



*Mr Rifaat Saba, president of LEF, being interviewed by Lebanese international channel LBC about the situation of the Nahme landfill and waste crisis. (Photo by LEF)*

## Recent Activities by Lebanese Environment Forum

*By Rebecca Baissari*

On a national level, Lebanese Environment Forum (LEF) has been working on a national campaign since January 2014 in corporation with more than 100 NGOs from the civil society on the solid waste management crisis in Lebanon, advocating for a recycling-based plan, against incinerators and garbage exportation strategy of Lebanese government.

In the context of the “El Baher Elna” (Our Sea) Project, LEF organized a campaign to raise environmental awareness to protect beaches and marine life from pollution caused by plastic waste and engage youth in volunteering work to clean up the coast in South Lebanon, from Zahrani to Qasmiyeh.

LEF has also organized several round tables on environment conservation (responsible hunting, nature conservation and chemicals management) for LEF NGOs members in Beirut offices to transfer knowledge and experience at both the national and international level. LEF is also in continuous communication with the Ministry of Environment to urge the ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

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*Young volunteers working to clean up the coast in South Lebanon, from Zahrani to Qasmiyeh (Photo by LEF)*

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*In this region, IPEN has approximately 46 Participating Organizations in the following countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen.*

## Recent SAICM-Related Activities by Association de la Protection de l'environnement et de Développement de Bizerte (ABEDDUB), Tunisia

By Dr. Najwa Bourawi

- *Projet en cours sur la formation des ONGs locales sur la bonne gouvernance et collaboration avec le FEM*

This project aims to strengthen local NGOs in Bizerte, Tunisia in support of good environmental governance, sustainable management and a green economy. This is achieved by the organization of seminars and coaching sessions; by encouraging and assisting young people in the start-up of green businesses in the region, and by networking with the NGOs. Twenty NGOs from urban and rural areas have participated in this project and now have a better understanding of the concepts of good governance and decision-making.

- *Enquête sur l'utilisation des produits chimiques toxiques et dangereux dans tous les produits de consommation nationaux et internationaux dans le cadre du projet « International Poll »*



*Participants at the workshop on green economy and environmental governance (Photo courtesy of APEDDUB)*

*en collaboration avec Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC)*

APEDDUB participated in an international survey about chemicals in consumer products. The poll showed that citizens are aware of the presence of chemicals and their negative impacts on health and environment. The results were published in English in December 2015 and in French in February of this year.

- *Campagne de sensibilisation sur la réduction progressive de l'utilisation de l'amalgame dans le cadre du projet «Dental Amalgam Phase-Down in Africa» en collaboration avec l'Alliance*

*mondiale pour une dentisterie sans mercure.*

APEDDUB is working with local and national dentists and also with professors in dentistry, dental students, children and parents to try to raise awareness about the dangers of mercury amalgam. APEDDUB is trying to convince dentists to reduce use of dental amalgam by explaining the risks of mercury on their health and the health of their patients and by encouraging them to use the alternatives. APEDDUB has also explained the necessity of requiring alternatives to dental patients; has organized meetings with dentists, students and citizens; has displayed informative posters in schools and hospitals; and is spreading information via social networks.

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*Presentation against mercury use in dental amalgam (Photo courtesy of APEDDUB)*

# International Mercury Treaty Enabling Activities Program (IMEAP) by IndyACT, Lebanon: National public awareness campaign about mercury and the Minamata Convention

By Dr. Najj Kodeih

Via its recent IMEAP project, IndyACT met with representatives from the Environment, Industry, and Foreign Affairs Ministries about the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the need for a rapid ratification and the national implementation process. Emphasis was put on the needed cooperation between the ministries and other concerned national officials, NGOs, the health sector, academia, customs and media. Additionally, correspondence occurred between IndyACT and

adopted. This law gives a permit to the government to ratify the Convention.

IndyACT also organized several workshops for civil society, NGOs and coalitions to learn more about the Convention. As a result, a number of Lebanese NGOs are now more interested in chemicals and promote working on chemical management issues, including the Minamata Convention on Mercury, among other important issues in Lebanon. A follow-up open committee has now been established, led by IndyACT, and it is working on a NGO / civil society national action plan for the rapid ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention. IndyACT also organized a stakeholder meeting for those in the health sector (hospital workers, dentists, and physicians) and produced and distributed awareness-raising material for public consumption such as flyers and posters.

Finally, IndyACT also created a document outlining the current mercury situation in Lebanon, a list of traded materials that contain mercury (such as batteries, switches and lamps), the danger and the influence of mercury on peoples' health and what is needed to phase-out mercury.

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## IMEAP by Land and Human to Advocate Progress (LHAP), Jordan: Jordan Country Mercury Situation Report

By Ziyad Alawneh

Land and Human to Advocate Progress (LHAP) conducted a range of mercury monitoring and awareness-raising activities to sensitize the public and key stakeholders to the dangers of mercury pollution and the need to ratify the Minamata Convention. The activities were conducted within the overall framework of an initial Country Mercury Situation Report to help inform national activities in the lead up to



Slide from Dr. Kodeih's presentation at a workshop about the Mercury Treaty

officials from the Ministries of Health, Economy and Commerce about the importance of the Minamata Convention for Lebanon, and the necessity for these ministries to play an active role in the ratification process. The Ministry of Environment sent an official letter to the Council of Ministers and to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the significance of national ratification of the Minamata Convention, and once the Council of Ministers takes a decision, a draft law should be prepared and sent to the parliament to be discussed and



Pamphlet created during LHAP's IMEAP project

ratification. The Jordanian government has already taken key steps toward mercury control by banning mercury in medical measurement devices and establishing a mercury storage facility.

