

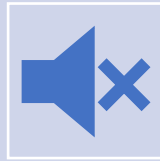
Third meeting of the Eliminating Mercury Skin Lightening Products project stakeholder group

30 Jan 2025

2 pm - 4 pm CET



Before we start, please:



Keep **microphones off** unless when making an intervention, cameras are optional



Use the **“Chat”** to ask technical questions or share views



The **meeting will be recorded**. Please indicate if you have any objection



OPENING AND SCENE SETTING

UNEP Global Mercury Partnership

AGENDA

14:00 Opening and scene setting, **EEB/ZMWG, UNEP Global Mercury Partnership**

Updates from the GEF project

14:10 Key take aways from regional meeting on “Eliminating skin-lightening cosmetic products containing mercury in Africa region”, **Gabon**

14:30 Updates from Sri Lanka and Jamaica

14:50 Looking ahead – project key activities in 2025, **WHO, BRI, GMP**

Updates from the stakeholders

15:05 Presentation of the draft report on Cosmetics Listed in Part I of Annex A to the Minamata Convention on Mercury **Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury**

15:35 Moderated discussions and updates from the stakeholders, **EEB/ZMWG, UNEP Global Mercury Partnership**

15:55 Closing, **UNEP**



**Key take aways from regional meeting on “Eliminating skin-lightening cosmetic products containing mercury in Africa region
Gabon**



REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE ELIMINATION OF MERCURY-CONTAINING SKIN-LIGHTENING COSMETIC PRODUCTS IN THE AFRICAN REGION

Hotel Radison Blu, Libreville, Gabon 20-22 January 2025

«Skin-lightening cosmetics, a public health concern in Africa».



Éliminons les cosmétiques éclaircissants d'Afrique !

Let's do away with Skin-lightening cosmetics from Africa

«High Level Segment: 22 January 2025»

SCENARIO



REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE ELIMINATION OF MERCURY-CONTAINING SKIN-LIGHTENING COSMETIC PRODUCTS IN THE AFRICAN REGION



Third meeting of the Eliminating Mercury Skin Lightening Products project stakeholder group

Gabon's Overview

30th January 2025





Plan

1. **Architecture of Regional Workshop**
 - a) **Technical session**
 - b) **HLS**
 - i. **Outcome**
 - ii. **Libreville Commitment of SLPs**
 2. **Data from Regional Workshop**
 3. **awareness: Multi-media**
- Conclusion**

1. Architecture



Technical session (2 days)

- **6 sessions and working groups**, each moderated by an expert from the WHO, UNEP, GMP, BRI, Zero Mercury Working Group, BEAUTYWELL, etc.
- Session rapporteurs from the countries present
- ***Focus of discussions and exchanges:*** proposing solutions to understand blanching skin phenomena and eliminate that practice in the region.
- **Special session to examine Draft Regional Commitment to eliminate SLPs in Africa**

b). HLS



i. Outcome

- Opening remarks provided by:
 - Lesley ONYON (WHO),
 - Rose MWEBAZA (UNEP-ROA)
 - Mme Monika Stankewich (Ex. Sec. MC).

- **Round Table chaired by the H.E Prime Minister of Gabon, Raymond NDON SIMA:**
 - Key comment from
 - **Madam Minister for Communication:** The place of black women (the beauty of black women) in the promotion of beauty (how to combat advertisements that only promote fair skin)
 - **Madam Minister of the Trade:** What strategies should African countries put in place to combat skin-lightening cosmetics containing mercury and other dangerous substances?
 - **Madam Minister for culture:** What role does original skin colour play in today's appreciation of body beauty?
 - **Madam Chair of the National Assembly's Social Affairs Committee :** What role can parliament play in introducing legislation to combat skin whitening?
 - **Madam Secretary General of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council :** Why should the fight against skin-lightening cosmetics containing mercury and other dangerous substances have an economic, social and environmental dimension in African countries?



2. TABLE RONDE DU SEGMENT DE HAUT NIVEAU	
Modération : Premier Ministre, Chef du Gouvernement de la Transition	
09:30 – 10:30	<p>Thématiques :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L'impact du commerce des produits cosmétiques éclaircissants de la peau dans les économies nationales ; • Les conséquences sanitaires de l'utilisation des produits cosmétiques éclaircissants de la peau contenant le Mercure et les autres substances dangereuses ; • L'impact environnement des déchets des produits cosmétiques éclaircissants ; • La couleur originelle de la peau, quelle place pour les critères de beauté d'aujourd'hui ? Comment inverser la tendance pour la réappropriation culturelle au sein des masses populaires ? • Pour l'Afrique de demain, quelle stratégie pour promouvoir la pratique de l'hygiène corporelle avec les produits cosmétiques sans mercure ni substances dangereuses pour la santé ? • Quels éléments pertinents pour une Déclaration africaine sur l'élimination des produits cosmétiques éclaircissant pour la peau contenant le mercure et d'autres substances dangereuses pour la santé ?
	<p>Intervenants (3mn) :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ministre du Commerce et PME-PMI Gabon ; 2. Ministre de la Culture Gabon ; 3. Ministre de la Communication et des Médias 4. Ministre de la Santé du Nigeria ; 5. Présidente de la Commission des Affaires Sociales de l'Assemblée Nationale, Gabon 6. Mme le Secrétaire Générale du Conseil Economique Social et Environnemental du Gabon ; 7. Représentant du Ministre de la Santé du Burundi ; 8. Représentant du Ministre de l'Environnement du Burkina-Faso ; 9. Représentant du Ministre de l'Environnement de Côte d'Ivoire ; 10. Représentant du Ministre de l'Environnement du Sénégal ;

**HLS (Session 2):
Round Table chaired by the H.E Minister of Health from
Federal Republic of Nigeria**

**Senegal (MoE HLS), Cote d'Ivoire (MoH,HLS) Burundi (MoH, HLS), Burkina Faso (MoE, HLS), Zimbabwe (MoE HLS),
Economic, Social and Environmental Council**

- The original color of the skin: what place for today's beauty criteria? How can we reverse the trend towards cultural re appropriation by the masses?
- What role do regional integration organizations play in developing and implementing policies to promote the cultural values of beauty among young people in Africa?
- For the Africa of tomorrow, what strategy should be adopted to promote the practice of personal hygiene using cosmetics that are free from mercury and other substances that are hazardous to health?
- What are the relevant elements for an **African Commitment** on the elimination of lightening cosmetic products containing mercury and other substances hazardous to health?



ii. Libreville Commitment on the Elimination of Mercury-Added Skin Lighthening cosmetics in Africa



LIBREVILLE COMMITMENT ON THE ELIMINATION OF MERCURY-CONTAINING SKIN-LIGHTENING COSMETICS IN AFRICA

Libreville, 22 January 2025

AFRO-SLPs-GA-21012025

Origine: Français

We, the African Ministers responsible for Health and the Environment, convening in Libreville (Gabon) on 22 January 2025 with additional Ministers and representatives from international organisations, civil society, academia and the private sector, for the Regional Workshop on the elimination of mercury-containing skin lightening cosmetic products in the African region:

1. Recalling the Libreville Declaration on Health and Environment in Africa of 2008 ;
2. Taking note of the 2010 Luanda Commitment on the implementation of the Libreville Declaration on Health and Environment in Africa ;
3. Noting with significant concern the scientific reports on the health and environmental consequences of exposure to skin-lightening cosmetic products containing mercury, both for users and for family members, particularly children and pregnant and breastfeeding women ;
4. Acknowledging the Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly's resolution that welcomed the formal adoption of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, which urged Member States to undertake requisite national measures for signing, ratifying, and implementing the Convention, as well as addressing health-related concerns arising from exposure to mercury and its compounds in healthcare settings ;
5. Recognising the paramount importance of efficacious, all-encompassing, and enduring multilateral endeavours to combat climate change, biodiversity depletion, and environmental contamination, as articulated in the Ministerial Declaration issued during the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, which convened in Nairobi on 29 February 2024 ;
6. Emphasising the significance of the decisions adopted by the fifth Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury at its fifth meeting MC-5/4, Amendments to Annexes A and B and feasibility of mercury-free alternatives for Annex B manufacturing processes on the implementation of Articles 4, 16, 17 and 18 of the aforementioned Convention ;
7. Considering the WHO report A71/rev.1 of 10 May 2008 on the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016-2030) presented to the Seventy-first World Health Assembly ;
8. Commending the accomplishments of Gabon in executing project GEF 10810 'Eliminating Mercury Skin Lightening Products', implemented in parallel with Jamaica and Sri Lanka to bolster the legal and institutional framework for eradicating mercury-containing skin lightening cosmetic products ;
9. Appreciating the strides made in the execution of the initiative to reinforce the legal framework and institutional capacities of the ECOWAS nations (Burkina Faso, Senegal and Togo) for the implementation of Articles 3 and 4 of the Minamata Convention, supported by the International Specific Programme ;
10. Cognisant of the pervasive practice of skin lightening and whitening across all social strata in Africa ;
11. Acknowledging with concern the deleterious effects of anthropogenic mercury, mercury compounds and mercury wastes on human health, wildlife and the environment ;
12. Underscoring the critical nature of implementing effective awareness campaigns and enforcement measures to curtail and ultimately eliminate the mercury-added cosmetics industry, including the informal trade of unauthorised cosmetics through both online platforms and brick-and-mortar shops, as well as the emergence of unauthorised local production facilities ;
13. Recognising the intricate nature of human behaviour, with particular emphasis on the psychological, socio-cultural, and environmental factors that influence skin lightening practices, thereby highlighting the imperative for scientific methodologies to elucidate and address behavioural patterns and their underlying determinants within this specific context ;
14. Cognisant of the deficient sampling, testing, waste management, regulatory frameworks and enforcement capacity in numerous African nations regarding mercury-containing skin lightening cosmetic products ;
15. Acknowledging the imperative to bolster analytical capabilities for detecting mercury in skin lightening cosmetic products to efficaciously enforce the monitoring of manufacture, import and export ;
16. Recognising the strides made by the pilot nations: Gabon, Jamaica and Sri Lanka, in their campaign against skin-lightening cosmetic products containing mercury ;
17. Reaffirming the critical necessity of executing the African Health Strategy 2016 - 2030 in alignment with the African Union's Agenda 2063: 'The Africa We Want', as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda focusing on health and well-being ;
18. Recognising the joint initiatives of the World Health Organization (WHO), Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Global Mercury Partnership (GMP), and the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury in securing resources from the Global Environment Facility and additional bilateral and multilateral partners ;

1. We, in conjunction with other Ministers, representatives of international and regional organisations, civil society, and academia, hereby commit ourselves to:

- a) Establish incentives for online platforms to adopt voluntary agreements to identify, remove and prevent the sale of cosmetics containing more than 1 ppm of mercury ;
- b) Mobilise sufficient resources from governments and partners to intensify efforts to eliminate mercury-containing skin-lightening cosmetic products ;
- c) Equip and/or enhance national regulatory authorities for medicines and other health products, including skin lightening cosmetic products, with technical analytical and logistical capacity ;
- d) Enhance capacities for the management of waste from mercury-containing products added ;
- e) Undertake the following actions:
 - i. Extend the project to eliminate skin-lightening cosmetic products containing mercury to additional African nations ;
 - ii. Support the establishment of national, sub-regional and/or regional public databases on mercury-containing skin lightening cosmetic products ;
 - iii. Establish standardised and comprehensive border and in-country monitoring and control systems for mercury-containing skin lightening cosmetic products ;
 - iv. Establish national, sub-regional and/or regional commitments to promote voluntary agreements by online platforms to ensure that mercury-containing cosmetic products are not sold, offered for sale and, where identified, removed in a timely manner ;
 - v. Develop public awareness programmes and media training regarding the deleterious effects of skin bleaching and the acceptance of natural skin colour in order to counteract harmful skin lightening and bleaching practices ;
 - vi. Employ behavioural science methodologies to investigate the underlying factors contributing to skin lightening practices, and utilise these findings in the development of public health interventions and community engagement strategies aimed at altering behaviour and addressing societal influences ;
 - vii. Facilitate collaboration amongst diverse stakeholders, including civil society organisations, community leaders, academic institutions, and professional groups such as dermatologists, primary healthcare providers, educational establishments, and religious organisations, as well as the private sector, in concerted efforts to counteract skin whitening practices ;
 - viii. Utilise behavioural science to elucidate the factors underlying skin lightening practices and apply the findings to public health interventions and community engagement initiatives aimed at modifying behaviour and addressing societal factors ;
 - ix. Engage all stakeholders, including civil society organisations, community leaders, academia, and professional groups such as dermatologists, primary care practitioners, educational institutions, and faith groups, as well as the private sector, in efforts to address skin whitening practices ;

2. Invite the Government of the Gabonese Republic to submit this Commitment to the African Council of Ministers in charge of the Environment (AMCEN) and to the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, with the objective of its presentation at the 6th Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention to be convened in Geneva, Switzerland, in November 2025.

