A REPORT on activities during the Fifth International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, 22–28 October 2017
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The Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint (Lead Paint Alliance) is a voluntary collaborative initiative working to focus and catalyse the efforts of a diverse range of stakeholders to achieve international goals to prevent children’s exposure to lead from paint and to minimize occupational exposures to lead paint. The Alliance is a joint undertaking of WHO and UN Environment. One of the initiatives of the Lead Paint Alliance is the annual International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week campaign.

The Lead Paint Alliance organized the Fifth International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week on 22–28 October 2017. The objectives of the 2017 campaign were to:

- raise awareness about the hazards of lead and, in particular, of lead paint;
- draw attention to the importance of preventing lead poisoning, particularly in children; and
- urge further action by governments to ban lead paint by 2020.

International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week was supported by partners in the Alliance – including the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), the UN Environment North America Office, US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and IPEN.

As with earlier campaigns, the Lead Paint Alliance provided a campaign resource package and a range of multilingual campaign materials, examples of which are shown. In addition to making these materials available from the WHO website, a Trello board was created, which provided access to additional materials in an organized fashion.

The overarching theme of the 2017 campaign was the achievement of the Lead Paint Alliance target that by 2020 all countries should have in place legally binding controls on the production, import, sale and use of lead paints.
Current status of legal controls on lead paint

As of October 2017, according to information provided by governments to WHO and UN Environment, only 68 countries (34%) have confirmed that control measures are in place. These control measures vary, however, in the degree to which they protect against lead exposure, with limits on lead content ranging from 90 ppm to 20 000 ppm.

![Countries with legally binding controls on lead paint as of October 2017](https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/publication/2017-update-global-status-legal-limits-lead-paint)

Figure 1. Countries with legally binding controls on lead paint as of October 2017 (Source: World Health Organization)

A new resource to help countries draft laws to prevent the use of lead ingredients in new paints

UN Environment, in partnership with WHO and US EPA, has developed a **Model law and guidance for regulating lead paint**.

The Model law is a practical “how-to” resource designed to support countries in protecting human health and the environment by establishing new laws, or modifying existing laws, to limit lead content in paints. It includes model legal language and detailed guidance with key elements of effective and enforceable legal requirements, based on the best approaches currently found in lead paint laws around the world.

Countries can use the Model law and guidance to help develop their own laws, in accordance with their existing legal frameworks and other national circumstances. The Model law and guidance is available on the Lead Paint Alliance website: [https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/emerging-issues/](https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/emerging-issues/)

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The Fifth International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week – overview

The International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (ILPPW) provides an opportunity to mobilize political and social commitment for further progress towards the elimination of lead paint. In 2017, once again, governments, local authorities, civil society, including the paint industry, and international organizations were active in organizing awareness-raising events. These were held in at least 44 countries and involved at least 64 organizations. As shown in Figure 2, there were events in all regions, particularly in African and European countries. Many events were reported in the local media. Information about all the events registered with WHO can be seen at http://www.who.int/ipcs/lead_campaign/events/en/.

Figure 2. Number of countries where events were held and number of organizations holding events in 2017

![Bar chart showing the number of countries and organizations by WHO region]

Key: AFR – African Region; AMR – Region for the Americas; SEAR – South-East Asia Region; EUR – European Region; EMR – Eastern Mediterranean Region; WPR – Western Pacific Region

Activities and events that took place during ILPPW

A wide range of activities and events took place around the world, including: social media communications; television broadcasts; marches and demonstrations calling for action on lead paint; educational activities in schools; stakeholder meetings; information stands in public areas; and donations of lead-safe paint to schools. Some examples are given below.
Using social media

The Lead Paint Alliance used Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube to disseminate the key messages of the week of action, namely the damage that lead exposure causes to health and the need to phase out lead paint. The campaign hashtags were #BanLeadPaint and #ILPPW2017.

- #BanLeadPaint reached over 14.5 million users on social media
- WHO tweets in English, French and Spanish were seen 1.4 million times and got 2600 retweets
- WHO Facebook posts reached 362 000 people and got 2700 likes and 1400 shares
- WHO Instagram reached 7900 people and received 3100 likes
- US EPA tweets were seen 5600 times

Some examples of social media messages by Lead Paint Alliance partners and others are shown below

World Health Organization and UN Environment tweets

UN Environment YouTube video about the importance of the new lead paint legislation in Cameroon.
Government tweets

We must #BanLeadPaint globally to protect children from lead exposure. Resources in 6 languages at: who.int/ipcs/lead_camp... #ILPPW2017

Public Health England

Learn about the risks from lead during pregnancy here: medicinesinpregnancy.org/Medicine--preg... #ILPPW2017

Civil society tweets

New #LeadPaint Study in #Uganda found 67% of paints tested had lead. See NAPE’s (http://napes36272826.org) report ipen.org/sites/default/... #ILPPW2017

