A REPORT ON 2016 activities during International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week

The Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint (the Lead Paint Alliance) organized the **fourth International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week** from 23–29 October 2016.

The **objectives** of the **2016 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.

Supported by partners in the Alliance - including the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), IPEN, United Nations Environment (UN Environment), the UN Environment North America Office and the World Health Organization (WHO) - successful events were held in at least 47 countries by governments, local authorities, civil society and international organizations.
## History of lead poisoning

Lead has been mined and used for more than 6000 years. Over the last century the danger of lead exposure from paint has become more widely recognized, resulting in actions to prevent this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>First modern clinical description of lead poisoning by Tanquerel des Planches (1).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Dr Lockhart Gibson from Queensland, Australia identified lead paint in the home as a source of lead poisoning in children (2).</td>
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<td>1909</td>
<td>White-lead paint banned for interior use in France, Belgium and Austria (3).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>The use of paint containing more than 5% of soluble lead on surfaces in the home, schools etc. accessible to children was prohibited in Queensland, Australia (3).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1922-50</td>
<td>White-lead paint banned for interior use in more than 20 countries (4).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Baltimore City Health Dept, USA, started investigating lead poisoning cases in children (2).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act, USA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act, USA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Governments at the World Summit on Sustainable Development call for lead paint to be phased out (5).</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>Second Meeting of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM2) supports the establishment of a global partnership to promote the phase-out of lead paint (6).</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint is formally established.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>First International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

While many countries have taken action to reduce exposure to lead by restricting its use in paint, in a survey carried out by WHO and UN Environment, as of 30 June 2016, only 62 governments confirmed that they have legally binding control measures on lead paint. Clearly more work is needed on this issue.
The fourth International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week

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 2016, once again, governments, local authorities, civil society and international organizations were active in organizing awareness-raising events: these were held in more than 100 cities in at least 47 countries. Information about all the events registered with WHO can be seen at http://www.who.int/ipcs/lead_campaign/events/en/.

The 2016 ILPPW also included a major communications campaign via Twitter to promote the Lead Paint Alliance and its efforts to eliminate lead paint by 2020. As Chair of the Lead Paint Alliance, the US Environmental Protection Agency collaborated with UN Environment, WHO and other partners on Twitter engagement, including videos and infographics (see pictures right and below) to promote the message of #BanLeadPaint. On 27 October, EPA, WHO, UN Environment and the UN Environment North America Office hosted a Twitter-based "Global Lead Chat" which generated hundreds of posts and reached millions of Twitter users. This was significantly greater engagement on social media than in previous years. These tools and strategies will continue to be useful for future communications campaigns in the coming year and beyond.

Campaign materials
UN Environment, WHO, EPA and IPEN jointly developed the ILPPW campaign resource pack (below) to assist those planning events. The pack provides advice on organizing campaigns, key messages, and links to customizable materials in the six UN languages.

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## Campaign Materials: Icons

The ILPPW has basic to support you in organizing events in your Lead community. The messages you use these materials create a common visual identity for your other UN campaign. downloadable materials for your communities or organizations, using the official icons will help your event uses the global effort.

Icons are available in two color schemes: white with blue background or blue with transparent background. All languages are available English, Spanish, Moroccan, and Spanish.

2016 Events and Activities

In Zambia, the Children's Environmental Health Foundation (CEHF), together with other stakeholders, conducted an awareness-raising meeting with shop owners to discuss the effects of producing, selling and using paint that contains lead. CEHF highlighted the need for a law in Zambia that would prohibit the manufacture, sale and use of paints that contain added lead.

The Environment and Social Development Organization (ESDO) from Bangladesh has been active for several years in ILPPW campaigns. This year they conducted multiple activities, including the organization of a human chain, to spread their message on the need to ban lead paint.

The National Institute of Public Health in Slovenia organized workshops in childcare centres to promote methods for reducing exposure to heavy metals including lead.

The poisons centre at King Fahad Medical City in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia used Twitter to disseminate multiple-choice questions on which products contain lead. This was followed by the distribution of fact sheets on lead poisoning and an information stand in the lobby of the hospital (picture below and leaflet bottom right).

The Lead-Free MV Coalition in the USA hosted a presentation on the history of lead poisoning in the USA featuring the authors of “Lead Wars: The Politics of Science and the Fate of America’s Children” (picture below). After the presentation, a panel of experts discussed the impact of lead poisoning in communities.

Shortly after ILPPW, two paint industry workshops were held in Medellin and Bogota, Colombia. These were organized by ABRAFATI (the Brazilian Coatings Manufacturers Association) with support from local paint technical societies. The workshops focused on industry education and the technical requirements for reducing the use of lead in residential and decorative paints.

And there were many other initiatives...

