

Concept note on a side event on lead paint at the 3rd Interministerial Conference on Health and Environment in Africa (IMCHE 3)

6-9 November, 2018

Venue: Libreville, Gabon

Date: 6 November, 2018

Time: 13.00–14.00

Session title: **Phasing out lead paint in the African Region: rationale, techniques and experiences**

Background

Lead paint is an important source of lead exposure to children when the paint is used in homes, schools and on toys and playground equipment. It is also a source of occupational exposure to lead when the paint is manufactured and when paint is stripped using abrasive methods.

Lead is a multisystem toxicant and no safe level of exposure has been identified. Exposure to even low levels of lead in childhood can impair cognitive and behavioural development and result in reduced intelligence quotient (IQ) and increased risk of poor educational attainment and antisocial behaviour. The long-term consequences of lead exposure also include increased risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke. These impacts have both personal costs and societal costs.

Lead paint has been banned in high income countries for several decades. However, it is still available in many African countries. From information provided to WHO, as of 31 August 2018, only six countries in the region have laws already in place, or about to be enacted, that restrict the use of lead in paint.



BAN LEAD PAINT

UN Environment and WHO jointly lead the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint (the Lead Paint Alliance), which has set the target that by 2020 all countries should have in place legally binding controls on lead paint, effectively banning the manufacture, import, sale and use of lead paint. Clearly there is still much to be done in the African region to achieve that target.

UN Environment, WHO and other partners will shortly be executing a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) project funded by the Global Environment Facility that aims to assist a further 40 countries globally to put in place the necessary legally binding control measures.

As part of a global effort on raising awareness of the hazards of lead, and the need to act on lead paint in particular, the Lead Paint Alliance organized the 6th International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week on 21–27 October 2018 (for more information see http://www.who.int/ipcs/lead_campaign/en/).

Several tools have been developed by the Lead Paint Alliance and through the GEF project to facilitate different activities. One useful tool which African countries can use is the “Model Law and Guidance to Regulate Lead Paint” available in English and French at <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/publication/model-law-and-guidance-regulating-lead-paint>.

Rationale:

Given the significance of the effort to phase out the use of lead paint and inadequate engagement by the health and environmental sectors, the proposal to hold a 1-hour side event at the 3RD Session of the

Interministerial Conference for Health and Environment (IMCHE) will raise awareness on the matter at the highest level of health at the national level.

Objectives:

- To explain the rationale for phasing out lead paint, with particular reference to the African region.
- To present experiences from an African country in controlling lead paint
- To provide information on the technical assistance available through tools developed by the Lead Paint Alliance and through the GEF project.

Expected participants:

The session is open to all participants, and the following are expected to form part of the audience:

- Honourable ministers and other officials responsible for health and environment in Africa,
- Representatives of development partners,
- Other conference participants

Session Proceedings:

- Introduction and opening by session
- Brief presentations
 - Health and economic arguments for phasing out lead paint.
 - Country experience in developing legally binding controls on lead paint
 - Technical assistance available to countries, such as the “Model Law and Guidance to Regulate Lead Paint² and Resources for the “International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week 2018²
- Facilitated discussion on lead paint.

Agenda:

Time	Session	Speaker	Moderator
13:00-13:10	Opening remarks	Ms. Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo , Regional Director, Africa Office, UN Environment Dr. Boureima Sambo WHO/Director CEA	UN Environment
13:10-13:25	Health and economic arguments for phasing out lead paint.	Dr. Nathalie Roebbel WHO	WHO
13:25-14:40	Overview of Global Efforts to Eliminate Lead Paint	Mr. Abdouraman Bary , Regional Subprogramme Coordinator (Chemicals, Waste & Air Quality)	UNE and WHO

13:40-13:50	Technical assistance available to countries: Model Law and Guidance to Regulate Lead Paint.	Mr. Abdouraman Bary, Regional Subprogramme Coordinator (Chemicals, Waste & Air Quality)	UNE and WHO
13:50-14:00pm	Discussion and closing remarks	Ms. Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo, Regional Director, Africa Office, UN Environment Dr. Boureima Sambo WHO/Director CEA	UNE and WHO