3. Request WHO, UNEP, GEF, BRI, the Global Mercury Partnership and the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury to:

- a) continue and expand their support for developing countries' initiatives to eliminate products containing added mercury, in accordance with the decisions of the Conference of the Parties.

2. Some data from Regional Workshop on SLPs

- Under the patronage of the First Lady of Gabon
- Strong collaboration between the MoH, MoE, MoFor. Affairs and partners including the WHO (HQ and AFRO), UNEP, GMP and the Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI).
- 15 countries:
 - Burkina Faso, **Burundi**, Congo Brazzaville, Cameroun, **Côte d'Ivoire**, Éthiopie, **Gabon**, **Guinée équatoriale**, Mali, Nigeria, **Sénégal**, Togo, **Zimbabwe**, Jamaïque, Sri Lanka.
 - Experts from MoE & MoH
 - 25 NGOs (included online),
 - Academia,
 - Private sector,
- Outcome:
 - KAP survey on SLPs in Gabon (*factual basis for other countries*)
 - High public awareness through the media, particularly television, radio and social networks
 - Way forward to eliminate SLPs in the Region: **Libreville Commitment on the Elimination of Mercury-Added Skin Lighthening cosmetics in Africa**
 - Government of Gabon agreed to promote the African Commitment at regional and international level to eliminate SLPs



3. awareness: Multi-media



Conclusion

- The objectives of the Libreville regional workshop were achieved, as demonstrated by the strong participation of the Government of Gabon and the involvement of 15 African countries. *The moderation of the HLS by the Prime Minister of Gabon and the sponsorship of the event by the First Lady of Gabon were certainly a first for this pilot project.*
- In addition to this, one of the most promising results of this regional workshop was the adoption of a **COMMITMENT BY THE AFRICAN REGION TO ELIMINATE SLPs** within a concerted framework. The resulting roadmap will certainly be an important tool in replicating this activity in other regions.
- For Gabon, the next steps will be to implement the 2025 work plan. One of the priorities of this plan is to strengthen the analytical capabilities of LSPs.
- ***NB: The final report of the regional workshop will be ready very soon after it has been validated by the national side***





- Thank you!

Contcat

Serge Molly Allo'o Allo'o

National Project Officer | GEF project on mercury
in skin lightening products

WHO Gabon

PO BOX 820 Libreville, Gabon

[E-mail : alloos@who.int](mailto:alloos@who.int) Telephone : +241
77708528

Updates from Sri Lanka and Jamaica





Ministry of Health & Mass Media
Ministry of Environment



The legal framework and research data on skin lightening products used in Sri Lanka

PROJECT ON ELIMINATING MERCURY IN SKIN LIGHTENING PRODUCTS

SRI LANKA

LINE-UP

- Sri Lanka country context on mercury and SLPs (brief overview)
- Use of SLPs- study by dermatologists
- Levels of Hg in SLPs in studies from Sri Lanka
- Existing Legal framework
- Gaps and challenges

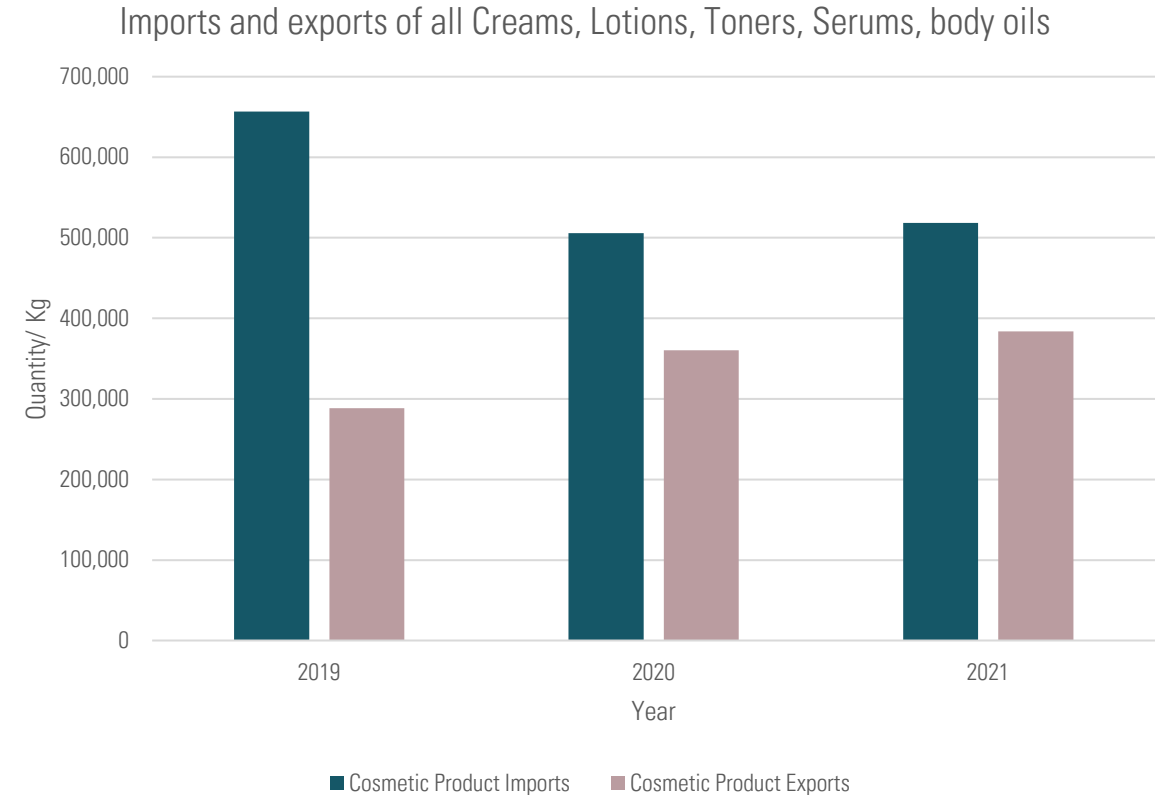
SRI LANKA COUNTRY CONTEXT ON MERCURY AND SLPS

- Sri Lanka is an island nation with a population of 22.04 million (2023).
- The mercury is not mined in Sri Lanka
- Mercury is disposed due to;
 - Used consumer products
 - Used appliances in health sector and applications in education sector
 - Coal power plants
 - Trash incinerators
 - Cremation and
 - Use in jewelry sector in recovering gold in the waste and from river bed sand.



SRI LANKA COUNTRY CONTEXT ON MERCURY AND SLPS (CONT.)

- The cosmetic industry in Sri Lanka include **skin care**, hair care, oral care, baby care, colour cosmetics, perfumes & colognes, and hygiene products.
- It is estimated that about 65% of cosmetics are produced locally and the balance 35% are imported but these.
- By end of 2022, cosmetics market in Sri Lanka was estimated to be about Rs. 90 billion.
- There are over 30 companies manufacturing cosmetics in Sri Lanka.
- However cottage production and mixtures by individuals are not counted.



8 Sept

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13 reactions, 7 comments

Like Comment Send Share

21 Oct

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Whitening cosmetic manufacturing cour... See more

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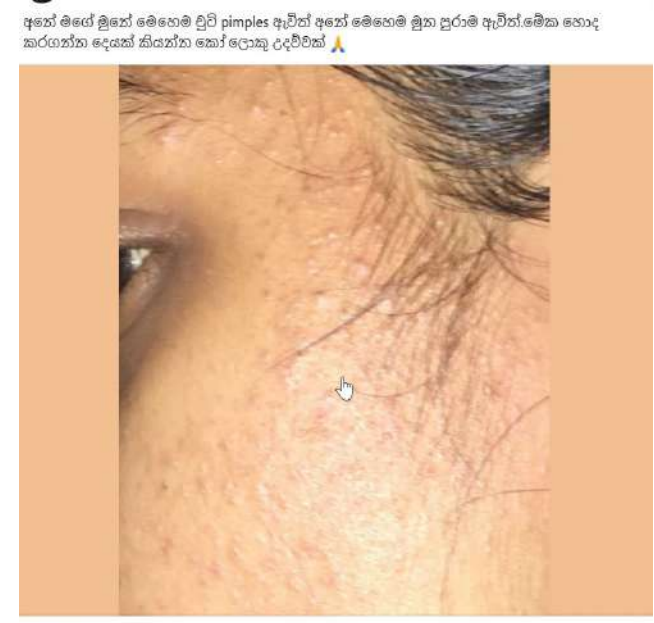
Whitening Cosmetic manufacturing

Whitening Face cream, Whitening Body lotion, Whitening Creamy soap, Whitening Glycerin soap, Whitening Serum, Pink Lip balm, Whitening Face pack, Whitening Face and body scrub

Whitening Face gel - සොමිලේ ඉගෙන ගන්නක් පුළුවන්

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Hk's Post

Cosmetic Items

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Chat on WhatsApp

Shopping

මිස් මන් නයිට් රෝස් ක්‍රීම් එකක් හදලා මන් කලින් one day course එකකට රොයිට් වුනා වෙන තැනක අපිට කිසිම විටියේ එකක් දුන්නේ නෑ නොවී එක විතරයි හම්බුනේ මන් මිස්ගේ youtube එකේ විටියේ එක බලාල මේ ක්‍රීම් එක හදලා වෙන වෙනම පින් මිස් ඔයාට ඔයා නිසා තමා මේක හදාගන්න පුළුවන් උනේ වෙන කවුරුන් නිසා නෙවෙයි. මිස්ට කලින් දුන ගත්තම මිස්ලා හිතෙන වාර අනන්තයි දැන්

9:53 AM

9:53 AM

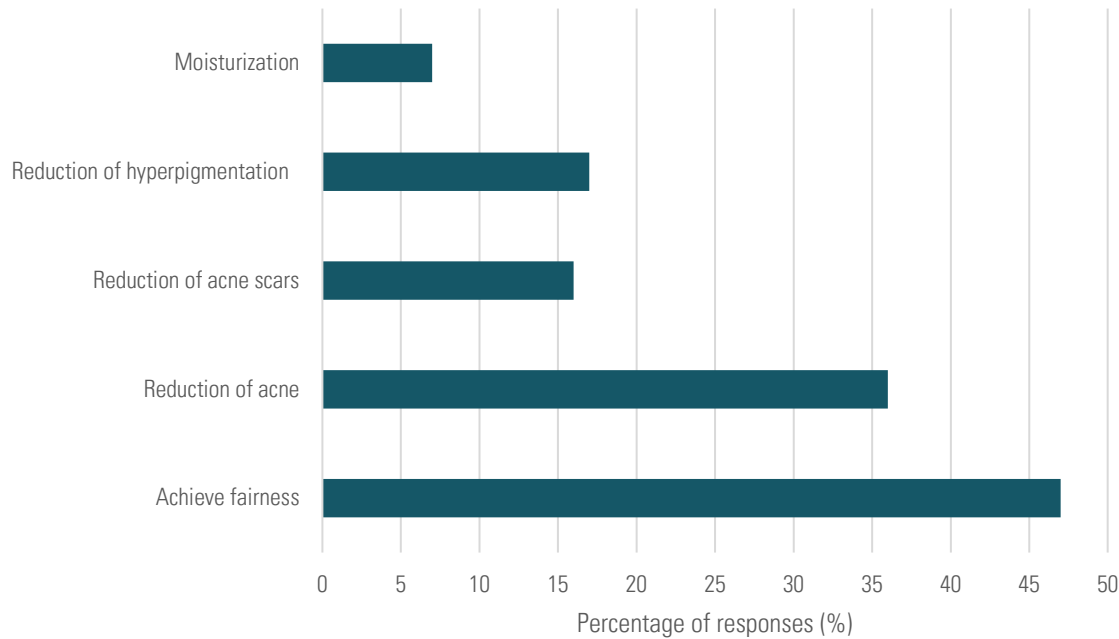
Like Comment Send Share

Chat on WhatsApp

Disclaimer: None of these products or platforms displayed here are promoted or demoted. They are displayed solely for awareness purposes.

