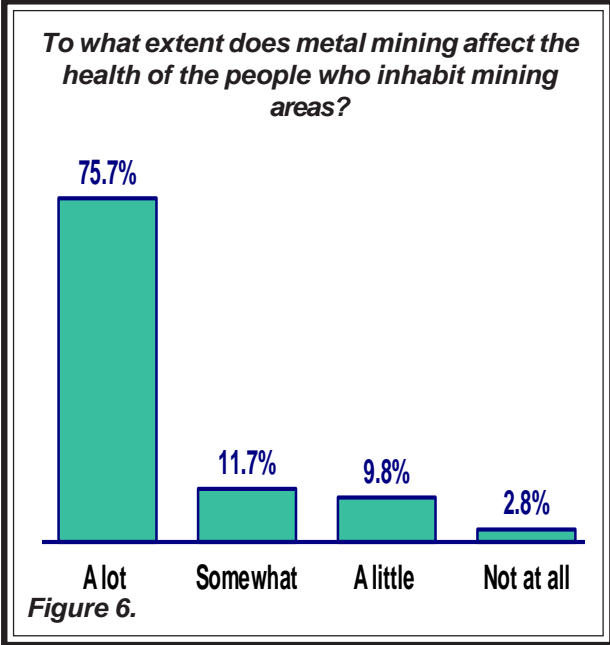
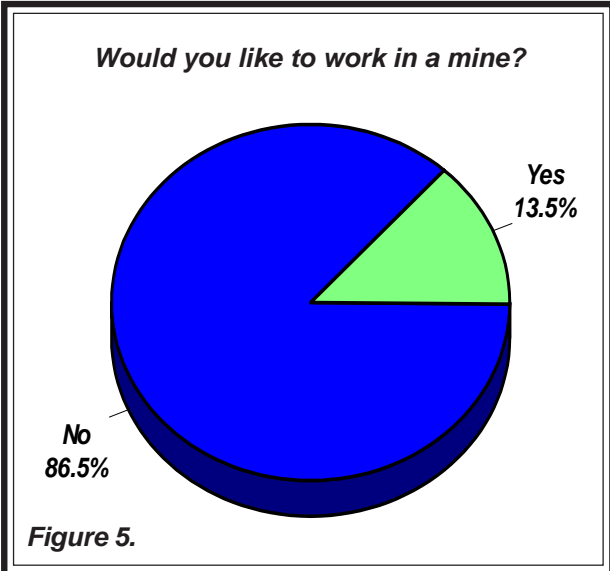
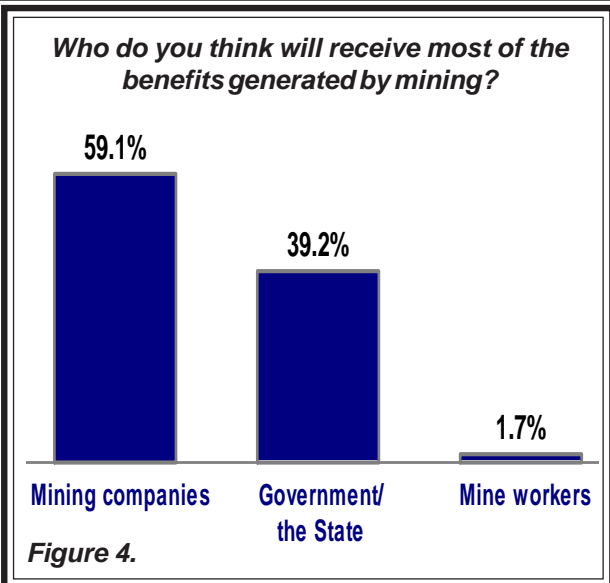
In addition to considering that mining would generate few employment opportunities locally, 86.5% of those polled indicated that they had no interest in working in a mine. Only 13.5% indicated that they would be interested in this form of employment.

These opinions demonstrate the limited interest that inhabitants of the polled municipalities have regarding their participation in future mining projects, in spite of the high levels of unemployment in these communities. They also call into question the claims of the mining companies to have broad support for mining among salvadorans due to the employment it would generate.

On the issue of who benefits most from the wealth generated by metallic mining, the polled population demonstrated clear opinions. Six of every ten persons polled indicated that mining companies themselves would receive the major part of mining income, 39.2% believe that the State will receive the major portion while 1.7% believe that the workers will benefit most. The vast majority of those polled (75.9%) expressed the belief that metallic mining, if approved in their municipality, would bring few or no benefits to their current way of life.

