

SAICM ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL MEETING

NGO INTERVENTIONS ON EMERGING POLICY ISSUES

23 JANUARY 2018

1. INTERVENTION ON LEAD SAFE PAINT – Regional Outcomes

By Thony Dizon, Chemical Safety Campaigner, EcoWaste Coalition/IPEN

The EcoWaste Coalition, an NGO from the Philippines, and on behalf of other Participating Organizations of IPEN is pleased to inform this meeting about the notable progress that we in the Asia-Pacific region have achieved so far in terms of eliminating lead paint to protect public health and the environment.

- **NEW LEAD PAINT STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS.** The region has done significant progress as a result of multistakeholders' collaboration, new regulations and standard's banning or restricting lead in paint based on total lead content are now in place in several countries, including India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Thailand. The Supreme Court of Nepal recently upheld the country's lead paint standard that was challenged in court by the paint industry. The Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority has approved new quality standards for paints in 2017, including maximum allowable lead limit for enamels. The Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution most recently finalized the lead paint limit for household paints. Participants of a multi-sectoral workshop held in Hanoi in October 2017 agreed that a lead paint regulation should be developed quickly toward the goal of eliminating lead paint by 2020.
- **MAJOR PAINT PRODUCERS ELIMINATING LEAD PAINT.** Top Asian paint producers in a number of countries have begun eliminating lead from their paint products. Some small and medium-sized paint companies, particularly in countries where mandatory regulations are being enforced, are also shifting to non-lead paint formulations. Studies conducted by CEPHED and the EcoWaste Coalition in 2017 showed significant progress in phasing out lead-containing decorative paints in Nepal and the Philippines. Study results show that 60 percent of the analyzed paints in Nepal and 76 percent of the analyzed paints in the Philippines were found to be compliant with national regulations banning lead in paint above 90 ppm. In Kuala Lumpur, 15 paint companies belonging to the Malaysia Paint Manufacturers' Association signed a statement last November 21, 2017 expressing their commitment to eliminate lead paint by 2020.
- **GREATER AWARENESS OF LEAD PAINT.** Data on lead in solvent-based paints are now available in more than 50 countries, including 16 from Asia-Pacific. In 2016-2017, new lead paint reports were published by IPEN campaign partners in China, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan. Many countries in the region have participated

in the annual International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week of Action that aims to, among other objectives, highlight efforts to eliminate lead paint.

- **LEAD SAFE PAINT CERTIFICATION.** The world's first lead paint certification program was launched in 2015. This independent, third party certification program verifies that a paint brand only sells paints that contain less than a total of 90 ppm lead. Developed through a multistakeholders' process led by the Philippine Association of Paint Manufacturers and the EcoWaste Coalition with support from IPEN, four leading companies from Bangladesh (Elite Paint), Sri Lanka (Multilac Paint) and the Philippines (Boysen and Davies Paints) have received certification under the program. The certification program, which originated in Asia-Pacific, is now being introduced to paint manufacturers in Nepal, Colombia, Kenya, Tanzania, Tunisia and Russia.

Through a resolution, the last United Nations Environment Assembly emphasized the importance of reducing exposure to lead. The resolution specifically encouraged governments that have not yet done so to develop, adopt and implement legislation/regulations to eliminate lead paint and to undertake actions in order to remove the risks such paints pose.

Our successes in Asia and the Pacific, particularly in Nepal, Sri Lanka and the Philippines, India show that eliminating lead paint is an achievable objective. Nonetheless, much progress is still required as many developing countries still struggling to eliminate the lead in paints. With 2020 is fast approaching months away, hence we urge all stakeholders to work coherently hard to ensure national measures are in place by 2020 that will prohibit the manufacture, distribution, sale and use of lead paints considering the human health and environment and most importantly children health.

Concerned government policy makers and others will surely find the "Model Law and Guidance for Regulating Lead Paint" prepared by the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint as a useful reference in this regard.

IPEN and its campaign partners are committed to collaborating with all stakeholders to make the elimination of lead paint a reality for the sake of our children and their future.

Thank you.

2. INTERVENTION ON LEAD SAFE PAINT – Bangladesh Experience

By Siddika Sultana, Environment and Social Development Organization (ESDO)/IPEN

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to intervene on behalf of Environment and Social Development Organization and as a Participating Organization of IPEN.

Lead in Paint is one of the priority issue in the Asia Pacific Meeting.

We all aware that lead in paint is one of the largest sources of exposures to lead in children.

Also, lead causes the unacceptable risks to environment and human health. However, after lead

in paints has been accepted as an emerging issue in SAICM, I would like to update some progress taking place in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is committed to phase out lead from paints and has drafted a strict national standard to contain lead content in paint. In an important development, the Bangladesh National Paint company one of the largest paint company has got Lead Safe Paint certification. The certification program was established in 2015 with collaboration of the IPEN.

However, globally lead in paints need to be phased out and many developing countries are still struggling resulting huge burden on the environment and human health.

The region agreed in the 4th Asia Pacific meeting that calls on countries to promote regulatory frameworks and requests UNEP to consider organizing a regional Asia Pacific workshop at which multi-stakeholder participants can receive information, training and advice on how to eliminate lead paint. The resolution invites UNEP and others to support the environmentally sound management of lead paint wastes in developing and transition countries. Finally, the resolution requests WHO to assist with efforts to conduct regular biomonitoring.

Hence I would urge SAICM to give adequate attention to lead in paint issue beyond 2020.

3. INTERVENTION ON PHARMACEUTICAL POLLUTION

By Naji Kodeih, IndyACT/IPEN

Thank you Mr. Chair, I am talking on behalf of IndyACT, an NGO from Lebanon and a Participating Organization of IPEN.