A pilot screening test of mercury monitoring in fish, human hair and cosmetics was also conducted. None of the samples returned a mercury level higher than 1ppm. The results and broader mercury pollution issues were communicated through a brochure and a series of stakeholder engagement meetings held in various locations in Jordan. Importantly, through this engagement LHAP has received information that Jordan will engage in an accelerated early Treaty ratification process.

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## About the Association d'Education Environnementale pour la Future Génération (AEEFG) / Association of Environmental Education for Future Generations

By Semia Gharbi

AEEFG is a Tunisian Association operating from the city of La Marsa, Tunisia. It aims to contribute to the sustainability of the environment and works to reduce the risk of chemicals on environmental media and human health.

AEEFG acts to raise awareness about the environment specifically with the target groups of children and young people, a group that represents the future generations. AEEFG does this via the dissemination of information using

the educational framework within educational institutions.

AEEFG also works in coordination with the National Focal Points relevant to various international treaties (Stockholm Convention, etc.). On a national scale, AEEFG is a member (observer) of the Technical Committee charged with studying the applications for approval of the pesticides used for agriculture. AEEFG has contributed in many of the sessions where consideration is taken about the danger of substances that persist in soil and water and/or those that effect the endocrine system (Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals), and has been working to withdraw approval of the materials that are characterized as highly hazardous.

In the scope of IPEN's Global Campaign to Eliminate Lead in Paint, in both 2013 and 2015 AEEFG carried out activities directly with students to raise their awareness, and also pub-



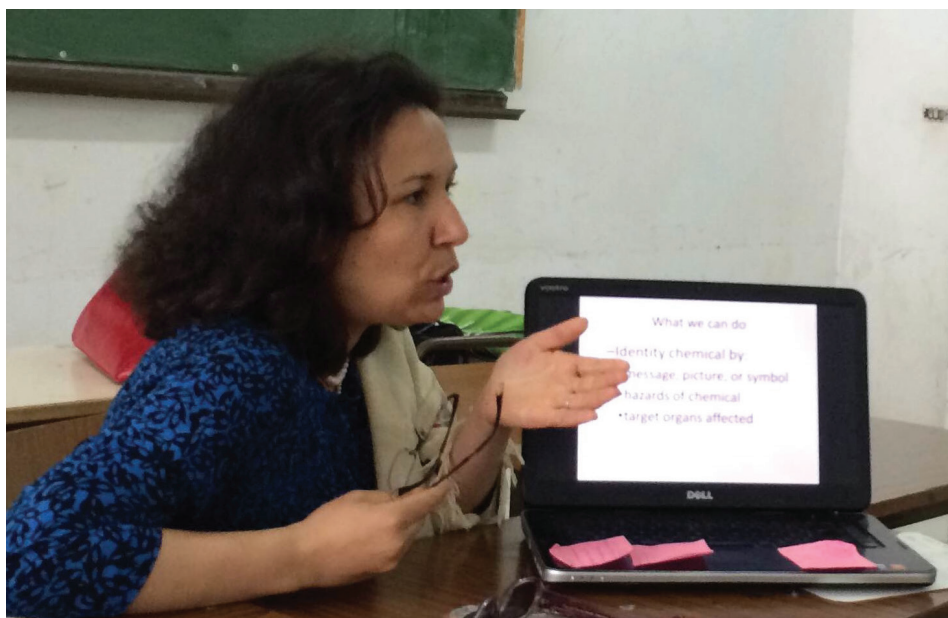
*Slide from AEEFG presentation about eliminating lead from paint and international awareness week*

lished articles in the national daily newspapers and created a short film. AEEFG is now in the process of painting the halls at school with lead-free paint for an "ecological hall." AEEFG also gathered paint samples in national markets to analyze them for lead content and found that some contained very high levels of lead. AEEFG is working in cooperation with IPEN and the relevant national authorities to seek ways to put an end to the lead content adopted by the manufacturers.

Additionally, in 2015 AEEFG participated in the first National Conference on EDCs and the World Social Forum.

AEEFG is the IPEN Regional Hub for the Middle East / North Africa region and aims to disseminate information through the list and act as a coordinator between the IPEN Network Secretariat and Participating Organizations.

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*Semia Gharbi hosting a roundtable about chemical hazards and environmental and human health at the World Social Forum (Photo courtesy of AEEFG)*

IPEN's global network is comprised of more than 500 public interest, non-governmental organizations in 118 countries. Working in the international policy arena and in developing countries, with international offices in the US and Sweden, IPEN is coordinated via eight IPEN Regional Hub Offices in Africa, Asia, Central / Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. IPEN works to establish and implement safe chemicals policies and practices that protect human health and the environment around the world.

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a toxics-free future