The majority of people surveyed did not identify any contribution from mining to local economic development, but rather foresaw the destruction of their traditional ways of subsistence and their surroundings that mining would generate. In this regard, eight of every ten people polled consider that agriculture, cattle-raising and fishing would be either partially or greatly damaged by metallic mining, and 64.4% believe that ecotourism would also be negatively affected.

Further, 87.4% of those polled expressed the opinion that metallic mining would partially or greatly affect the health of mine workers and local inhabitants in mining areas. It is also of interest that 64.1% considered that metallic mining would generate violence in



the areas where mining projects take place; this is consistent with the evidence gathered in other countries of the region where mining projects have been developed.

Perceptions related to the actual state of the environment

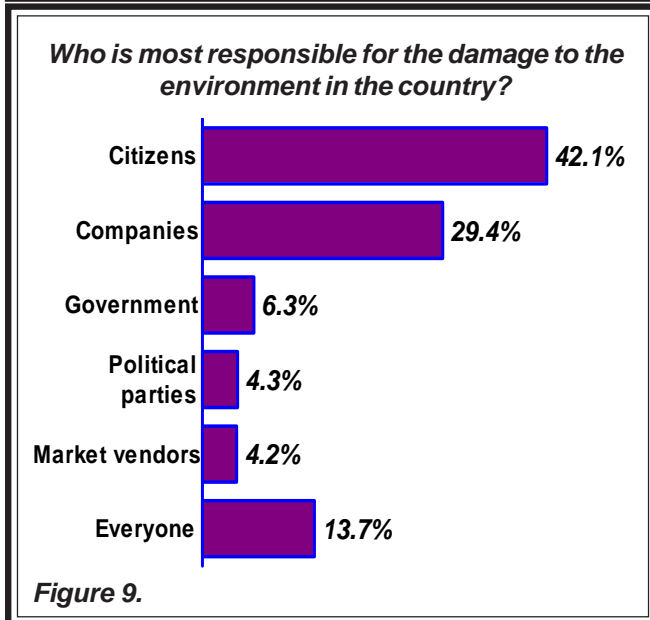
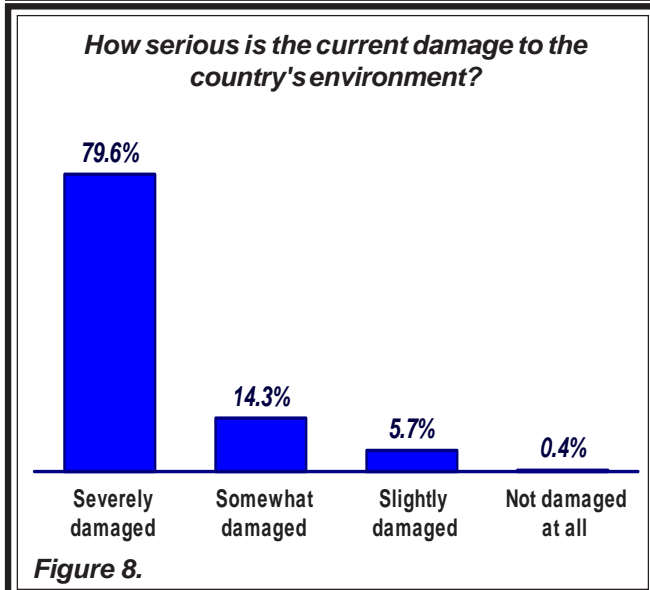
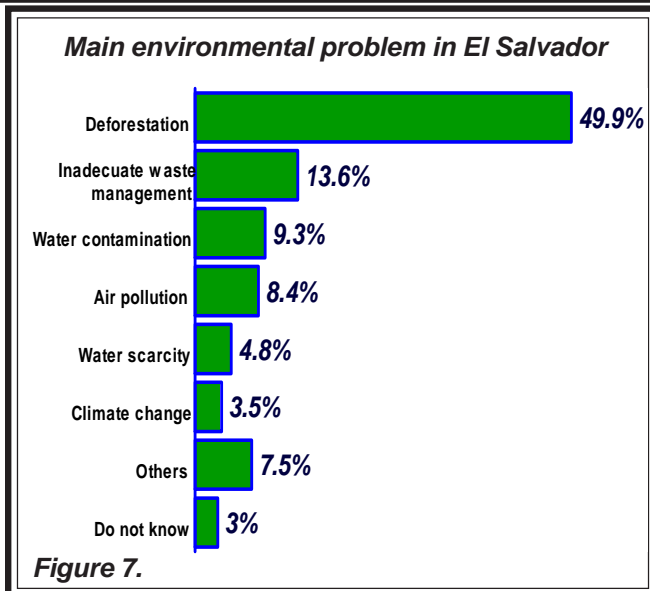
The poll explored the perceptions of the population regarding the actual state of the environment in the country and in their respective municipalities. Asked about current levels of environmental damage in El Salvador, 93.9% shared the opinion that the environment is somewhat or severely damaged, while only 6.1% considered that the level of damage was little or nothing.