USE OF SLPS- STUDY BY DERMATOLOGISTS

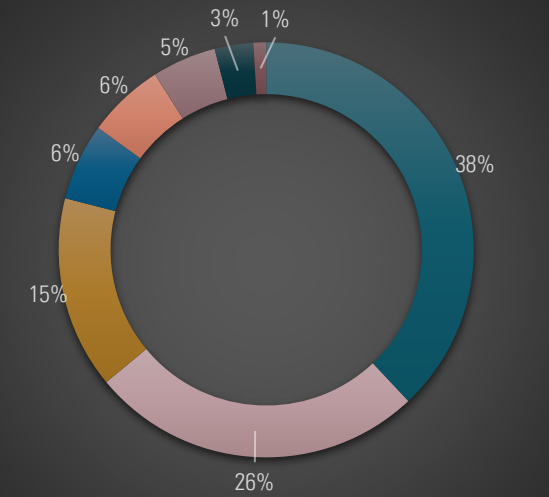
The reasons for applying skin whitening products



Total sample #	100
# of females	94
# of males	6

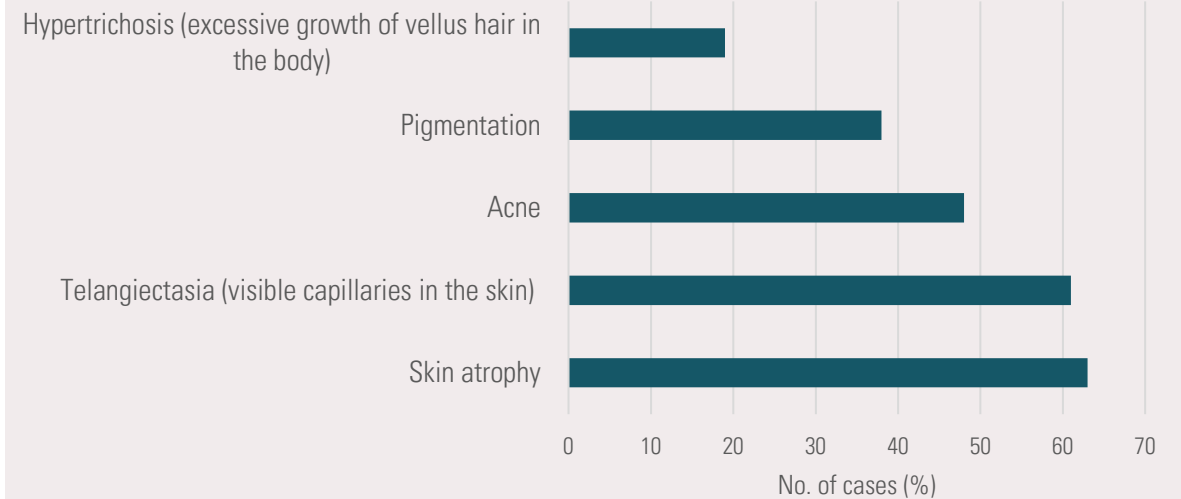
Age range 13 to 51 years

Sources of recommendation



■ Friends
 ■ Own self
 ■ Beautician
 ■ Pharmacy
■ Cosmetic shop
 ■ Family member
 ■ Doctor
 ■ Media

Main adverse reactions observed



Fonseka, S. and Wijekoon, V.D.B., (2019). Use of skin whitening products in Sri Lanka: an observational study. *Sri Lanka Journal of Medicine*, 28(1). doi: <http://doi.org/10.4038/sljm.v28i1.108>

LEVELS OF MERCURY IN SKIN LIGHTENING PRODUCTS IN SRI LANKA

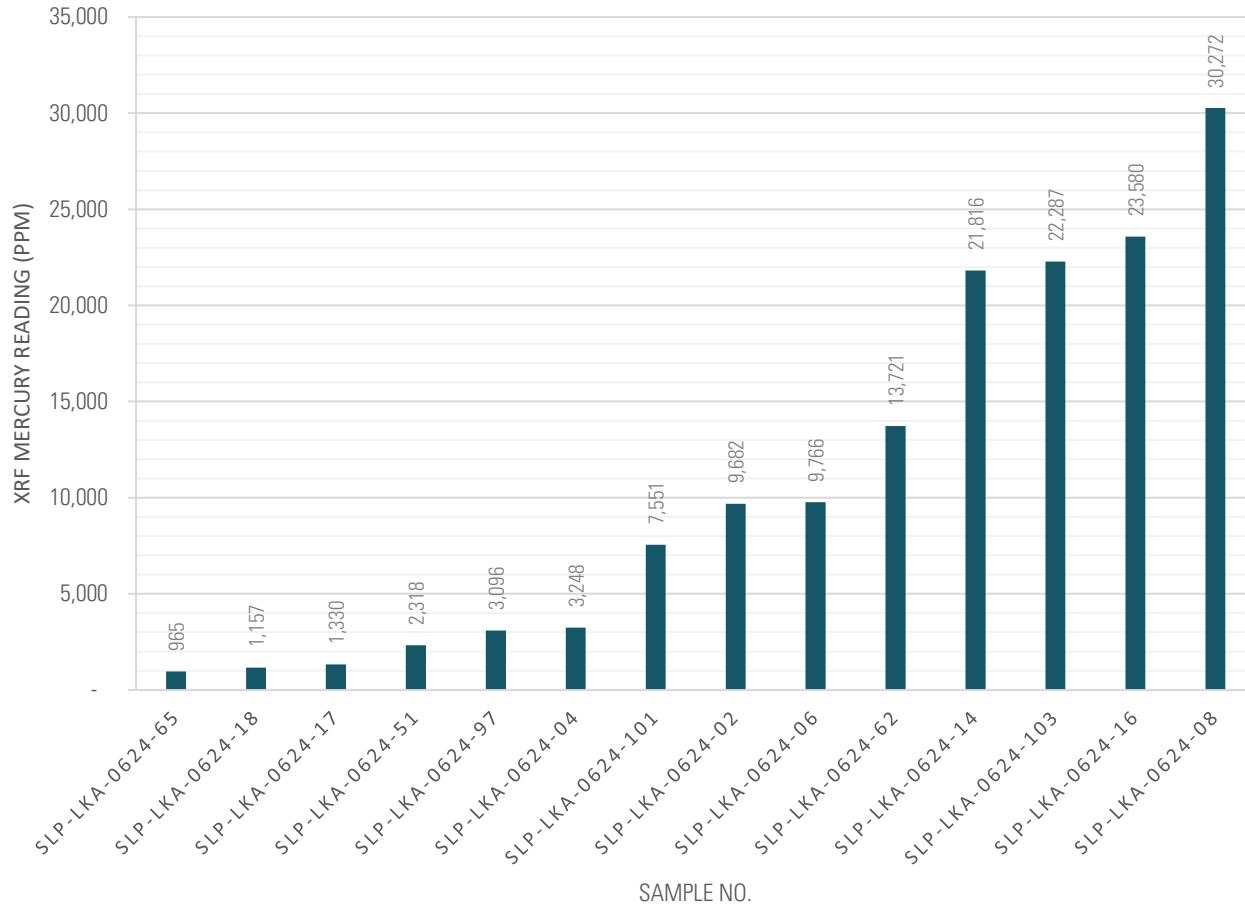
1st phase screening results



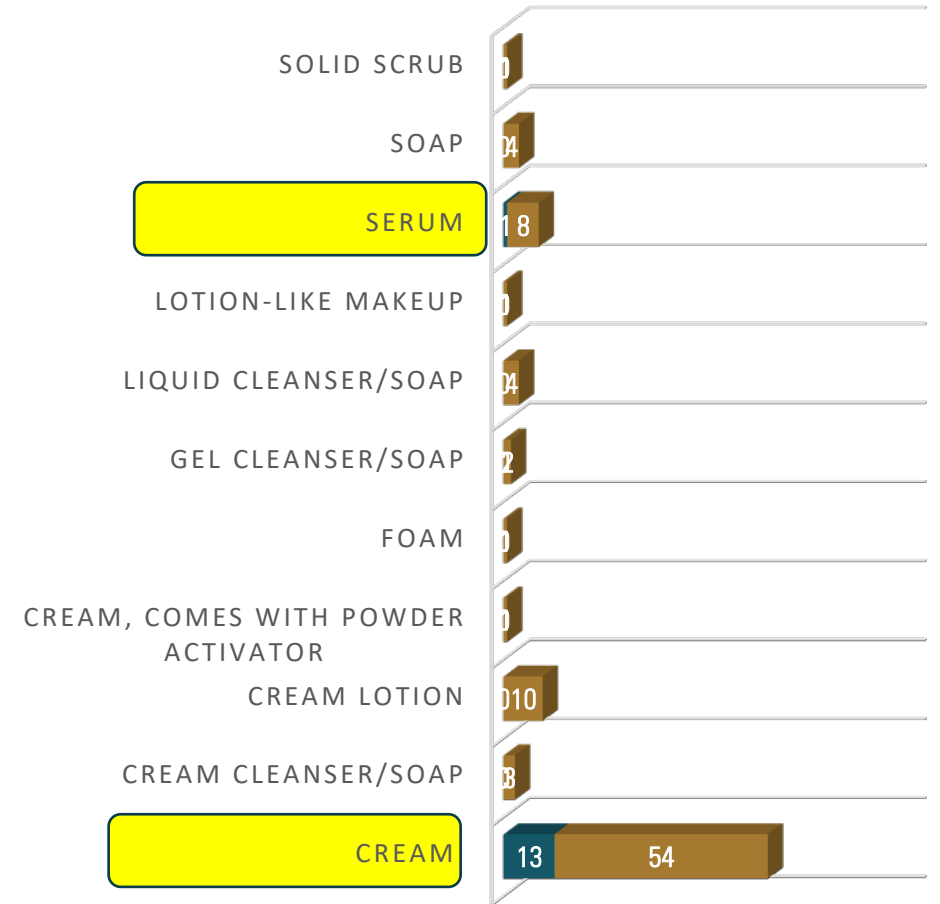
Results of the First phase analysis by BRI

Methodology:

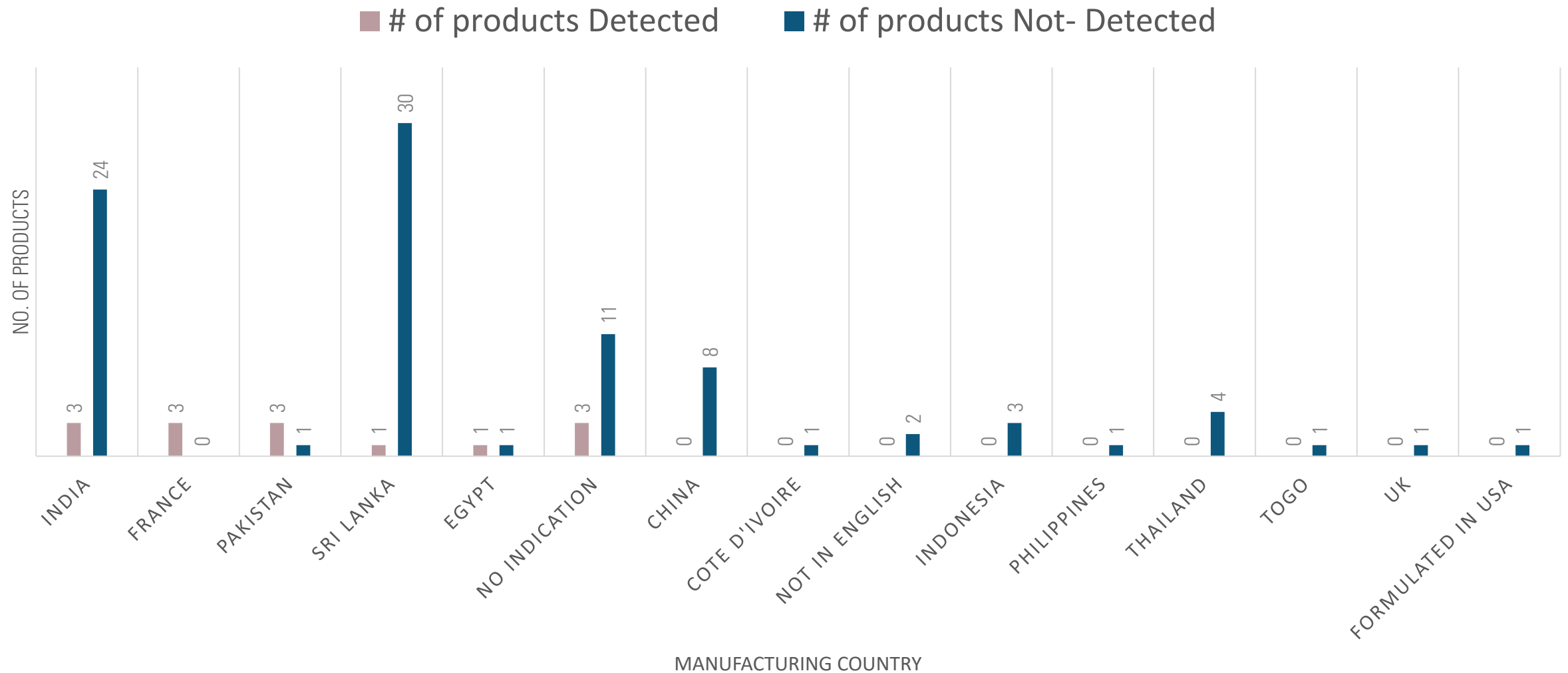
103 samples were logged and screened at BRI's laboratory in Portland, Maine, USA using the x-ray fluorescence (XRF) analyzer to determine mercury concentrations **over 10 parts per million (ppm).**



