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**Strategic Approach
to International
Chemicals Management**

**Open-ended Working Group of the International Conference
on Chemicals Management**

Third meeting

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Item 4(b) of the provisional agenda*

**Progress towards the achievement of the 2020 goal of the sound
chemicals management: Emerging policy issues and other issues
of concern**

**Submission of UN Environment and the World Health
Organization: The promotion of lead paint laws and enhanced
actions towards 2020**

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to circulate, in the annex to the present note, a report received from the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Health Organization that supports the promotion of lead paint laws and enhanced actions towards 2020. The report is presented in the annex as received and has not been edited by the secretariat.

*SAICM/ OEWG.3/1

Annex

Submission of UN Environment and the World Health Organization: The promotion of lead paint laws and enhanced actions towards 2020

A. Background

Lead paint is a major source of childhood lead exposure, for example via contaminated dust in homes that can be inhaled or ingested¹. Even relatively low levels of exposure to lead can cause serious and irreversible neurological damage, there is no known level of lead exposure without harmful effects. The cost of removing existing decorative lead paint from surfaces in homes, schools, and other buildings is significant. By contrast, the economic cost for eliminating the use of lead compounds in new decorative paints is low and alternatives to lead additives are available for all types of paints. Many manufacturers have successfully reformulated their paint products to avoid the intentional addition of lead. However, the continued use of lead paint around the world remains a significant source of human exposure.

In 2009, the International Conference on Chemicals Management adopted lead in paint as an emerging policy issue and mandated the establishment of the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint (short name: The Lead Paint Alliance). Led by UN Environment and the World Health Organization, the Lead Paint Alliance goal is to eliminate lead paint in all countries by 2020². The global target to eliminate lead paint by 2020 was reaffirmed at the Third and Fourth Sessions of the International Conference on Chemicals Management. While considerable action has been taken, the elimination of lead in paint and the introduction of safe alternatives to lead pigments in paints remains a challenge in many countries.

B. Current Status

The momentum to reduce the use of lead in paints resulted in a number of countries adopting legislation in recent years. The SAICM independent evaluation states that the progress made in taking forward the “Lead in Paint” agenda has been particularly successful. As of September 2018, 71 countries confirmed that they have legally binding controls on lead in paint; however, in 122 countries, no binding limits were found. Even in countries with adequate regulations, weak enforcement resulted in continued manufacture and sale³. Despite significant progress and successful engagement of stakeholders, including through the Lead Paint Alliance, challenges remain, in particular in developing countries. These include a lack of country-specific data, laboratory capacity, public awareness on lead toxicity, and knowledge on alternatives⁴.

1 (UNEP 2010).

2 (UNEP and WHO 2012).

3 Kessler 2014; Gottesfeld 2015; IPEN 2016

4 (UN Environment 2017a, IPEN 2017; Kessler 2014).

Table 1. Countries with Confirmed Lead Paint Laws in Each UN Environment Region as of September 2018⁵

Africa	Asia and the Pacific	West Asia	Europe			Latin America and the Caribbean	North America
Algeria	Australia	Jordan	Armenia	Kazakhstan*	Slovenia	Argentina	Canada
Cameroon*	China	Iraq*	Austria	Kyrgyzstan	Spain	Brazil	United States
Ethiopia*^	India	Oman	Belarus	Latvia	Sweden	Chile	
Kenya	Nepal		Belgium	Liechtenstein	Switzerland	Costa Rica	
South Africa	New Zealand		Bulgaria	Lithuania	The Former	Cuba	
United Republic of Tanzania	Philippines		Croatia	Luxembourg	Yugoslav	Dominica	
	Sri Lanka		Cyprus	Malta	Republic of	Guyana	
	Thailand		Czech Republic	Monaco	Macedonia	Mexico	
			Denmark	Montenegro	United Kingdom	Panama	
			Estonia	Netherlands		Trinidad and Tobago	
			Finland	Norway		Uruguay	
			France	Poland			
			Germany	Portugal			
			Greece	Romania			
			Hungary	Russian			
			Iceland	Federation			
			Ireland	Serbia			
			Italy	Slovakia			

*New since 1 October, 2017

^The law has been passed, but it has not been put into force

+Status change in WHO database

C. SAICM GEF Project

The Global Environment Facility has approved a 9 million USD project titled, ‘Global Best Practices on Emerging Chemical Policy Issues of Concern under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)’. The aim of this global project is to accelerate progress and measure the adoption of national activities on emerging policy issues to achieve the SAICM 2020 goal and support planning for chemical management in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The project will be implemented in over 40 countries over a 4-year period and aims to present early project results at ICCM5 in 2020. The UN Environment GEF unit is the implementing agency and the SAICM Secretariat is the executing agency. The project focuses on three work components: lead in paint, chemicals in products, and strategic planning and knowledge management.

