



**** For Immediate Release ****

**Remediation of Lead Contamination Begins in Five Villages
Impacted by Legacy Pollution in Zamfara State, Nigeria**

Additional Villages Are Identified, but Funding is Lacking

19 October 2010, New York, New York – Blacksmith Institute has dispatched a team of environmental engineers to begin cleanup of legacy lead pollution – linked to informal artisanal gold mining – that has killed more than 400 children in Nigeria’s Zamfara State since March.

Soil lead levels in the Anka and Bukuyyum districts, where the villages are located, are up to 250 times higher than levels permitted in residential areas in the United States. Presently, at least 30,000 people in Zamfara are at risk for lead exposure by inhalation or ingestion, which causes kidney malfunction, anemia, brain damage, and death.

Delayed by the rainy season, work has now begun on cleaning up five villages identified earlier in the year. Landfills for the hazardous waste are being constructed, and digging and safe disposal of contaminated soils in household compounds is about to begin.

But additional villages have been identified as priority sites for remediation, including one large town with over 10,000 people. A lack of funding is hampering working in these new locations, said Richard Fuller, president of Blacksmith.

“We are earnestly appealing for the resources necessary to put a stop to these poisonings and deaths,” Fuller said. “The problem is much more widespread than we initially realized.”

Blacksmith is working with TerraGraphics Environmental Engineering, an Idaho-based firm, and is partnering with Medecins Sans Frontieres and local government authorities to usher the project to completion.

Remediating lead pollution in residential soil employs a range of clean-up activities, which are detailed in Blacksmith’s 2010 Lead Summary, available at:

http://www.blacksmithinstitute.org/files/FileUpload/files/2010_Lead_Summary_rf.pdf

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