■ # of products Detected ■ # of products Not- Detected



Results in relation to country of manufacture



LEGISLATION

Existing legal framework

2069/37 - 2018 මැයි මස 03 වැනි බ්‍රහස්පතින්දා - 2018
No. 2069/37 - THURSDAY, MAY 03 2018

(Published by Authority)

PART I : SECTION (I) — GENERAL **Government Notifications**

Direction No. 65

CONSUMER AFFAIRS AUTHORITY ACT, No. 09 OF 2003

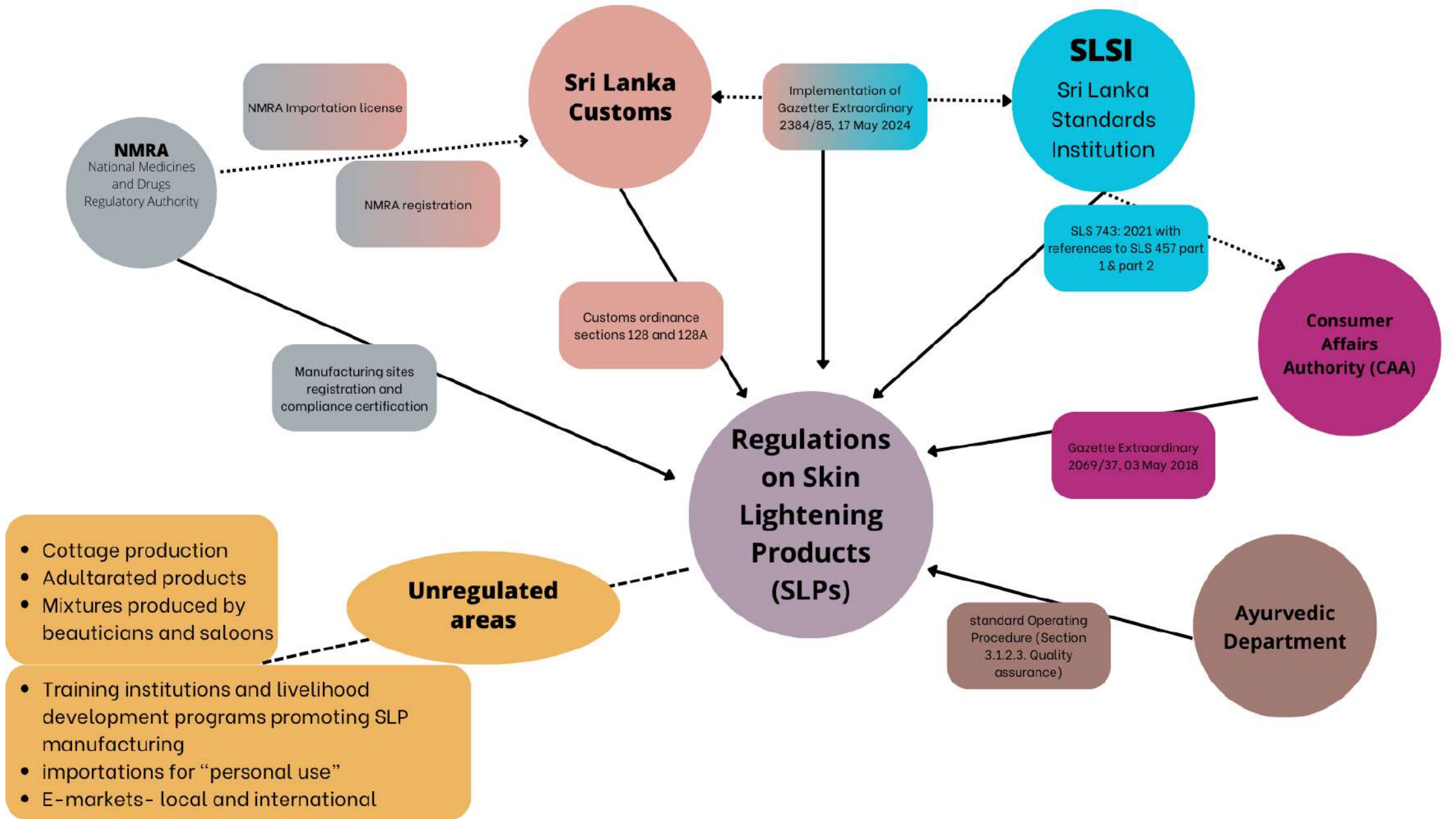
Direction under Section 12(2)

ACTING under the powers vested in it by Section 12(2) of the Consumer Affairs Authority Act, No. 09 of 2003, the Consumer Affairs Authority directs that no Manufacturer, Importer, Packer, Distributor or Trader shall manufacture, import, distribute, pack, store or sell or display for sale, expose for sale, or offer for sale, wholesale or retail any skin creams and lotions unless such skin creams and lotions shall conform to the permissible maximum limits for heavy metals when tested in accordance with ISO/TR 17276 as specified in SLS 743 issued by the Sri Lanka Standard Institution.

<i>Heavy Metal</i>	<i>Permissible Maximum Limit</i>
Lead (as Pb)	10 mg/kg
Arsenic (as As)	3 mg/kg
Mercury (as Hg)	1 mg/kg
Cadmium (as Cd)	3 mg/kg

Skin Creams and Lotions include ;

(1) makeup creams and lotions



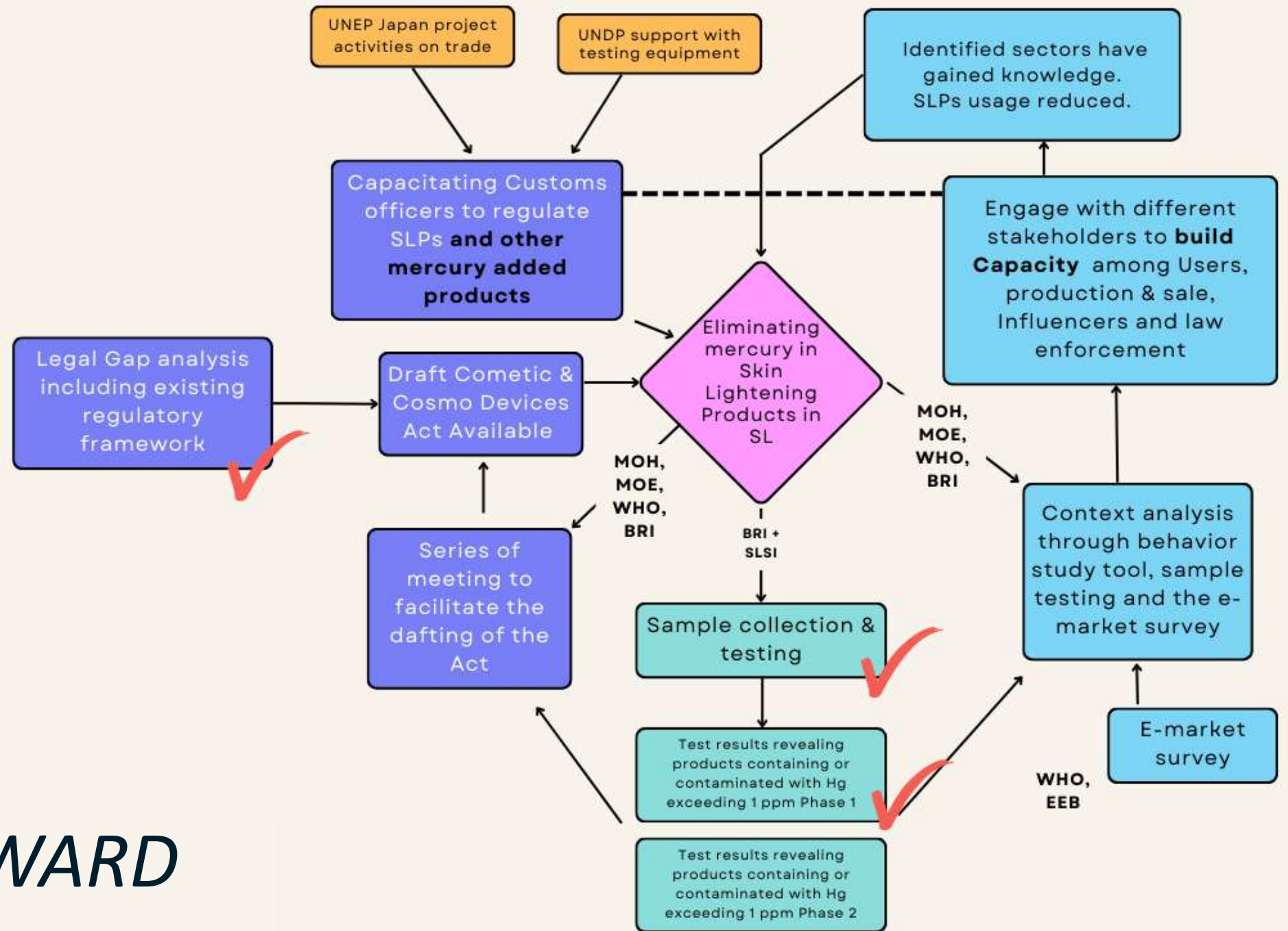
GAPS AND CHALLENGES

Gaps

- **Absence** of an Act on cosmetics binding both formal and informal markets, including local and imported goods, all potentially harmful chemical additives as well as cosmetics and cosmo-devices life cycle.
- **Coordination gaps** among authorities in law implementation
- **Voluntary** standards and procedures, including registration.

Challenges

- **Implementation capacity** of regulatory bodies.
- **Testing capacity** and lack of financial support for regular surveillance.
- **Unregulated markets**, including online sales, mixtures prepared in salons and clinics, and cottage productions operating outside regulatory oversight.



WAY FORWARD

THANK YOU

The Team

Dr. Inoka Suraweera

–Ministry of Health

Mr. S M Werahera

–Ministry of Environment

Dr. Farrukh Qureshi

–WHO Sri Lanka

T. Suveendran

–WHO Sri Lanka

Chalani Rubesinghe

–WHO Sri Lanka

Eliminating Mercury Skin Lightening Products

Project Jamaica Forecasting 2024-2025

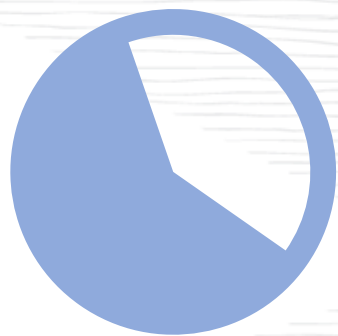
Jamaica Project Updates and Achievements Component 1



Outcome of	Activity	Progress Updates
Established, or improved legislation and reduced demand at national level.	1.1.3.1 Develop information materials for awareness raising.	NPC completed the formulation and review of health care worker training material.

Jamaica Project Achievements

Component 1



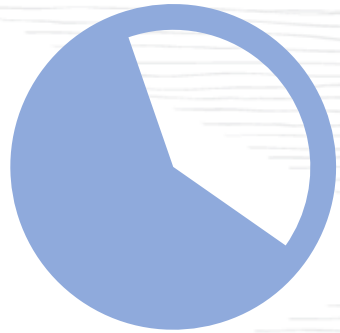
Outcome of	Activity	Progress Updates
<p>Established, or improved legislation and reduced demand at national level.</p>	<p>1.1.3.2 - 1.1.3.3</p> <p>Organize awareness raising campaigns on SLPs and facilitate media outreach and awareness events.</p>	<p>8 June 2023 Radio Panel Discussion on Nationwide News Network 90 FM -Live broadcast (radio, Facebook and YouTube)</p> <p>Public Forum: Tackling the Problem of the Use of Skin Bleaching Products in Jamaica.</p>

Jamaica Project Updates and Achievements Component 1



Photograph of participants at the media awareness outreach in collaboration with the Medical Association of Jamaica June 8, 2023.

