

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

20 November 2024

2:00 – 4:00 p.m. CET

Location: Online event via Interactio platform

(French and English translation)

Background

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), with the support of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), is set to facilitate the second of two consultations on lead sources and management in African countries in November 2024. The first consultation for African English-speaking countries was held on July 10, 2024; the consultation recording and documents can be found [here](#).

Lead exposure can cause chronic and debilitating health impacts in all age groups, but it is particularly harmful to young children. In lower- and middle-income countries, one in two children have elevated levels of lead in their blood, which can affect their development. Globally, lead is also associated with an estimated 1.6 million deaths every year due to its cardiovascular impacts. Given this danger, 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 industrial practices and consumer products. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly clear that feasible solutions exist to address these sources, including regulations and policies.

Recognizing that legal frameworks and 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. Embracing a holistic perspective can help policymakers better understand the primary drivers of lead exposure and pave the way for the development of cohesive, enduring mitigation strategies, action plans, and other relevant instruments. Moreover, addressing lead source and exposure reduction on a multi-sectoral basis empowers policymakers and stakeholders to forge vital connections between lead mitigation efforts and broader development objectives or societal priorities, which can enhance regulatory action and the mobilization of resources towards reducing lead exposure. 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 options for a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach by LMIC national governments to manage sources of lead exposure.

Objectives:

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

- 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;
- discuss current barriers and opportunities for lead exposure reduction action, including a coordinated and multi-sectoral lead management approach.

AGENDA

Moderator: *Mr. Alexander Mangwiro* - Programme Management Officer, Regional Coordinator, Chemicals, Waste Management & Air Quality Sub-Programme, United Nations Environment Programme Africa Office

2:00 – 2:10 – Welcome and introductions

Mr. Ludovic Bernaudat, UNEP, Chemicals and Health Branch

Mr. Patrick Huber, United States Environment Protection Agency, Office of International Affairs

2:10 – 2:35 – Setting the scene on lead management

Examples of whole of government approach:

- *Dr. Mamadou Fall* - Professor, Pharmacist Toxicologist, Poison Control Center, Ministry of Health and Social Action, Senegal
- *Ms. Angela Bandemehr* – United States Environment Protection Agency, Office of International Affairs, United States of America

2:35 – 3:10 - Panel discussion – Country Representatives

- *Mr. Issouf Son* - Focal Point of the Basel Convention, Environmental Inspector, General Directorate of Environmental Preservation, Ministry of Environment, Water and Sanitation, Burkina Faso
- *Mr. Rila Albani Rakotomanana* - Director of Pollution and Waste Management, Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Focal Point of the Basel Convention

3:10 – 3:20 – Questions and Open Discussion

- *All participants*

3:20 – 3:45 - Panel discussion – International Organizations and Civil Society Representatives

- *Dr. Bret Ericson* - Consultant, Environment, CEED-Programme Group, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- *Ms. Lesley Onyon* - Head, Chemical Safety and Health Unit, World Health Organization (WHO)
- *Mr. Bernard Koffi* - Interim Director of Environment and Natural Resources, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission
- *Dr. Lilian Corra* - Senior Advisor, Global Alliance on Health and Pollution

3:45 – 3:55 – Questions and Open Discussion

- *All participants*

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