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World Health  
Organization

Global Alliance to  
Eliminate Lead Paint

Lead Paint News | June 2019



## *Introduction*

As an important source of lead exposure globally, lead paint poses serious risks to human health and the environment. That is why the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint is working to achieve the goal that by 2020 all countries establish laws to address lead paint.

As we prepare for [World Environment Day](#) on June 5, we are proud to share additional updates about our recent progress and activities, as well as opportunities for governments, industry and civil society to join us in achieving this goal.

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## *Progress Towards Laws*

In this section we feature countries making progress toward laws. If your country is making progress, share your story to be considered for inclusion in our next newsletter!

ISRAEL: Through collaboration among the Ministries of Health, Environment, and Economy and local industry, Israel has recently developed a new, protective and mandatory standard restricting lead content to 90 ppm in all paints. There will be a two-year phase out period for the existing labelling standard until January 2021, after which the new standard will be fully in force.

SOUTH AFRICA: South Africa's National Department of Health is in the process of reviewing its existing regulation on lead in paint. A technical working group has been established, comprising government departments, non-governmental organizations and the paint industry, and is now developing a new draft

regulation.

ZAMBIA: The Zambia Bureau of Standards has drafted a new standard for paints, varnishes and coatings that limits total lead content to 90 ppm for all paints, and specifies sampling and testing procedures for total lead content.



### *Global Efforts to Address Lead Paint*

At the 3rd session of the Open-ended Working Group for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) awarded certificates of recognition to 65 countries that have committed to eliminating lead paint through joining the lead in paint component of the SAICM Global Environment Facility (GEF) project.

As part of the project, UNEP, with the support of project partners, is holding workshops to kick off development of laws by countries, and assistance to small and medium enterprises to reformulate paint:

- In March, 12 countries participated in the [Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia regional workshop](#) in Almaty, Kazakhstan.
- More than 40 key stakeholders, including 12 paint companies, attended the first [National Cleaner Production Centers launching workshop](#) in Amman, Jordan, 31 March–1 April.
- In May, 50 participants from at least 20 countries attended the African regional workshop in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.
- The Latin America and Caribbean workshop will take place in Panama City, Panama on 12 – 13 June and the NCPC launch for Andean countries will take place in Lima, Peru on 18–19 June.
- The Asia Pacific workshop in Bangkok, Thailand and the NCPC launch in Beijing, China are planned to take place third quarter of 2019.

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### *At the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA4)*

At the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA4), which took place 11–15 March 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya, Ministers [passed a resolution](#) requesting UNEP to prepare a report on issues posing a threat to human health and the environment, including lead in paint. The report will

analyse the ability of existing regulatory and policy frameworks to address these issues.

In advance of UNEA 4, on 9 March, Alliance partners were featured in a session on Combating Lead: From Paint to Batteries at the UN Science–Policy–Business Forum on the Environment. Presenters included Tadesse Amera Sahilu (Co–Chair, International POPs Elimination Network [IPEN]), Jacqueline Alvarez (UNEP), and Brian Wilson (International Lead Association). The discussion focused on how industry and civil society are working together and how industry can support governments in adopting lead paint laws.

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### *At the 72<sup>nd</sup> World Health Assembly*

WHO reported to Member States at the 72<sup>nd</sup> World Health Assembly about progress made in the management of chemicals towards 2020 and beyond. The report included information about WHO's work on the elimination of lead paint. The attention of Ministers of Health was drawn to the large number of countries that have not yet adopted laws to control lead paint. Delegates unanimously supported the progress made so far on chemicals management and requested the WHO Secretariat to scale up its work in order to support countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and healthier populations.