Jamaica Project Updates and Achievements Component 1



Outcome of	Activity	Progress Updates
<p>Established, or improved legislation and reduced demand at national level.</p>	<p>1.1.3.2 – 1.1.3.3</p> <p>Organize awareness raising campaigns on SLPs and facilitate media outreach and awareness events</p>	<p>June 2023 Twitter Community Engagement.</p> <p>MOHW - focal point led discussions on adverse effects of Hg SLP on women, men and pregnancy, and its environmental impact</p>

Jamaica Project Updates and Achievements Component 1



Nationwide90FM
@NationwideRadio

Dr. Heather Brown, National Coordinator of Dermatology is taking us through the history of skin bleaching in Jamaica. Tune in:
youtube.com/live/YjM4Q6j0v... #MAJSymposium

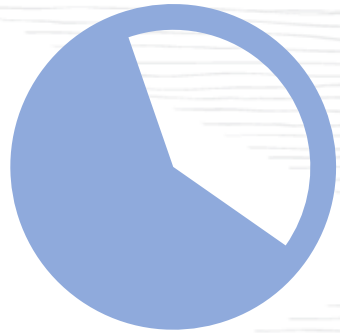
Partnership with

6:28 pm · 8 Jun 2023 · 956 Views

X (Formally Twitter) community forum on Skin Lightening and the adverse effect of Mercury Added SLPs.

The live feed had 956 views.

Jamaica Project Updates and Achievements Component 1



Outcome	Activity	Progress Updates
<p>Established, or improved legislation and reduced demand at national level.</p>	<p>1.1.3.2 – 1.1.3.3 Organize awareness raising campaigns on SLPs and facilitate media outreach and awareness events</p>	<p>11 June 2023 Public Lecture hosted by the Medical Association of Jamaica (MAJ) Presenter: WHO-Geneva Rep. Topic: “The Environmental Impact of the Use of Mercury in Skin Lightening Products”. Reach: ~ 90 national physicians (f2f) and > 100 virtually.</p>

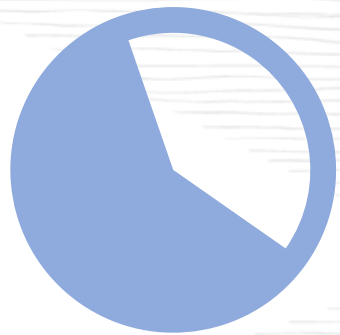
Jamaica Project Updates and Achievements Component 1



“The Environmental Impact of the Use of Mercury in Skin Lightening Products”.

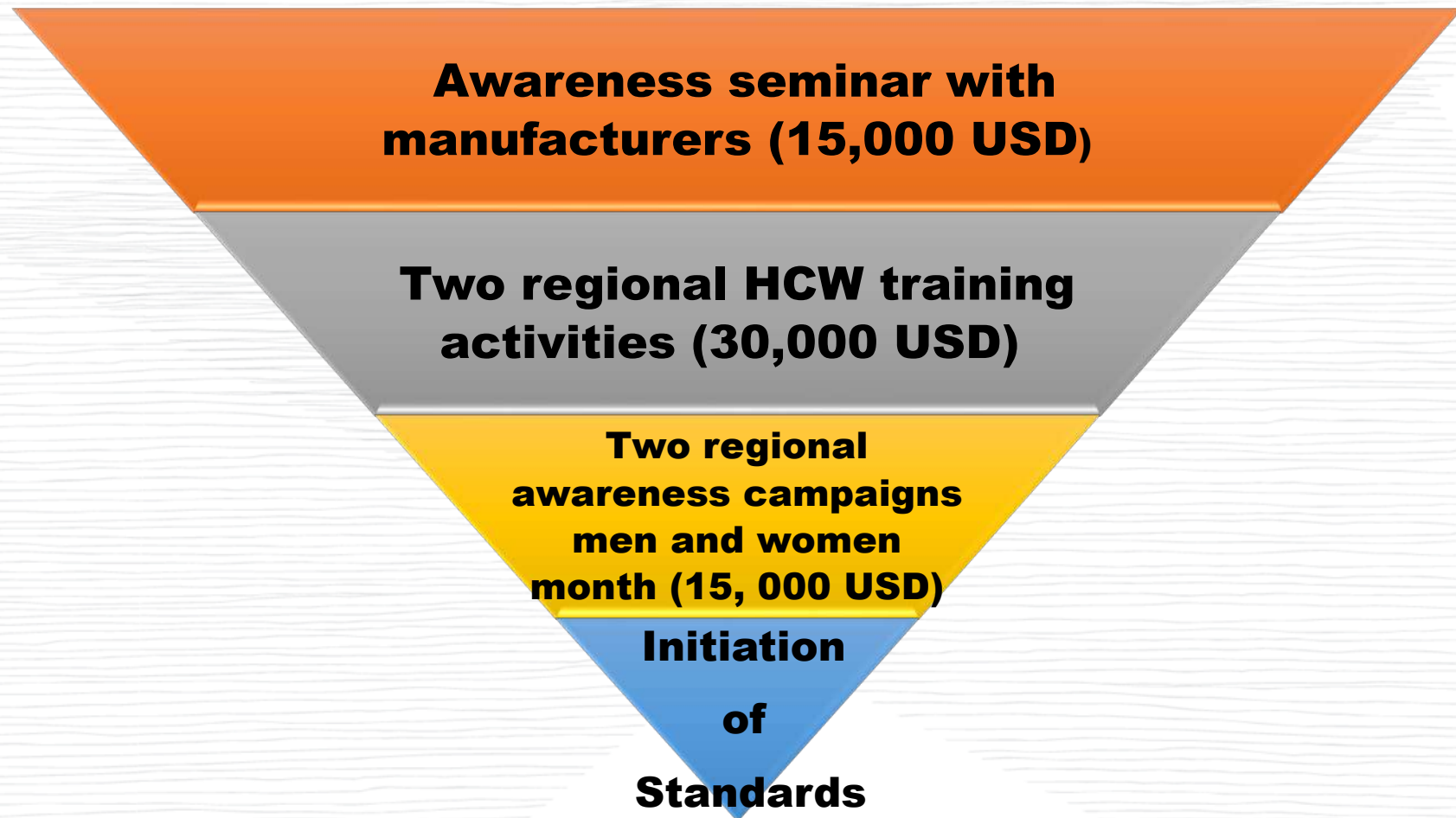
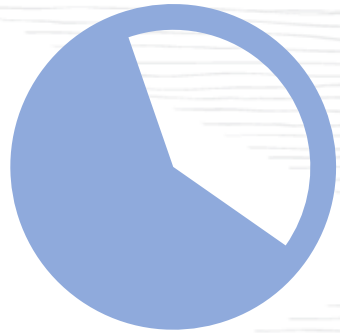
Presentation by: Lesley Onyon

Jamaica Project Updates and Achievements Component 1

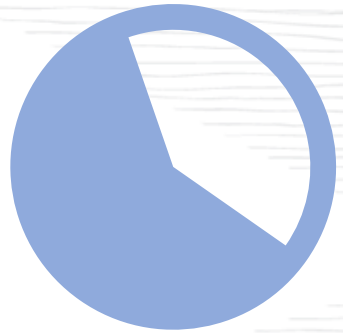


Outcome	Activity	Progress Updates
Established, or improved legislation and reduced demand at national level.	1.1.3.2 – 1.1.3.3 Organize awareness raising campaigns on SLPs and facilitate media outreach and awareness events	Video interviews termed VOX POPs previously conducted by radio journalists in a local market, captured local perspectives from users and non-users

Synopsis of prospective activities



Synopsis of prospective activities



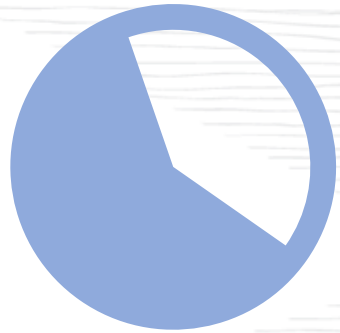
**Training of
Enforcement
agents**

**Improve
surveillance
and
regulatory
SOP**

**Conclude inve
stigative
procedures on
manufacturing**

**Phase 2
testing**

Synopsis of prospective activities



CARIBBEAN SUB-REGIONAL MEETING

POSSIBLE MID PROJECT MEETING

**END OF PROJECT MEETING
(20,000 USD)**

Critical Considerations

Data Analysis over the 17-year period highlighted several challenges and barriers to eliminating mercury based SLPs.

- National Testing Capacity
- Regulations and Enforcement
- Paucity of research on the “Push and Pull” (behavioural studies with a gender approach) factors as determinants of health. Planning and research protocols to be developed within project timeline, execution may likely extend beyond project end date.
- Active screening and awareness in the public health sectors.
- Awareness and knowledge among users and members of the community.
- Considerable interest from various stakeholders and the medical fraternity that can be tapped to provide support.

-End-

Thank you for your attention !

Dr. Alecia Hamilton Campbell

email: hamiltoale@paho.org

tel: 1-876-999-0852 (Mobile)



Looking ahead – project key activities in 2025
WHO, BRI, GMP

GEF 10810: ELIMINATING MERCURY SKIN LIGHTENING PRODUCTS: PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project objective

To reduce the risk of exposure to mercury-added skin lightening products



Timeline:
August 2022 – August 2025



Multisectoral collaboration between Ministry of Health and Ministry of Environment in project countries



Co-financing partners include WHO, UNEP/GMP, civil society (6), Ministries (6), and private sector (1)

GEF 10810: ELIMINATING MERCURY SKIN LIGHTENING PRODUCTS: PROJECT OVERVIEW – COMPONENTS AND OUTPUTS

1 National capacity building on legislation, enforcement, compliance, and awareness raising strategies



Project countries have established, or improved legislation based on developed model regulations



Project countries have strengthened capacity to develop enforcement and compliance strategies to support legislation on SLPs



Health professionals and the general public in target countries have increased awareness of health risks associated with mercury SLPs

Project countries regulate mercury SLPs in line with the Minamata Convention

2 Reduce or stop production, trade, distribution of SLPs in project countries



Ministries of Health in project countries demonstrate increased awareness of local markets for SLPs, including production, distribution and usage



Manufacturers, traders, and distributors in target countries demonstrate increased awareness of the danger associated with mercury SLPs



Authorities in target countries have increased capacity to identify, monitor and report on the market for SLPs

Target countries have reduced local production, trade and distribution of mercury SLPs