First of all, I must congratulate SAICM secretariat for organizing this important Asia Pacific regional meeting for intersessional meeting in view of the importance of the chemical management by 2020 and beyond.

Mr. Chair, I would like to highlight to some points on the increasing issue of Pharmaceutical pollution – an issue that was adopted as an emerging issue in ICCM 4 (relates to SDGs 3 and 7).

- Persistent pharmaceuticals are present in the environment and are being detected in surface water, groundwater, drinking water and soil. Due to their increasing usage more and more compounds are finding their way into varied environmental matrices.
- Being persistence and having the ability to bio-accumulate, they move up the trophic levels and induce toxic effects to even at low doses.
- Developing countries specially India and China, being the hub of drug production are prone to water pollution and causing subsequent health impacts to the environment and human health. Excessive usage, over the counter availability and poor disposal practices is yet another issue in our region leading to its high occurrence.
- They are causing development of resistant bacteria and other microbes. WHO published a report in 2014 on antibacterial resistance pointing out to the threat it causes to public

health. In 2013, there were about 4,80,000 new cases of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB). WHO declares AMR (Anti-microbial resistance) as a global emergency.

- In 2002, EU included 3 pharmaceuticals in the list of priority substance.
- Being global contaminants, there is no inventory on such pollutants yet and in SDG 7 it is proposed that a global roadmap on their production, usage and disposal will be developed by 2022. By 2025, it aims to establish an inventory of available techniques in waste water treatment for destruction of these pollutants, establish regular monitoring and public reporting of water sources in 50 countries and apply extended producer responsibility (EPR). Finally, it aims to achieve clean production and zero discharge of pharmaceuticals into the environment by 2030.

Seeing the larger threat associated with it and still a large amount of work required to be done, 2020 is a very short time to address this issue and we need to take it up further beyond 2020 to deal with it in a rightful manner.

Thank you Mr. Chair.

4. INTERVENTION ON CHEMICALS IN PRODUCTS

By Ram Charitra Sah, Center for Public Health and Environmental Development (CEPHED)/IPEN

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am speaking on behalf of our organization CEPHED, Nepal, a Participating Organization of IPEN.

CEPHED would like to thank UNEP and the Steering group of the Chemicals in products project for the effective work on the Chemicals in products programme and guidance for stakeholders.

Like many other developing countries, every day, children in Nepal are exposed to harmful chemicals while playing toys in many homes and schools have dangerous levels of chemicals coming from different product they use. Studies have shown elevated blood lead level (>5 µg/dl) among over 64 % of Nepalese children, 54 % of tested children toys contain most toxic heavy metal like Lead, Mercury, Cadmium, Chromium and Bromine. High level of lead in Cosmetic, Jewelry and Mercury in skin Whitening creams in almost all countries in the South Asia Region: Nepal, Bangladesh and India.

Another study shows high level of Octa BDE ranges from 17 to 58 ppm and Deca BDE 19 to 243 ppm. So, it is difficult to say that it is Toxic Toys or Toxic Waste as a matter of fact recycling toxic chemicals in into new products without any labeling about CiP etc. Above all, I am very happy to inform this august gathering that Government of Nepal had already enacted mandatory standard of Children Toys including some 12 heavy metals and chemicals in January 2017 and under implementation.

We would like to highlight a few points to be considered by this AP Meetings.

- The Chemicals in Products programme should acknowledge workers as a key stakeholder group affected by chemicals during manufacture recycle and disposal of products, and their need for full information about the chemicals they work with.
- The CiP programme recommends that stakeholders identify, at a minimum, regulated chemicals contained in the products in question thus needs for countries to continue advancing national legislations and ensure their effective enforcement, monitoring and control to effectively address chemicals in products issues.
- We urge companies to proactively move beyond a legally restricted substances list by identifying and full disclosure policy on chemicals of concern in their products and even in supply chains throughout its life cycle.
- We would also like to remind delegates that the driver for safer chemicals and products comes from transparency and that confidential business information should not undermine the key chemical safety principle that health and safety information should not be regarded as confidential and should not be claimed for chemicals of concern which are defined according to the Strategic Approach criteria based on hazards and targeting risk reduction.
- And finally, financial support for broad CiP Programme implementation in developing and transition countries should be provided so that by 2020 the implementation process of the CiP programme could start in several SAICM regions.

Thank you.

5. ELECTRONICS

By Hang Pham, Research Centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development (CGFED)/IPEN

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm Hang from Research Centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development, Vietnam, a Participating Organization of the IPEN network.

I would like to highlight some points that we consider as important issues regarding hazardous chemicals in the electronics industry.

In Vietnam, the electronics industry is now the #1 export industry in the country. In addition, women make up about 80% of the workforce. We decided to investigate the working conditions of women in the electronics industry.

Our study "Stories of Women Workers in Vietnam's Electronics Industry" has shown that:

- There are no specific regulations on workplace safety in the electronics industry to safeguard the health of its workers.
- None of workers thought of cleaning products as containing chemicals or about exposure from chemical use elsewhere in the factory.
- The women workers in this study reported a variety of health impacts as fainting or feeling dizzy at work. Miscarriage was reported to be “very normal if they are young.”

These issues seem to be similar to the electronics industry from other researches in Korea and China. So we need to:

- Implement policies and actions that prevent harm to workers in the electronics industry and the surrounding environment.
- Give more attention for awareness programs to the workers in the electronics industry who are subjected every day to the danger of workplace violations.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.