Ontario Poison Centre

Lead poisoning can be very harmful. Learn more about prevention efforts from @WHO ow.ly/UX7130Fqys #ILPPW2017

It’s International #LeadPoisoning Prevention Week! Learn how ABA ROU is planning to help countries #BanLeadpaint: bit.ly/26DD0Du

Wesse Water

We’re supporting International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week in partnership with @WatersafeUK #ILPPW2017 watersafe.org.uk/advice/wq_faqs...
Informing the public

In Kenya, the Caribbean Poison Information Network organized a media campaign. This included a ‘Think Tank’ session with the Jamaica Information Service television station to discuss issues around lead exposure in the country, daily television messages during the week just before the evening news, and newspaper articles.

The Poison Control Department at King Fahad Medical City in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia organized an information booth for staff of the King Fahad Medical City about the hazards of lead, sources of exposure and measures to prevent lead poisoning. Various materials, including Lead Paint Alliance flyers were provided.

In Algeria, the Centre National de Toxicologie in Algiers provided information in metro stations and hospitals to raise awareness about lead poisoning. Flyers and brochures about lead were distributed together with information about managing lead poisoning.

The Association des Familles Victimes du Saturnisme in France showed their film “Notre plomb quotidien” and arranged a debate with the local council on the health problems associated with poor housing conditions and provided information on lead poisoning and its consequences.

In Jamaica, the Caribbean Poison Information Network organized a media campaign. This included a ‘Think Tank’ session with the Jamaica Information Service television station to discuss issues around lead exposure in the country, daily television messages during the week just before the evening news, and newspaper articles.

In the United Kingdom, Public Health England had an information booth at the New Scientist Live event where it provided information about the health effects of lead and potential sources of lead exposure in the home.

The Foundation to support civil initiatives (FSCI, Dastgiri-Centre), Tajikistan organized an outdoor meeting called the “Lead-Free Paint Store Now!” in Dushanbe. The aim was to inform the public about lead paint and to urge action to regulate lead paint.
The Uganda Network on Toxic Free Malaria Control (UNMETAC), which has a chemical safety programme, organized a press conference and a TV talk show event. These were used to disseminate information about lead paint exposure. The press conference included messages from officials from the Ministry of Health, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) as well as paint manufacturers in Uganda.

At the WHO Regional Office for Africa, in Brazzaville, Congo, a lunchtime seminar entitled “Childhood lead poisoning in Africa: A preventable public health threat” was held to inform WHO staff. In a speech the WHO Regional Director for Africa, Dr Matshidiso Moeti, noted that very few countries in the African Region had legally binding controls on lead paint and called on policy makers, health care professionals, painters, industry, consumers, communities, families and parents to support efforts to ban lead in paints (http://www.afro.who.int/regional-director/speeches-messages/msg-who-reg-dir-afr-dr-moeti-int-lead-poisoning-prev-week).

In Sri Lanka, the Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ), together with two paint manufacturers, conducted awareness raising campaigns on the importance of using lead-safe paints at schools and clinics where children spend time. A memorandum of understanding was signed between CEJ, a paint company and the Lady Ridgeway Children’s Hospital to paint the hospital with lead-safe paint. In addition, lead-safe paint was donated to a pre-school. Information about these events was broadcast in the national news (https://www.facebook.com/CEJSriLanka/videos/1540680939311265/).

The Malaysian Paint Manufacturers’ Association (MPMA) organized a Forum with the theme “Towards Lead Free Paint – The Malaysian Context”. The forum aimed to educate the paint industry, stakeholders and government bodies on the use of lead in paint and the need to work towards elimination of lead in paint systems in order to achieve the goal of lead-free paint in Malaysia by 2020.
Engaging with youth

On the eve of International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, a large crowd of young people demonstrated to demand a ban on lead paint production in Bangladesh. A human chain and a rally held in front of the National Press Club in Dhaka was organized by the Environment and Social Development Organization (ESDO) in association with IPEN. The theme was ‘Learn the Risks, Educate the Community and Ban Lead Paint’ calling for lead paint to be banned in Bangladesh by 2018.

The Saint Louis University Laboratory Elementary School in Baguio City in the Philippines organized a discussion during Science classes about the hazards of lead and ways to prevent exposure. A pamphlet was distributed by the school medical clinic.

The city of Bukavu, South Kivu, in the Democratic Republic of Congo is undergoing extensive development with a consequent increased demand for paint to decorate new buildings. This is an important time to raise awareness about the hazards of lead paint and the need to choose lead-safe paint. Planète verte-RDC carried out educational activities in four high schools with final year students of biochemistry, commerce and informatics. Students and teachers were encouraged to make a commitment to inform parents and family members about the dangers of lead paint. The "Environment and Health Club" was started for the students to have a platform to talk about this issue.