3 Knowledge management



Outcome: Global manufacturing and trade of mercury SLPs reduced

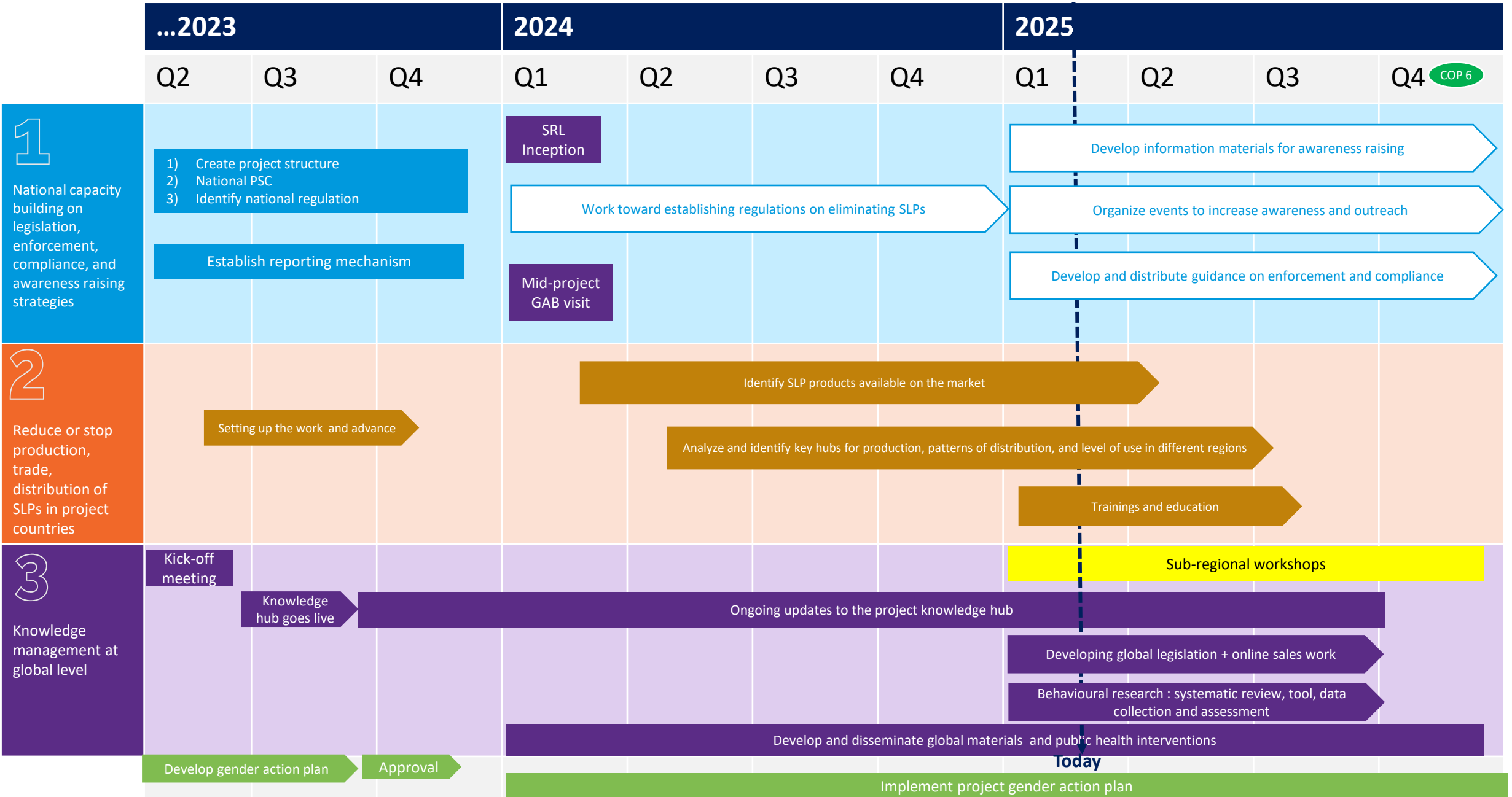


Global awareness increased through policy support



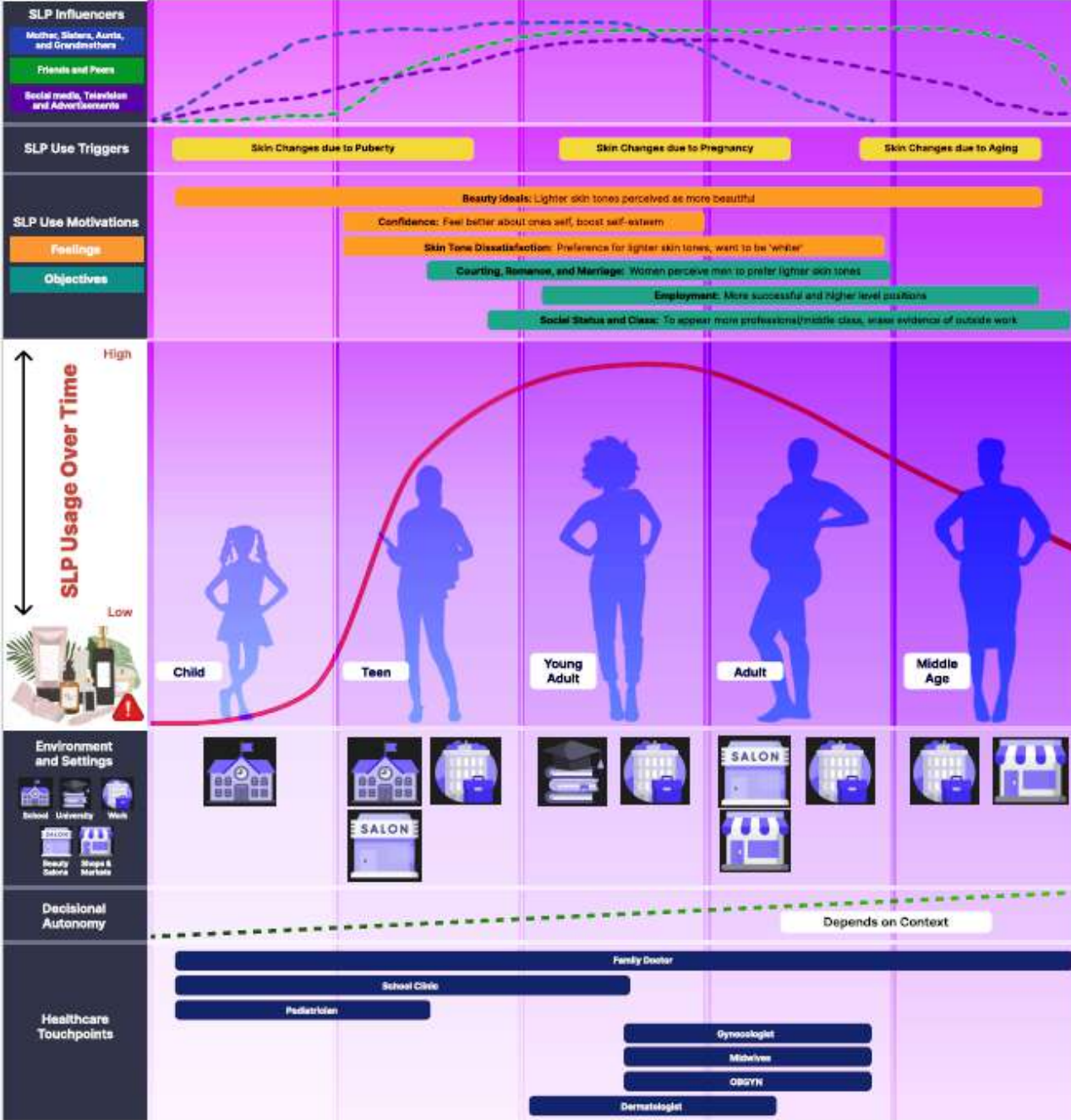
Global awareness increased through advocacy campaign and international meetings

PROJECT CURRENT STATUS AND TIMELINE



Mapping Women's Journeys through the Use of Skin Lightening Products (SLPs)

This journey map illustrates how a woman's relationship with skin-lightening products (SLPs) can evolve across different life stages—from adolescence to adulthood. By visually tracing her key triggers, motivations, and influences, we can uncover opportunities to help women make healthier choices.



Update on Targeted Technical Assistance - WHO

- **Behavioural insights /public health interventions**
 - what is the problem in terms of behaviours
 - what are the barriers/drivers
 - what are the interventions to address the barriers
- **Project deliverables**
 - ❖ Survey tool and template for ethical clearance
 - ❖ Tool for mapping/understanding user journeys
 - ❖ Country support for crafting communication messages
- **Model Regulatory Framework/Toolbox**
 - Building on the WHO survey to enrich the information on the survey from MC (75 respondents – 59 MC Parties)
 - Cosmetics legislation is largely mandate of the Ministry of Health/medicines agent
 - Regulatory depends on national context
- **Online sales**
 - **Identifying SLPs available** on the online marketplace operating in three countries; assessing relevant info.
 - **Creating a better understanding** of the magnitude and proportion of online sales of SLPs, and how such products are made available through online marketplaces operating in the three countries;
 - **Providing information** on existing controls for online sales of different products - regulatory and voluntary
 - **Documenting success stories** that can benefit and potentially apply in project countries in their endeavours on controlling and regulating relevant online sales;
 - **Developing methodologies** that could be used to assess changes in online marketing practices that could be tested in the overall evaluation of the project, and by other countries interested in working to tighten regulation of online sales.

Update on Global Database on Hg SLPs - BRI


Eliminating Mercury in Skin Lightening Products

Skin Lightening Products About the Project **Project Countries** Global Database Recommended Sampling and Analy... Ne →

Gabon
In Gabon, inventory assessments conducted under Minamata Initial Assessments (MIAs) estimated...

Jamaica
Research has shown that SLPs have been promoted through advertisements, marketing strategies, an...

Sri Lanka
Sri Lanka has 23 official local cosmetics and pharmaceutical manufacturing industries involv...



Skin Lightening Products About the Project Project Countries Global Database **Recommended Sampling and Analy...** Next Steps

More specific data on mercury concentrations can be made available for tracking of progress in phase out of skin lightening product availability/mercury content in skin lightening products.

Trends in Supply Chains Identified for Mercury Skin Lightening Products

At this stage of the process, this literature review data is being used to identify:

- potential key hubs for production
- patterns of distribution and;
- products of interest for testing in project countries/regions.

Measured mercury content was extracted from various sources including peer-reviewed literature as well as governmental and NGO databases. Samples were grouped by either the country in which they were collected or by the country of manufacture as reported by the label and calculated median mercury content by country. Results are shown on a log scale due to the extensive range in mercury content across samples.



Figure 46. Average rates of Hg content by country of collection.

The maps display the log of median mercury content in skin lightening product samples by country of collection (44) and by country of manufacture (48) based on the literature review conducted on existing verified datasets. Labels over each country show the number of samples analyzed. (Sources: Eaci, TomTom, FAO, NOAA, CSOS)




Figure 46. Average rates of Hg content by country of manufacture.

Existing data on Hg concentrations in SLPs has been compiled with over 2,800 datasets.

To date, under the project, over 374 SLPs have been sampled using a standard sampling protocol and Hg concentrations are currently being verified.

Data is being compiled to determine:

- Potential key hubs for **production**
- Patterns of **distribution**
- **Products of interest** for testing in project countries/regions

Compiled and verified data is being used for the development of a global database to be hosted on UNEP GMP's website that is intended to:

- Be used by governments as a **reference** for the development of regulations to prevent import/export/manufacture of Hg SLPs (which will enable monitoring by Customs and other agencies).
- Serve as a **'living' database** with a mechanism for other researchers/monitoring entities to access/contribute to
- Allow for more specific data on Hg concentrations to be made available for **tracking of progress in phase out of** SLP product availability/ Hg content in SLPs

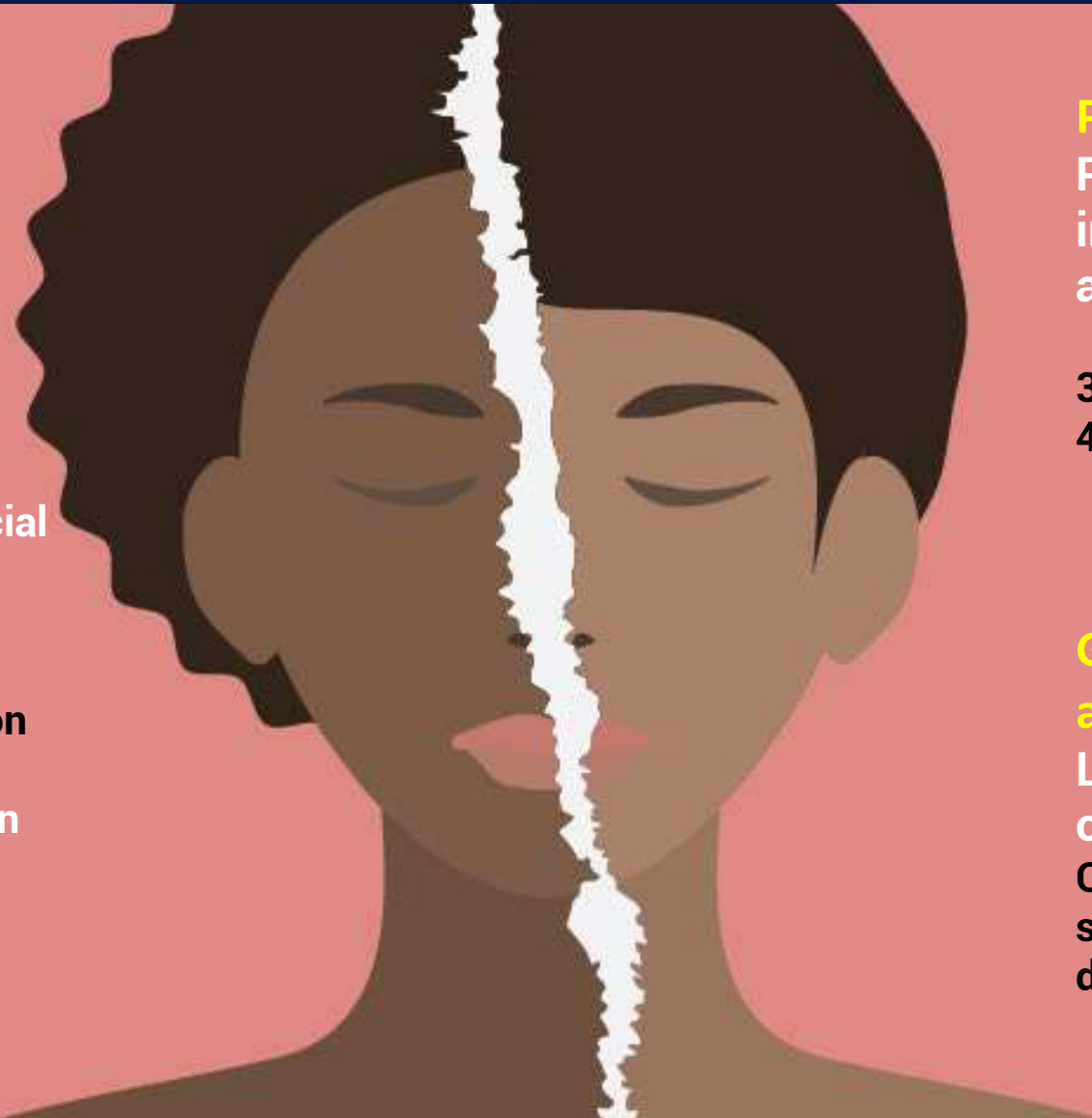
Global communication events

Joint event with Minamata Convention – Unmasking Mercury and Colorism in Cosmetics
5th March 2025

Tackling mercury pollution and racial discrimination jointly
21 March 2025
The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Sub-regional workshops planned in Asia and LAC

COP6 special event on SLP?