When asked about the principal problems affecting the environment in El Salvador today, the responses showed that deforestation (49.9%), the contamination and scarcity of water (14.1%) and the poor management of trash (13.6%) are the main environmental problems perceived by the respondents. Other phenomena mentioned with less frequency included air contamination, climate change and the contamination of soils by toxic chemicals, among others.

When asked who was most responsible for the damage to the environment, 42.1% of those polled pointed to the citizens themselves of El Salvador, followed by 29.4% who pointed to private enterprises as the most responsible, Government (6.3%), political parties (4.3%) and market sellers (4.2%). Of those polled, 13.7% considered that all of the salvadorans are equally responsible for environmental destruction.

Concerning the principal causes of environmental destruction in the country, respondents primarily indicated the failure to apply established laws (21.7%), low educational and cultural levels among the citizenry (17.7%) and the irrational exploitation of natural resources (17%). The rest of respondents alluded to weak regulation, lack of information and others factors.

The target population was also consulted about key actors and entities responsible for protecting the environment in the country. Almost half of those polled (47.6%)



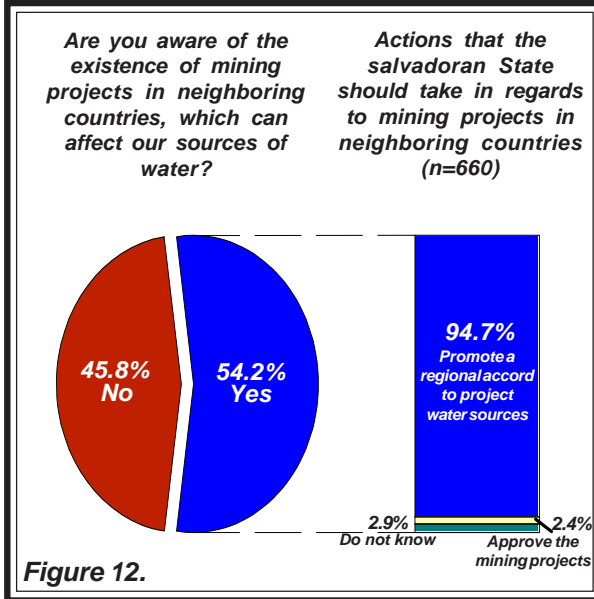
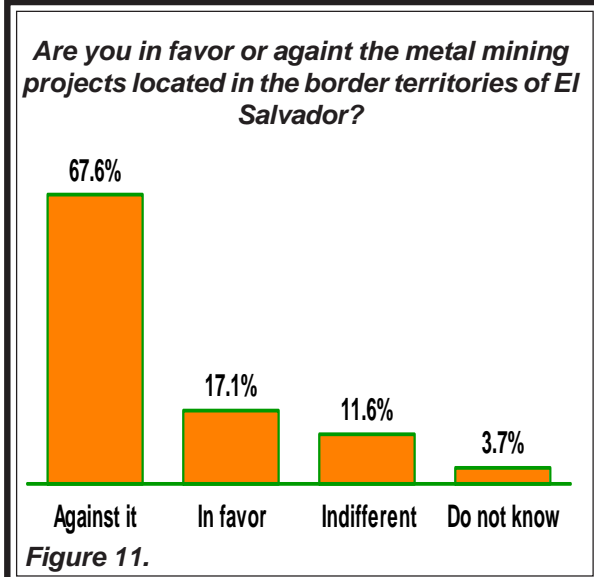
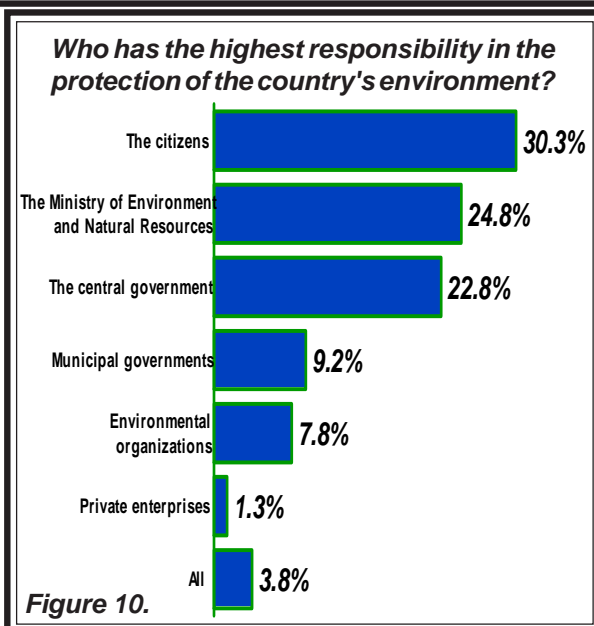
indicated that the Government or the Ministry of Natural Resources were the primary responsible parties; 30.3% responded that the citizens of El Salvador are the most responsible, 9.2% considered local municipal governments as the most responsible, 7.8% responded that environmental organizations were primarily responsible and 5.1% named other actors.

