International lead poisoning prevention week of action, 22–28 October 2017

To mark the fifth international lead poisoning prevention week of action, groups from all around the world campaign to raise awareness about the health hazards associated with lead. A major source of lead exposure among children is lead paint that can be found in homes, schools, playgrounds and on toys. Children can suffer lasting harm from exposure to lead. During the week of action and beyond, WHO is calling on all governments that have not as yet introduced legal controls on the use of lead in paints to do so; to date only 67 countries have confirmed that such controls are in place. To find out more about the registered events, click here. To access infographics and for further information about the week of action, click here.

Health-related events at the Climate Change Conference (COP-23)

The Paris Agreement, adopted in December 2015, represented a pivotal moment in determining the global response to climate change. The Agreement came into force in November 2016, signed by 195 out of 197 States, and represents a crucial step towards keeping the global temperature rise this century below 2 degrees Celsius. To protect public health, we must do better and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius. To meet these ambitious goals we need to achieve a downward trend in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

To contribute to this goal, WHO is taking part in organizing the Global Climate and Health Summit during COP23. The Summit will focus, through a health lens, on action in cities and regions to advance implementation of national targets under the Paris Agreement and build momentum for increased ambition in climate commitments. The Summit will take place on 11 November 2017.

Two other events will be held on 12 November 2017: The COP Presidency’s high-level event on Health Actions for the Implementation of the Paris Agreement and Momentum for Change; Planetary Health Event. COP 23 will take place from 6 to 17 November 2017 in Bonn, Germany. For more information on the Summit and events, click here.

United Nations uniting for Minamata

The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP1) to the Minamata Convention on Mercury was held in September 2017. During COP1, WHO organized a series of events to address the adverse effects of mercury on public health. The high-level event, United Nations uniting for Minamata provided an opportunity for an interactive, dynamic dialogue among heads of the United Nations and other organizations. They shared their commitment to take action at national, regional and global levels to support the effective implementation of the Convention; emphasizing its importance for human health and the environment; and working in partnership to ensure maximum impact.

COP1 took place from 24 to 29 September 2017 at the International Conference Centre in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information on WHO activities during COP1 and infographics click here.
Progressing the Sustainable Development Goals through Health in All Policies (HiAP)

Progressing the Sustainable Development Goals through Health in All Policies – Case studies from around the world captures HiAP experiences from across the globe in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While there is no single or simple model for HiAP, there is a growing evidence base of facilitating conditions for this. The publication documents experiences, capturing important elements of HiAP practice through an analysis of established and emerging models. The Government of the State of South Australia and WHO recently co-published this compilation, which is aimed at the international community, the broader sustainable development network and all those who are interested in knowing more about implementing HiAP. The publication was launched during the WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific on 12 October 2017. To access the publication and key messages click here.

London’s vision for clean energy, clean air – #BreatheLife2030

On 4 October 2017, London joined the BreatheLife network as the world’s first mega-city to commit to meeting WHO’s air quality standards. The global standard recommendations for air quality set serious limits on health-harmful pollutants.

The WHO recommends an upper limit of health-harmful fine particles (PM2.5) of 10 micrograms/cubic meter, and this is the target London plans to reach by 2030. London’s Air Quality department has done extensive analysis to ensure that while ambitious, this is an achievable target. London has a plan in place to meet this target, backed by serious science and stakeholder consensus. The city’s air quality strategy centers around another target: becoming a zero-carbon city by 2050. Achieving this vision will require broad citywide action, from the institutional level to the individual. For more information, click here.

Global Network for HiAP second meeting in Thailand

The second meeting of the Global Network for Health in All Policies (HiAP) was convened with the objectives to: define the network’s vision, mission and slogan; agree on the governance structure; elect the Steering Committee, Executive Committee and the Chairperson; and prepare its work plan. During the course of the meeting, the governance structure and its functions were agreed upon and His Excellency Mr Bahr Idriss Abu Garda, Federal Minister of Health, Republic of the Sudan was elected as the Chairperson of the Steering Committee. All the members agreed on prioritizing the following activities for the next three years: strengthening network advocacy and governance; developing the Global HiAP status report; strengthening HiAP capacity building; and providing operational guidance for implementing HiAP approach. The meeting took place from 2 to 3 October 2017 in Thailand.

The Global Network for HiAP is a country-led initiative that was launched by the governments of Sudan, Finland and Thailand, the Province of Quebec, and the State of South Australia as a side event during the 70th World Health Assembly on May 24 2017. For more on network click here.

Facts and Figures Lead poisoning and health

- Lead is a cumulative toxicant that affects multiple body systems and is particularly harmful to young children.
- Lead in the body is distributed to the brain, liver, kidney and bones. It is stored in the teeth and bones, where it accumulates over time. Human exposure is usually assessed through the measurement of lead in blood.
- Lead in bone is released into blood during pregnancy and becomes a source of exposure to the developing fetus.
- There is no known level of lead exposure that is considered safe.
- Lead exposure is preventable.

For more information, please click here.

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