Project stakeholder group
Platform to exchange information between project and stakeholder on the topic

3rd meeting – 30 Jan 2025
4th meeting – September 2025

Global data and trends analysis

Leverage global information on SLP value chain
Ongoing – in parallel with online sales research and global database development



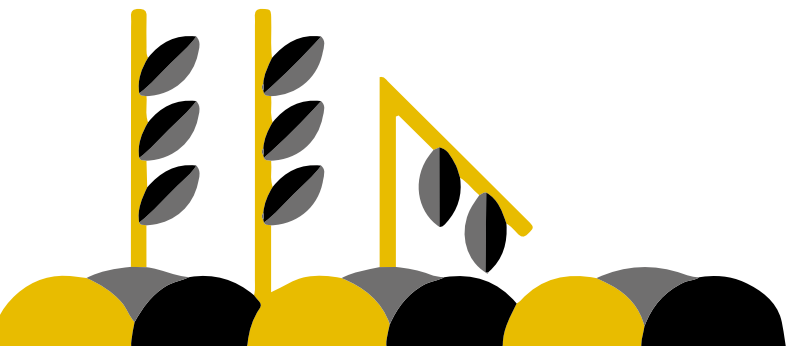
UPDATES FROM THE STAKEHOLDERS



Minamata Convention on Mercury: COP-5 decision and report for COP-6 on mercury-added cosmetics

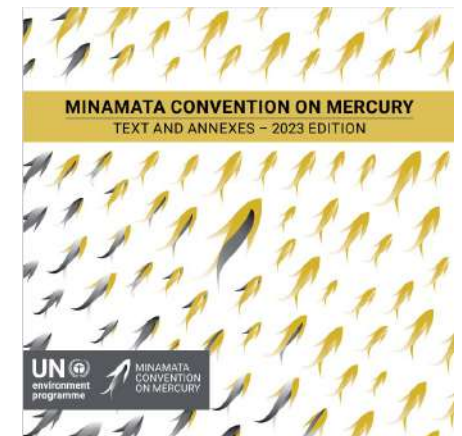
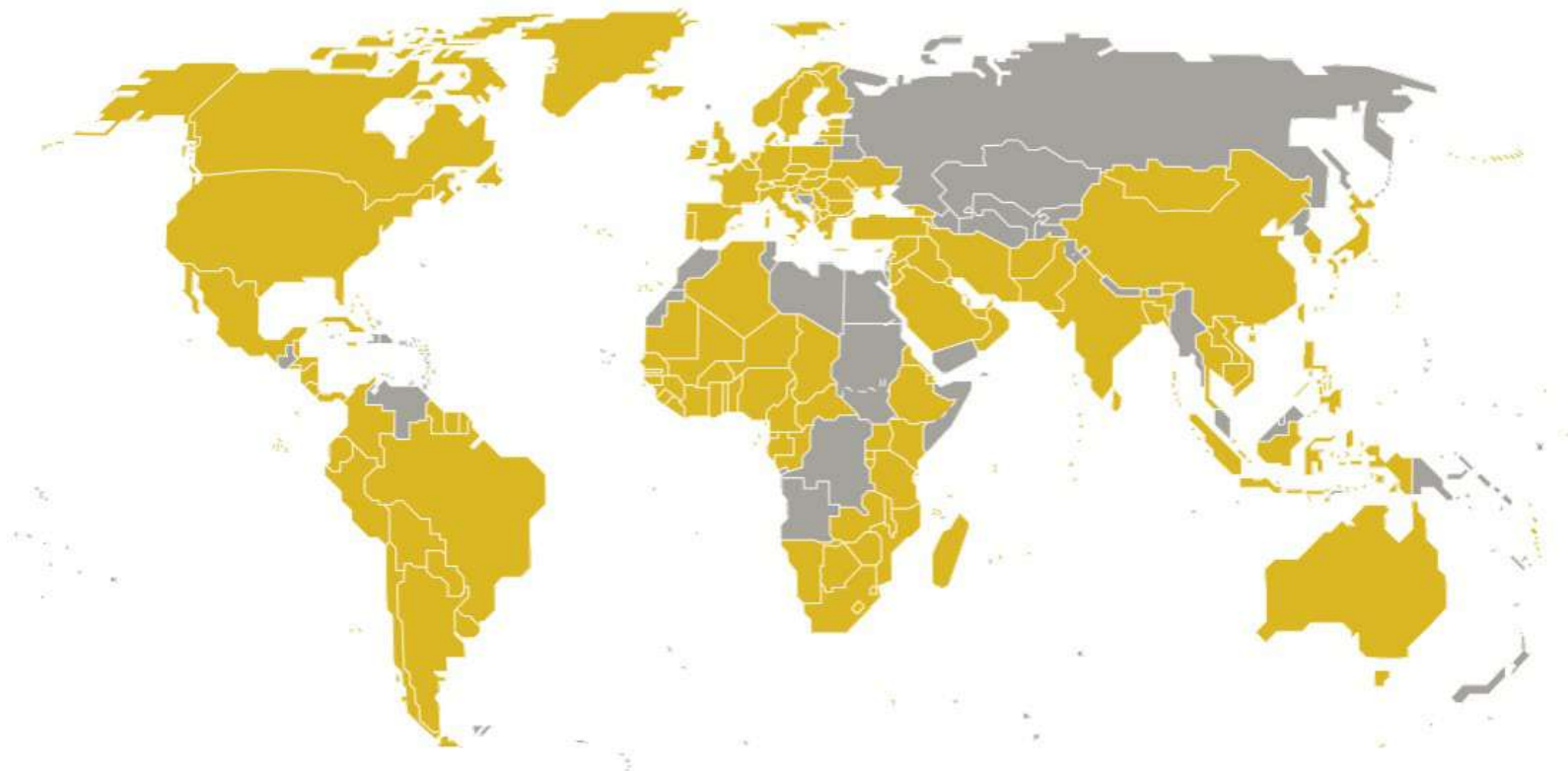
Secretariat of the Minamata Convention

Third meeting of the Eliminating Mercury Skin Lightening Products project stakeholders group
30 January 2025



Minamata Convention of Mercury

- ▶ Global legally-binding treaty addressing mercury pollution.
- ▶ Objective: to **protect the human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds.**
- ▶ Adopted in October 2013, entered into force in August 2017.
- ▶ 152 Parties, as of January 2025



Life cycle of mercury

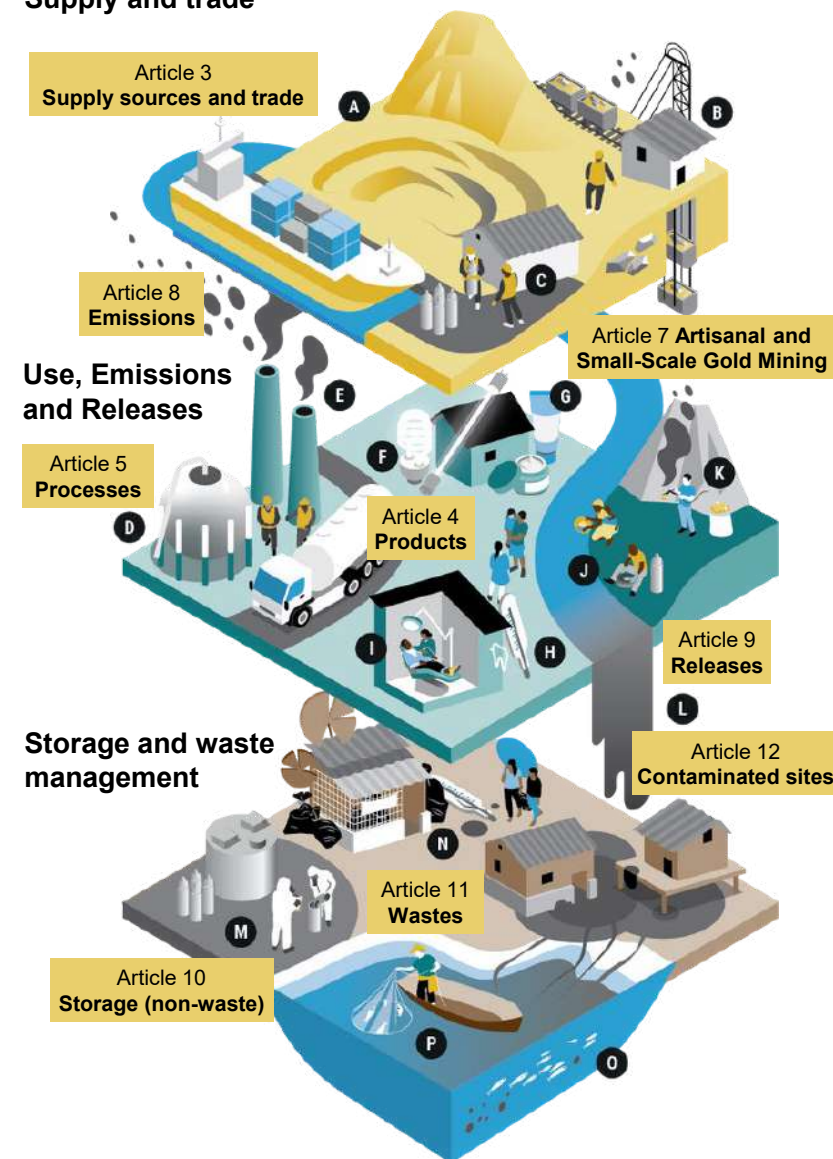
- ▶ The Minamata Convention **controls the whole life cycle of mercury**.
- ▶ Controlling the **anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury** throughout its lifecycle has been a key factor in shaping the obligations under the Convention, which include:
 - a **ban on new mercury mines** and the phase out of existing ones
 - control of **international trade** of mercury
 - the phase out and phase down of mercury use in a number of **products and processes**
 - **control measures** on emissions to air, releases to land and water, and waste disposal

- the regulation of the **artisanal and small-scale gold mining**, often conducted informally.

- ▶ The Convention also addresses interim storage of mercury and sites contaminated by mercury, as well as reducing human exposure to mercury.

- A. Cinnabar ore mining to produce mercury
- B. Mercury being supplied from primary mining
- C. Mercury being internationally traded
- D. Mercury being used in various industries such as chlorine and caustic soda
- E. Mercury being emitted to air from coal burning and other industries
- F. Fluorescent lamps
- G. Skin-lightening products
- H. Thermometers
- I. Dental amalgam
- J. Mercury being used to extract gold in gold mining
- K. Mercury being vaporized through burning to obtain gold
- L. Mercury being released into land and water
- M. Interim storage
- N. Mercury being emitted and released from waste management
- O. Mercury accumulating in fish from micro-organisms
- P. Humans being exposed to mercury through food consumption

Supply and trade



Source: [Minamata Convention on Mercury](#)

What are Parties required to do on mercury-added products

ARTICLE 4

Mercury-added products

1. Each Party shall not allow, by taking appropriate measures, the manufacture, import or export of mercury-added products listed in Part I of Annex A after the phase-out date specified for those products, except where an exclusion is specified in Annex A or the Party has a registered exemption pursuant to Article 6.
2. A Party may, as an alternative to paragraph 1, indicate at the time of ratification or upon entry into force of an amendment to Annex A...