The Association for Environmental Education for Future Generations (AEEFG) in Tunisia organized activities in a school in Kasserine. Children painted the logo of the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint as a mural on a school wall using lead-safe paint. The following day children were photographed holding ILPPW posters in the first classroom to be painted with lead-safe paint as a result of the campaign.
Engaging with policy makers

The Environment and Social Development Organization (ESDO) organized a high-level policy dialogue on lead paint in Bangladesh. Participants included government officials from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Department of Environment, the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution, representatives from the Bangladesh Paint Manufacturers’ Association and academicians. Participants, including government representatives, called for the rapid introduction of a regulation to ban lead paint.

The Consumers’ Association of Penang (CAP) in Malaysia issued a statement calling on the authorities to ban lead in products. CAP drew particular attention to sindoor, a scarlet powder widely used during Hindu religious and cultural ceremonies in Malaysia, which can contain lead tetroxide.

Gamarjoba in Georgia launched a petition through its Facebook page to ask Parliament and the Ministry of Environment to introduce legal controls on lead in paint. Gamarjoba reported on their investigation, which had found that around one third of the paints on the market in Georgia contain lead but no warning about lead content is provided on the labels.

In the context of a congress celebrating the 90th anniversary of the Republican Unitary Enterprise Scientific-Practical Centre of Hygiene, Ministry of Health Belarus, the results of a study of lead paint were presented.

Also in Belarus, the Centre for Environmental Solutions (CES) issued a press release pointing out the high lead content in some paints on the local market and the need to revise the sanitary norms for paint. CES released an informative poster about lead in paint.
In Rosario Santa Fé in Argentina, Taller Ecologista launched a report entitled “Lead in solvent-based paints for domestic use in Argentina”. This report was covered by the local television station and by other media outlets.

**IPEN** issued a press release entitled “Lead paints dangerous to children widely sold throughout the world”. This drew attention to the recent global report, “Lead in Solvent-Based Paints for Home Use”, which brings together data from all of the paint studies conducted since 2009 in 55 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. The report shows that decorative paint containing levels of lead dangerous to children is widely available in more than 50 low- and middle-income countries.

In a “good news” event at San Vicente Elementary School in Quezon City, the Philippines, marking the national phase-out of lead-containing architectural, household and decorative paints, the EcoWaste Coalition launched the report "Lead in Solvent-Based Paint for Home Use in the Philippines". This showed a significant increase in the percentage of paints that conform with the 90 ppm maximum total lead content limit. To celebrate this campaign milestone, the group unveiled a "Lead Safe Paint Store" with some of the 50 compliant paint brands on display. Messages of recognition and support were received from the Philippine Association of Paint Manufacturers, as well as from the offices of the Vice President and other senior politicians. The EcoWaste Coalition, together with the consumer protection group Laban Konsyumer Inc., also issued a press release requesting paint manufacturers to improve product labelling information, and to retrieve old lead-containing paints that are still in retail shops after the phase-out deadline.

**IPEN participating organizations carried out awareness-raising activities in 33 countries. Information on these events is at** [http://ipen.org/documents/international-lead-poisoning-week-action-2017](http://ipen.org/documents/international-lead-poisoning-week-action-2017)
Resources

Model law and guidance for regulating lead paint.
This guidance document can be downloaded from
https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/publication/model-law-and-guidance-regulating-lead-paint

Toolkit for establishing laws on lead paint
A collection of materials for advocacy and technical support for the elimination of lead paint can be found at https://www.unenvironment.org/toolkit-establishing-laws-eliminate-lead-paint

Information about other sources of lead exposure
The 2017 ILPPW focused attention on banning lead paint, but lead exposure can also come from other sources.

At the third United Nations Environment Assembly, on 4–6 December 2017, in Nairobi, Kenya, governments agreed to a resolution on Eliminating exposure to lead paint and promoting environmentally sound management of waste lead-acid batteries. This resolution calls on governments, that have not yet done so, to take measures to eliminate lead paint and to develop national strategies to better manage the collection and recycling of waste lead-acid batteries and to reduce lead release, emissions and exposures.

Recycling used lead-acid batteries can result in severe environmental contamination and lead poisoning. WHO has recently published information for the health sector on this issue, in a booklet called Recycling used lead-acid batteries: health considerations. This is available in English, French and Spanish, with a summary version additionally available in Arabic, Chinese and Russian at http://www.who.int/ipcs/publications/ulab/en/.

For further information on the Lead Paint Alliance please go to the Alliance website where you will find background information, including information on becoming a partner in the Alliance, as well as technical guidance materials (https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/emerging-issues/global-alliance-eliminate-lead-paint). You can also send an email to lead-cadmiumchemicals@un.org or noleadinpaint@who.int.