

CONCEPT NOTE

Towards a coordinated, multi-sectoral lead management approach in low- and middle-income countries: Consultations in Africa region (Part I)

Wednesday, 10 July 2024

2:00 – 4:00 p.m. CET (3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Nairobi Time)

Location: Online event Webex (English only)

Background

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), with the support of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), is set to facilitate two consultations on lead sources and management in African countries during 2024. The first consultation for African English-speaking countries will be held on July 10, 2024, followed by a second consultation for African French-speaking countries in the fourth quarter of 2024.

This initiative comes at a crucial juncture, as previous international efforts around lead exposure reduction primarily targeted single sources of lead contamination, such as leaded petrol and paint. However, a growing body of research highlights the wide variety of sources impacting lead exposure, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), encompassing various industries and consumer products.

Recognizing that policy and regulatory approaches to addressing sources of lead exposure may vary, adopting a comprehensive look at lead management policies in LMICs across sectors holds immense promise. By embracing a holistic perspective, it becomes feasible to discern the primary drivers of lead exposure with greater clarity, increase awareness of policymakers, and pave the way for the development of cohesive, enduring mitigation strategies, action plans, and other relevant instruments. Moreover, addressing lead management on a multi-sectoral basis empowers stakeholders to forge vital connections between lead mitigation efforts and broader development objectives or societal priorities, thereby enhancing the mobilization of resources towards this critical cause. Through promoting collaborative action and a multifaceted approach, these consultations aim to catalyze impactful change in safeguarding public health and environmental well-being across the African continent.

Objectives

The aim of these consultations is to explore the feasibility of a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach by LMIC national governments to manage sources of lead exposure.

The objectives of the consultations include:

- To facilitate the exchange of information among African countries on existing lead management activities and needs;
- To understand sources of lead exposure and applicable regulations identified at the country or regional level;

- To present examples of coordinated multi-sectoral lead management approaches, including country-level efforts, the UNICEF Lead Toolkit, the US Federal Lead Action Plan and the EPA Lead Strategy and Local Lead Action Plan Guide;
- To discuss current barriers and opportunities for lead exposure reduction action, including a coordinated and multi-sectoral lead management approach.

AGENDA

Moderator: **Ms. Angela Bandemehr**, Senior International Environmental Protection Specialist, Office of International Affairs, Office of International and Tribal Affairs, US EPA

2:00 – 2:10 – Welcome and introductions

UNEP, Chemicals and Health Branch

US EPA, Office of International Affairs

2:10 - 2:40 – Setting the scene on lead management

Overview of Lead Pollution Issues in Africa

Ms. Emily Nash, *UNEP Lead management expert*

Examples of coordinated multi-sectoral lead management approaches

Ms. Angela L. Bandemehr, *Senior International Environmental Protection Specialist, Office of International Affairs, Office of International and Tribal Affairs, US EPA*

2:40 – 3:15 - Panel discussion – Country Representatives

- **Ms. Letitia Abra-Kom Nyaaba**, *Environmental Protection Agency Ghana – Country-level lead action plan*
- **Mr. Stephen Kuyeli**, *Director of Technical Services, Malawi Bureau of Standards – Lead in paint*
- **Mr. Abdulhamid Makame**, *Mining Engineer, Vice President’s Office, Division of Environment, United Republic of Tanzania – Electronic waste management – Electronic waste management*
- **Mr. Lemesa Hirpe Wari**, *Head of Environmental Pollution Monitoring and Study Desk, Ethiopia – Lead-acid battery management*
- **Dr. Livinus Nnamdi Nwankwo**, *Basel Convention Desk Officer, Federal Ministry of Environment of Nigeria – Lead-acid battery management*

3:15 – 3:40 - Panel discussion – International Organizations and Civil Society Representatives

- **Mr. Alexander Mangwiro**, *Programme Management Officer, Regional Coordinator, Chemicals, Waste management & Air Quality Sub-programme, UNEP Africa Office*

- **Dr. Valerie Zartarian**, *Science-Policy Advisor on International Lead Cooperation Efforts and member of the US Presidential Task Force on Environmental Safety Risks and Health Risks to Children, US EPA*
- **Ms. Nafisatou Cissé**, *Team Leader, Lead Exposure Elimination Project (LEEP)*
- **Dr. Casey Bartrem**, *Senior Technical Advisor, United States Agency for International Development Lead Working Group*

3:40 – 3:55 – Questions and Open Discussion

- *All participants*

3:55 – 4:00 – Conclusions and Final Remarks

Questions for panelists:

1. What strategies have been successful in identifying and addressing sources of lead exposure in African countries? This could be either high concentration sources (such as industrial hotspots), or more diffuse sources of exposure (that may be lower concentration, but more ubiquitous). What sort of monitoring mechanisms are required and what are the current challenges?
2. How can African countries leverage existing lead management activities to enhance collaboration and knowledge sharing nationally and across the region?
3. What practical steps can be taken to overcome barriers to implementing a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach to lead management, and how can stakeholders collaborate to address these challenges effectively? What are the roles of various stakeholder groups (government, NGOs, academia, industry, local communities)?
4. How can stakeholders in African countries align their efforts in lead management with broader development goals and societal priorities, and what strategies can be implemented to improve the mobilization of resources for this purpose?
5. How can the international community support African countries in developing and implementing comprehensive and multi-sectoral lead management strategies that align with broader development objectives and priorities?