Parties shall:

Not allow the manufacture, import or export of mercury-added products listed in Part I of Annex A

- after the specified phase out date
- unless the Party registered exemption.
- Parties may choose, when becoming a Party to the Convention, to take other measures and report those measures to Conference of the Parties (COP). (Paragraph 2)

Mercury-added products	phase out date
Cosmetics (with mercury content above 1ppm), including skin lightening soaps and creams, and not including eye area cosmetics where mercury is used as a preservative and no effective and safe substitute preservatives are available ^{1/}	2020
Cosmetics, including skin-lightening soaps and creams, and not including eye area cosmetics where mercury is used as a preservative and no effective and safe substitute preservatives are available ^{1/}	2025

¹ The intention is not to cover cosmetics, soaps or creams with trace contaminants of mercury.

Decision MC-5/5: Preparation of a report on cosmetics listed in part I of annex A to the Minamata Convention

The Executive Secretary issued a [letter](#) inviting submission of information on 5 March 2024.

The Conference of the Parties

1. *Invites* Parties and relevant stakeholders to submit information to the secretariat by 30 June 2024 on challenges in preventing the manufacture, import and export of cosmetics listed in part I of annex A to the Minamata Convention on Mercury, as well as on current or proposed measures for addressing these challenges taken by Parties and others, including the Global Mercury Partnership;

2. *Requests* the secretariat to prepare a draft report, compiling and synthesizing the information described in paragraph 1 above, addressing topics such as, but not limited to, the following: phasing out sales and offers of sales of mercury-added cosmetics; strategies for discouraging the marketing, advertising and display of mercury-added cosmetics; advisories, detention lists and prohibited

substances lists concerning mercury-added cosmetics; licensing and product ingredient approvals for cosmetics manufacturing facilities; developing and implementing product safety pledges for online platforms; and raising awareness of the hazards of skin-lightening product use among physicians, dermatologists and beauty centre staff, as well as consumers and family members;

3. *Also requests* the secretariat to make the draft report mentioned in paragraph 2 above available to Parties and relevant stakeholders by 31 March 2025 so that they can review it and comment on it;

4. *Further requests* the secretariat to prepare a final report, taking into account the comments submitted by Parties and relevant stakeholders in accordance with paragraph 3 above, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting.



Decision MC-5/5: Submissions

Submissions were received from the following Parties:

- Albania
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Brazil
- Burkina Faso
- Canada
- China
- Comoros
- Dominican Republic
- European Union
- Gabon
- Guatemala
- Guinea
- Japan
- Madagascar
- Mauritania
- Niger
- Philippines
- Republic of Korea
- Sierra Leone
- Sri Lanka
- Thailand
- United States of America

Also from the following organizations:

- BAN Toxics
- Environment and Social Development Organization
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- Mercury Policy Project
- New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- WE_ACT
- Zero Mercury Working Group

Submissions are available from:


<https://owncloud.unog.ch/s/NOq861kP4jB8c6J>



Report on Decision MC-5/5: Structure of the report

Executive summary

1. Introduction
 2. Methodology
 3. Submissions from Parties and Stakeholders
 - 3.1 Overview of Submissions
 - 3.2 Submissions by Parties
 - 3.3 Submission by Stakeholders
 - 3.4 Input from the Global Mercury Partnership
 - 3.5 Input from the WHO/Health Sector
 4. Key findings and analysis
 - 4.1 Preventing the Manufacture, Import, and Export of Mercury-Added Cosmetics
 - 4.2. Phasing-Out Sales and Offers of Sales of Mercury-Added Cosmetics
 - 4.3. Strategies for Discouraging the Marketing, Advertising, and Display of Mercury-Added Cosmetics
 - 4.4. Advisories, Detention Lists, and Prohibited Substances Lists Concerning Mercury-Added Cosmetics
 - 4.5. Licensing and Product Ingredient Approvals for Cosmetics Manufacturing Facilities
 - 4.6. Developing and Implementing Product Safety Pledges for Online Platforms
 - 4.7. Raising Awareness of the Hazards of Skin-Lightening Product Use
 - 4.8. Other matters raised for consideration
 5. Conclusions
- Annex: Compilation of submitted information




Report on Decision MC-5/5: Section 4.1. Preventing the Manufacture, Import, and Export of Mercury-Added Cosmetics

Current regulations:

- 15 out of 23 parties reported on regulations on manufacturing – mercury regulation, food and drug regulation, product safety standards, etc.
- 17 out of 23 Parties reported on regulations on import and/or export.
- Burkina Faso, Madagascar and Sierra Leone reported on planned regulations

Challenges reported:

- Illegal manufacturing
- Misidentification at the border
- Personal use loophole, including online trade
- Non-compliant packaging
- Incomplete labeling
- Limited capacity of customs control (including mercury measurement)
- Limited market monitoring (complex supply chain)
- Absence of regulation and regulatory bodies
- Lack of awareness




Report on Decision MC-5/5: Section 4.2. Phasing-Out Sales and Offers of Sales of Mercury-Added Cosmetics

9 out of 23 Parties reported on regulations on sales and marketing

- Food and drug regulations covering sale
- Market surveillance and control (Argentina, EU)
- Ban on online sales (Gabon)


3 Parties did not specifically reported on sales and marketing regulations but mentioned regulation of manufacturing, import and/or export



Report on Decision MC-5/5: Section 4.3. Strategies for Discouraging the Marketing, Advertising, and Display of Mercury- Added Cosmetics

18 out of 23 Parties reported information


- Enforcement of regulations including inspection
- Monitoring of digital platforms
- Online complaint form (Canada)
- EU General Product Safety Regulation and Digital Services Act
- General product safety act setting out obligations of online providers
- Public awareness campaigns



Report on Decision MC-5/5: Section 4.4. Advisories, Detention Lists, and Prohibited Substances Lists Concerning Mercury- Added Cosmetics

15 out of 23 Parties reported information


- Restricted substances (Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, Canada, China, European Union, Gabon, Republic of Korea,
- List of unauthorized products (Canada)
- Publication of warning and other compliance actions (Philippines, Thailand and USA)



Report on Decision MC-5/5: Section 4.5. Licensing and Product Ingredient Approvals for Cosmetics Manufacturing Facilities

12 out of 23 Parties submitted information on measures taken


- “No licensing an approval systems” (Albania, Argentina, European Union, Japan, USA)



Report on Decision MC-5/5: Section 4.6. Developing and Implementing Product Safety Pledges for Online Platforms

11 out of 23 Parties submitted information

- Canadian product safety pledge (2023)
- EU Voluntary Memoranda of Understanding
- Monitoring of advertisements including online platforms




Report on Decision MC-5/5: Section 4.7. Raising Awareness of the Hazards of Skin- Lightening Product Use

17 out of 23 Parties submitted information

- EU regional risk information sharing system Safety Gate Rapid Alert System (RAPEX) reporting 90 cosmetic products with high mercury contents
- Awareness Day on the complications of artificial depigmentation (Mauritania)
- Alerts, workshops, social media campaigns...

Decision MC-5/5 mentions physicians, dermatologists and beauty centre staff, consumers and family members.

- Any targeted awareness raising actions?



Report on Decision MC-5/5: Section 4.8. Other matters raised for consideration

The following points were raised by Parties

- Align local regulations with international standards.
- Laboratory capacity especially at borders to be strengthened with equipment such as the XRF
- Carry out national/global inventory of mercury-added cosmetics
- Provide a mechanism for the disposal of cosmetic products containing mercury
- Provide a baseline for the use of cosmetic products containing mercury
- Collaboration of international regulatory bodies
- Collaboration between customs, and market surveillance authorities
- Promote research, and development of cosmetic products free of mercury
- Facilitate cooperation among the member countries of the Global Partnership on Mercury from UNEP to develop, and implement common international standards



Report on Decision MC-5/5: Next steps

Decision MC5/5 requested the Secretariat to make the draft report mentioned in paragraph 2 above available to Parties and relevant stakeholders by 31 March 2025 so that they can review it and comment on it.

- Draft report to be posted on the web in early February for comments by early April

Decision MC/5/5 further requested the Secretariat to prepare a final report, taking into account the comments submitted by Parties and relevant stakeholders, for consideration by COP-6.

The final report may cover issues such as:

- Challenges in controlling manufacture of mercury-added cosmetics
- Challenges in controlling import and export of mercury-added cosmetics
- Regulating and monitoring sales and advertisements
- Specific measures on online trade
- Addressing illegal manufacturing, trade, sales and marketing
- Building of institutional and technical capacity
- Effective awareness raising
- International cooperation (governments, IGOs, NGOs...)

Decision MC-5/3 requested the Secretariat to start a study on the global supply, production, trade and use of mercury compounds.

- Draft report to be posted on the Convention website in early February for review.



Thank you for your attention

Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury

United Nations Environment Programme

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[#MakeMercuryHistory](#)



MINAMATA
CONVENTION
ON MERCURY



**Moderated discussions and updates
from the stakeholders**
EEB/ZMWG

Stakeholders' updates

Third meeting of the Eliminating Mercury Skin Lightening Products project stakeholders' group

30 January 2025

Online, 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm (GMT+1)

Elena Lymberidi-Settimo, European Environmental Bureau

Michael Bender, Mercury Policy Project

International Co-coordinators Zero Mercury Working Group

UNEP GMP Products area Co-Leads



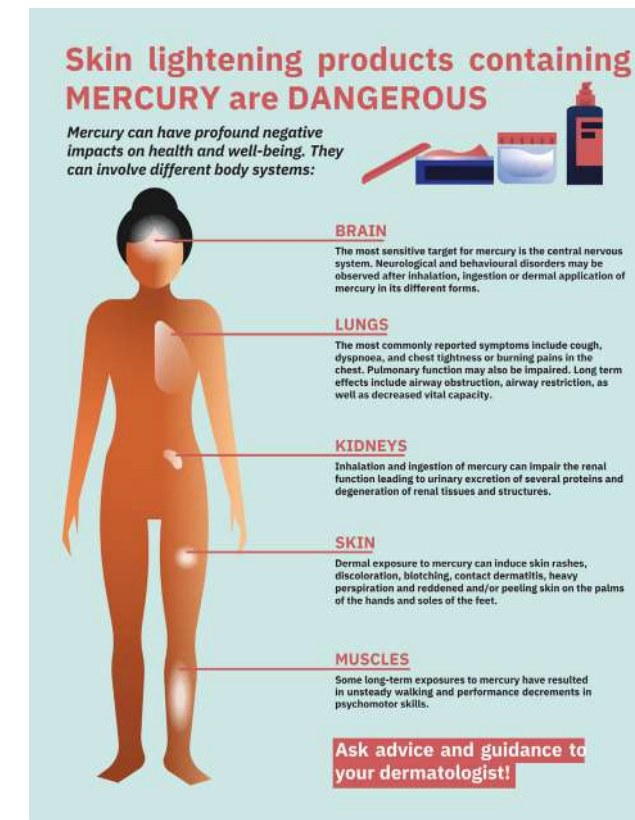
Key Highlights – Skin Lightening Products

• GMP Products Ongoing activities

- Developing GMP global mercury added skin lightening product (Hg/SLP) **database** w/BRI
- Circulating GMP **survey of online platforms on reducing/eliminating** sales offering of Hg/SLPs

Zero Mercury Working Group

- Submitted input to Secretariat following COP5 request to address challenges and measures to banning manufacture, trade of SLP
- In collaboration with WE ACT and US state and local governments, expanding ZMWG database, developing peer reviewed paper
- Presented at ICMGP 2024 in Cape Town
- Contributed to the UNEP/GEF project on *Eliminating mercury in SLPs*
 - Supporting the Stakeholder platform and relevant meetings
 - WHO/ Addressing online sales of Hg/SLPs in the Gabon, Sri Lanka, Jamaica
- Supported projects
 - in Pakistan (SDPI) with focus on Hg/SLP manufacturers,
 - in Philippines (BT) & Kenya (CEJAD), advancing work related to curtailing online sales



Investigating online sales of Hg/SLPs

Under the GEF funded, UNEP led, WHO/BRI executed project, EEB/ZMWG has been hired by WHO to contribute to existing knowledge about online sales and marketing of skin lightening products in each of the three project countries, Gabon, Jamaica, and Sri Lanka, and suggest mechanism for addressing this issue by:

- Identifying SLPs available on the online marketplace operating in three countries; assessing relevant info.
- Creating a better understanding of the magnitude and proportion of online sales of SLPs, and how such products are made available through online marketplaces operating in the three countries;
- Providing information on existing controls for online sales of different products - regulatory and voluntary
- Documenting success stories that can benefit and potentially apply in project countries in their endeavours on controlling and regulating relevant online sales;
- Developing methodologies that could be used to assess changes in online marketing practices that could be tested in the overall evaluation of the project, and by other countries interested in working to tighten regulation of online sales.



THANK YOU



UN environment programme