Concerning the protection of the country's environment, the poll asked about how much the Government is doing in regards to this matter. Of those consulted, 69.8% indicated that the Government is doing little or nothing to protect the environment. Only 28.7% considered that the Government was doing something or doing a lot. A smaller percentage gave no opinion (1.5%). Upon being asked about the urgency of taking actions aimed at protecting the country's environment, eight of every ten people polled expressed the opinion that immediate actions were needed, compared to 11.5% who considered that actions should be taken within the next two years and 4.8% who considered that actions should be taken in the next five years.

Opinions on transborder metallic mining

The poll also consulted the population about mining projects developed in Guatemala and Honduras, located in their border areas with El Salvador, which could affect El Salvador's freshwater sources.

In this regard, 54.2% of those polled indicated awareness of these transborder mining projects and their effects on water resources, whereas 45.8% indicated lack of awareness on this matter. Within the group that knew about these mining projects, 94.7% considered that the salvadoran State should promote a regional accord assuring the proper care of the water sources that El Salvador shares with other Central American countries, with only 2.4% expressing the opinion that the Government should accept the opening of mining projects in other countries close to salvadoran borders. A small 2.9% gave no response. With regards to support for mining projects in neighboring countries, like Guatemala and Honduras, 67.6% of those polled indicated that they were opposed to this activity in areas close to the border, while 17.1% expressed their support to this activity. A small percentage (11.6%) expressed their indifference to these



projects and 3.7% did not respond.

In summary

This recent poll with the population potentially threatened by metallic mining in El Salvador reaffirms a high level of rejection from the studied communities to the possible opening of metallic mining projects in their municipalities and in their country.

This probably has to do with the fact that the population targeted for the study does not attribute benefits to their municipalities from the incursion of mining projects but rather shares concerns about the grave repercussions that this industry could have for their communities, for the local economy and, most importantly, for the environment.

In this regard, in spite of El Salvador's severe problems of unemployment, in urban as well as rural communities, the population of these municipalities does not think that working in the mining industry would be a viable alternative, as they do not consider it a source of dignified work.

The interviewed population demonstrated clear perceptions and opinions with regards to who would benefit most from mining in the country. The majority holds that mining companies, themselves, would obtain most of the benefits generated by the industry, eliminating the stimulus to participate in this economic activity.

However, the objection to metallic mining is not only based on economic considerations; it derives primarily from environmental concerns. The inhabitants of these municipalities allude to the serious repercussions that mining activity would have on the environment at both local and national levels. More than eighty percent of those polled pointed to the grave levels of contamination that metallic mining would generate for water and air, along with the destruction of forests and green areas, among other repercussions.

For those polled, the insertion of this industry in El Salvador would worsen the situation of environmental deterioration. This would be especially dangerous in a country considered by the United Nations as the most vulnerable to natural disasters in the world, and also declared as the most deforested in Central America, according to salvadoran entities.

These perceptions have prime relevance considering also the grave impact that water scarcity is already causing for large areas of the country. The incursion of metallic mining in El Salvador, in this context, could transform the current situation into a severe humanitarian crisis, due to the high consumption and contamination of water that this industry generates. This could result in the serious violation of Human Rights, reproducing the complexity of problems experienced in other countries of the region and around the world.

San Salvador, July, 2015.

Data Sheet

Responsible institution: Iudop-UCA

Total of valid surveys: 1,220

Departmental sampling: Multi-stage design, with quotas per departmental, gender and age groups, and random selection of the surveyed homes. The survey was carried out in 8 departments and 23 municipalities where there was an authorization to explore heavy metals, following a proportional distribution of the population size (PPS), established according to geographical segments.

Sampling error: +/- 2.8 %

Reliability level: 95 %

Mode of application: Household survey applied through personal interview.

Date of completion: April 17-26, 2015.

General direction: Jeannette Aguilar.

Principal researcher: Laura Andrade.

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