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## *Partners Corner*

As of April 2019, 19 governments, 37 non-government organizations, 4 inter-governmental organizations, 6 academic organizations or institutions, and 20 industry or trade associations have joined as partners of the Lead Paint Alliance. A warm welcome and congratulations are extended to the new partners who have joined in 2018 and 2019! New members include:

- Civil society: Africa Foundation for Community Development (AFCOD–Uganda) and The LEAD Group Inc.
- Intergovernmental Organizations: International Labour Organization (ILO).
- Governments: Ministère de l'Environnement, de l'Economie Verte et du Changement Climatique du Burkina Faso (Burkina Faso Ministry of Environment, Green Economy and Climate Change); Ministère de l'Environnement, de l'Ecologie et des Forêts (Madagascar Ministry of the Environment, Ecology and Forests); and Vietnam Chemicals Agency (Ministry of Industry and Trade).
- Academic Organizations and Institutions: New York University Langone Health's Department of Pediatrics – Division of Environmental Pediatrics.

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## *Advisory Council*

On May 10, the Advisory Council of the Alliance met to discuss current work. Discussions included review of progress in implementing the goals of the Alliance, including the status of lead paint laws and an update on projects and activities. The Council took note of the Activity Report for 2017–2018, as well as the 2019–2020 proposed Action Plan. These documents were shared with the Council for comment earlier this year, and are available under Related Publications on the [Alliance Partner website](#).

*In addition, our Advisory Council members shared the following updates:*

- Moldova – one of many active countries in the Alliance -- is drafting a National Strategy and Action Plan to eliminate lead in paint, including participation in a lead paint regional workshop, analysis of the paint industry in the country, and designation of an intersectoral working group to draft and implement a lead paint law.
- In Kenya, the department of Chemistry of the University of Nairobi in collaboration with Basco Paints Company [organized a series of events from 22nd to 27th October 2018](#), on the theme "Stopping the Importation, Manufacture, Sale and Use of Lead Paint" during the 6th International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week of Action. The events advocated for implementation of the newly developed lead paint standard to regulate maximum total lead content to 90 ppm.
- As Colombia works toward a regulation to limit lead content in paints,

the government has prepared a technical guide for government authorities on reducing risks caused by use of lead in paints, and a guide for paint manufacturers on alternative paint ingredients to eliminate the use of lead-containing pigments and other additives. The Colombian Ministry of the Environment is also participating in work to elaborate non legally binding technical quality standards, developed by paint manufacturers, that will contain guidelines about the maximum content of lead. Additionally, The Ministry of Health disseminated a policy brief report entitled "[Domestic lead paints: a silent risk for our children](#)", prepared with the support of the Bloomberg Philanthropies Foundation, Vital Strategies and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- Toxics Link, an IPEN Participating Organization, organized a regional stakeholder meeting in February to raise awareness amongst concerned stakeholders and help the regulatory 90 ppm lead limit be fully implemented in India, considering concerns of lead paint still on the market as shown by their 2018 [report](#).
- In March, [the European Court of Justice ruled in favor of Sweden's challenge](#) to the authorization of the use of lead chromates in paint for some industrial applications. The European Commission is still considering its response to this decision.

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## *What Can You Do? Take Action!*

The following suggested actions are selected from the [2019–2020 Action Plan](#). A full list may be found by following the link.

- Governments: Establish, implement and enforce legal limits on lead in paint, building on the [Model Law and Guidance for Regulating Lead Paint](#) developed by UNEP in consultation with WHO, US EPA and other Alliance Partners. Strengthen existing regulations or legal limits on lead in paint where they exist but are not protective of public health.
- Non-governmental environmental and health organizations: Continue to conduct paint sampling studies in countries without legal limits in order to raise awareness and support for action to develop legal limits and, in countries where legal limits have been established, to help evaluate their effectiveness.
- Legal community: Urge lawyers, law firms, bar associations, and other professional and nonprofit organizations to support the adoption and implementation of laws to phase out and eliminate lead paint through pro bono support, educational initiatives, and other appropriate means.
- Industry: Engage with governments to support the development and implementation of legal limits on lead in paint.

[Explore more actions for governments, industry and civil society organizations](#)

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