The Lead in Paint component promotes regulatory and voluntary action by government and industry to phase out lead in paint⁶. The project outcome is for at least 40 countries to legislate and implement legislation on lead paint; and for at least 35 small and medium paint manufacturing enterprises in seven countries to phase out lead from their production processes. Through nationally focused interventions, project activities will work with small and medium enterprises to demonstrate the replacement of lead additives in paint with non-lead alternatives using a technical guidance on paint reformulation developed in the context of the project. Experiences will be shared across subregions. Through regional approaches, targeted technical assistance will be provided to countries interested to take part in the project, to promote policy and advocacy towards phasing out lead in paint. Through a globally coordinated approach with governments and other relevant stakeholders, the project will accelerate the adoption of legal limits for lead in paint.

For the project countries selection process, countries without lead paint laws⁷ were selected based on the following criteria⁸:

- Growing national concerns (participated in International Lead Paint Prevention Week (ILPPW), voluntary commitment at UNEA 3, Lead Paint Alliance partner or member of

⁵ United Nations Environment Programme, *Update on the Global Status of Legal Limits on Lead Paint: September 2018*

⁶ The concentration limit recommended in UN Environment’s “Model Law and Guidance for Regulating Lead Paint” is 90 ppm total lead.

⁷ Lead paint law is defined as legislation, regulations, or mandatory standards, provided the law has enforcement provisions and penalties for non-compliance.

⁸ Baseline of the information used is from the WHO database and a related desk study.

- the Lead Paint Alliance advisory group, previous webinar participation, ECOWAS ministerial endorsement, engagement by partners or regional grouping;
- Initiated work (lead paint data available, previous or upcoming workshop participation, previous project participation);
 - Law assessment / first steps towards regulation (law review, gap analysis conducted, lead-related legislation such as in toys, voluntary standard in process or in place);
 - Non-protective legislation (non-protective limit or partial legislation in place);
 - Lead paint legislation in process or being drafted.

Based on the selection criteria above, countries without lead paint laws have been invited to participate in the project via letters sent to country Ministers of Health and Ministers of Environment, respectively. Countries that have expressed interest in participating in the project have been (or will be depending on the timing set out in part D below) invited to their relevant regional workshop to engage in the project.

D. Lead Paint Workshops under the SAICM GEF project

Lead Paint regional workshops will be organized by the UN Environment Chemicals and Health Branch and Regional Offices in collaboration with the World Health Organization as part of the project.

The regional workshops aim to:

- i. Provide participants with an understanding of why the elimination of lead paint is important and an overview of the SAICM GEF Project Lead in Paint Component.
- ii. Brief participants on the elements of a strategy to eliminate lead paint.
- iii. Enable participants to exchange ideas, experiences and best practice toward lead paint elimination.
- iv. Identify the next steps toward lead paint elimination, tailored to the national context, and to confirm willingness to join the project.

Participants for the regional workshops include:

- i. Two nominated focal points per country (from the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Health or any other relevant Ministry);
- ii. One civil society representative per country;
- iii. Country or regional industry representatives.

The workshop dates are:

- **CEE regional workshop**
19-20 March 2019, Almaty, Kazakhstan
- **LAC regional workshop**
14-15 May 2019, Panama City, Panama
- **Africa regional workshop**
28-29 May 2019, Abijan, Côte d'Ivoire
- **Asia Pacific regional workshop**
12-13 June 2019, Bangkok, Thailand

At the end of the regional workshops, a country approach to eliminate lead in paint will be elaborated by the participants.

In parallel, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) will be selected in Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Jordan and China for an industrial pilot test on paint reformulation, using the technical guidelines developed by the National Cleaner Production Center in Serbia. Launching workshops will be organized as part of the project, which will also support the global policy and advocacy effort to adopt lead paint laws.

E. Looking Ahead

- Urgent action is to be taken by governments, industry and civil society to accelerate international momentum to promote legally-binding controls on lead in paint in all countries.
 - Lead paint is a flagship programme of SAICM. OEWG3 is an opportunity for countries and regions to state their intentions to establish lead in paint legislation and share impact results at ICCM5 in 2020.
 - The Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint online toolkit for establishing laws to eliminate lead paint, publications and other useful information can be found at the following link: <https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/emerging-issues/global-alliance-eliminate-lead-paint>.
 - We invite all governments to adopt lead paint laws. For further information, please contact lead-cadmium.chemicals@unep.org and/or noleadpaint@who.int .
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