The Dirección General de la Salud Ambiental (DIGESA) in Paraguay, in conjunction with the NGO ALTER VIDA, organized a seminar to discuss the possibilities of reducing lead in various products.

During the 11th International Conference on Waste Management and Technology, hosted by the Government of China, UN Environment presented a session on "Lead-Based Paint Substitution and Recycling of Lead-Acid Batteries".

In the USA activities around the country included distributing free lead dust test kits, certification courses on safe removal of lead paint, displaying campaign materials at fairs and booths, and offering free blood lead tests at healthcare centres.

Above: Infographic from the website of Ecological Alert and Recovery (EARTH Thailand) on the importance of reducing lead exposure.

The Ecological Society ‘Ruzgar’ from Azerbaijan organized a press-conference on a study of the lead content in household paints.

Above: Leaflet on lead in paint from the poisons centre in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Calling for action!

Throughout the campaign week various people spoke about specific actions that need to be taken to eliminate lead in paint:

“The alternatives to leaded paints are now available in the market. I urge the government to establish legislation to ban lead paint by 2017.” (Siddika Sultana, Executive Director of ESDO)

The Center for Environmental Solutions (CES) (Belarus) posted an open letter to Belarussian manufacturers of paints, importers and large retail chains (picture below shows letter on webpage). In the letter CES states, amongst other things, that consumers should be better informed about the lead content in paint via labelling on products.

“Ukraine needs as soon as possible to develop and adopt normative legal instruments that prohibit the using of lead in production of paints, as it has been done by European countries, the United States and Canada.” (Denys Pavlovskyi, MAMA 86).

AGENDA for Environment and Responsible Development (United Republic of Tanzania) organized a media event to urge the government to endorse lead paint standards.

The Consumers’ Association of Penang (Malaysia) issued a press release calling for the promulgation of a regulation to ban lead paint.

Right: Cover page of the report on the national paint survey in Armenia.

IPEN report

IPEN released its Global Lead Paint Elimination Report as part of its worldwide activities during the ILPPW. The report makes a number of recommendations to achieve the Lead Paint Alliance target that by 2020 all countries should have adopted legally binding controls on lead paints. These include:

- More country-level data on lead paint is needed.
- More governments should begin developing lead paint regulations.
- Paint manufacturers, paint industry trade associations and paint ingredient vendors should take voluntary action immediately to eliminate lead from all paints, with decorative and other paints used in and around homes and schools as a priority.
- Donors should make significant new resources available for global lead paint elimination.

Success stories

A number of countries have banned lead paint in the past years and from January 2017 the Philippines can be added to this list. Under the Chemical Control Order for Lead and Lead Compounds issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), paint manufacturers were given a three-year phase-out period (2013–2016) for architectural, decorative and household (ADH) paints, and a six-year phase-out time (2013–2019) for paints used in industrial applications.

The country’s decisive move to prohibit the intentional use of lead in ADH paints was catalysed by the involvement of the DENR, the Philippine Association of Paint Manufacturers, IPEN and the EcoWaste Coalition.

IPEN Participating Organizations in nine countries hosted meetings to present the results of national surveys of lead content in paint. IPEN organizations also conducted awareness-raising activities in over 25 countries, including production of infographics showing the economic cost of lead exposure.

Above: children’s zombie run to remind about the 2016 deadline (photo credit: Manny Calonzo, IPEN)

On 1 November 2016 the Gazette of India published the new Lead Contents in Household and Decorative Paints Rules, 2016. This will come into force on 1 November 2017. The regulation sets the permissible level of lead in paints to 90 ppm of the weight of the total non-volatile content of the dried paint film. This effectively bans the addition of lead to these paints.
What can different stakeholders do to eliminate lead paint?

Governments of countries without lead paint laws should:

- Establish and enforce stringent national legal limits.
- Partner with stakeholders in the health sector, industry, public interest organizations and academia.
- Utilize available resources, e.g. the Toolkit for Establishing Laws to Control the Use of Lead in Paint (available on UN Environment website – see link).
- Participate in national and multi-country regional projects to share information and assistance.

Industry can:

- Voluntarily stop the manufacture and sale of lead paint.
- Engage with governments to support the development and implementation of legal limits on lead in paint.
- Identify ways for national and regional paint associations and large multinational paint and pigment manufacturers to provide expertise and encouragement to other companies interested in stopping their use of lead additives.
- Participate in third-party certification of their paint products to help consumers recognize lead-safe paints.

Non-governmental organizations can:

- Analyze lead content of paints sold in national markets.
- Engage with governments to support the development and implementation of legal limits on lead in paint.
- Build public awareness of lead paint hazards.

For more information:

- [http://web.unep.org/chemicalsandwaste/leadpaintalliance/](http://web.unep.org/chemicalsandwaste/leadpaintalliance/)

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 UN Environment and WHO.

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