

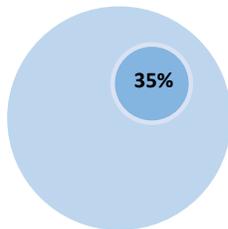
Worldwide Voices: Perspectives in Tackling Lead Webinar Summary

Date & Time	30 October 2023, 15:00 – 16:30 (UTC+1)
Recording	https://youtu.be/UtAhhRwOv4Q
SAICM CoP	ggkp.org/ChemAndWasteCoP

Attendee Report

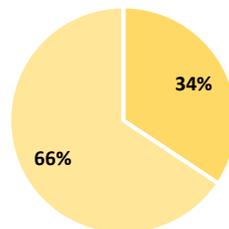
Participants

Participants	67
Registrants	187



Gender

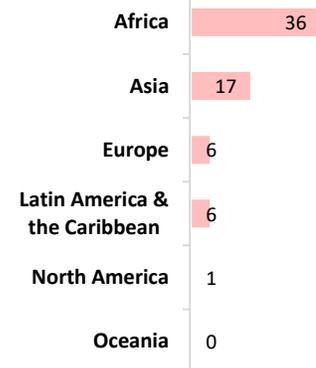
Female	23
Male	44



Affiliation



Region



Background Insights

The webinar addressed the persistent issue of lead poisoning, a significant health threat globally, especially in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Despite considerable progress, many children in these regions are still exposed to high levels of lead, mainly through paint, toys, and electronics. The discussion reflected on the G7 summit's emphasis on the urgent need for lead poisoning prevention and the support for LMICs in combating environmental pollution. A pivotal event was the Fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) in Berlin, where a unanimous decision led to the creation of the "Global Framework on Chemicals." This framework, comprising 28 targets, provides a roadmap for nations and stakeholders to collaboratively manage the lifecycle of chemicals and mitigate lead exposure. The webinar aimed to dissect these global actions, examine the hurdles LMICs face in establishing protective laws, and explore avenues for disseminating successful strategies worldwide.

Detailed Webinar Discussions

QUESTION 1

Engaging a broader network of stakeholders can be instrumental. Which sectors or groups do you believe need to be more actively involved in the fight against lead poisoning, and how do you plan to engage them?

Muhammed Omotola, UN Environment Programme

Omotola mentioned that in terms of acid batteries and batteries in general, the electronic and transport sectors need attention as they concern vehicles. The number of used vehicles imported and batteries in those vehicles flowing into Africa amount to millions.

Building more relationships with the energy and construction sector is also important. Power generation for business and domestic use is of concern in Africa and in terms of the construction side, wasted acid batteries could be converted to produce safe building materials for the construction of roads, homes and others.

Francesca Cenni, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions

In addition to highlighting the crucial role of national authorities and NGOs, Cenni emphasized the importance of international collaboration in addressing lead pollution challenges. She stressed that joint action by multiple actors at the international level is key to integrating various perspectives at the national level, including those related to health, labour, and work.

Cenni pointed out the necessity of establishing networks at local and community levels and effectively linking them with national strategies to address the improper management of lead waste. By doing so, she mentioned that it's possible to directly confront the challenges in specific sectors that are currently lacking in proper lead management practices.

She underlined the potential of leveraging both existing and new initiatives, as well as joint activities, to target these sectors. She mentioned that this approach can significantly contribute to rectifying the incorrect handling and disposal of lead waste, thus reducing its harmful impact on communities, particularly in vulnerable areas. She concluded by stating that this integrated and multi-level approach, is essential for effectively tackling the complex issue of lead pollution.

QUESTION 2

How are technological advancements and innovative approaches being harnessed to make a more significant impact in addressing lead pollution?

Sherika Ballingsingh, International Pollutants Elimination Network

Ballingsingh, emphasized the critical role of technological advancements in spreading awareness about safer alternatives to lead-based paint. Utilizing digital platforms, including social media and websites, her

organization has been actively involved in educating the public about the dangers of lead in paint and promoting safer options. Ballingsingh highlighted that research is a vital tool in this effort, helping to identify the current state of lead use in paints and recommending actionable interventions. This approach aims to empower individuals and communities with knowledge, enabling them to make informed decisions and participate in the global dialogue on eliminating lead from paint.

Mihaela Paun, UN Environment Programme

Paun focused on the legal and technical aspects of managing lead in paint. She emphasized the critical role of developing and promoting [model law and guidance](#) documents, which serve as powerful tools for countries to regulate lead in paint at the national level.

Paun highlighted the importance of not just enacting these laws but also ensuring their effective implementation and practice. This step is crucial in making a tangible impact on reducing lead exposure from paints. She pointed out that the existence of laws is not sufficient; their active enforcement and application are key to achieving the desired outcomes in terms of public health and safety.

For countries that have already passed laws regulating lead in paint, Paun mentioned the availability of the [Lead Paint Reformulation Technical Guidelines](#). This guidance is designed to aid in the practical enforcement and compliance with lead paint regulations. It provides a framework for governments and regulatory bodies to ensure that the legal provisions are not only on paper but are also being actively followed and enforced.

Paun mentioned that this comprehensive approach, combining the creation of legal frameworks with their active implementation and enforcement, is key for effectively reducing lead hazards in paint. For those that already enacted a law, the [Lead Paint Law Compliance and Enforcement Guidance](#) can be useful. She emphasized the practical implication of these laws and how it underscores the need for a proactive and engaged approach by governments and regulatory authorities in tackling the issue of lead in paints.

QUESTION 3

How critical is raising public awareness and engagement in your strategies against lead poisoning, and what methods have been most impactful? How are the needs and voices of the most vulnerable communities being integrated into global and local strategies?

Elena Jordan, World Health Organization (WHO)

Jordan emphasized the critical importance of raising public awareness and broad stakeholder engagement in combating lead poisoning. She highlighted that 93 countries have already established legally binding controls on the production, import, and sale of lead in paint, showcasing a global move towards stricter regulations. Jordan pointed out the significance of the International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, held every October, as a platform for advocacy and awareness-raising. This event is supported by a range of materials and guidance, offering legal expertise and technical know-how.

Jardan highlighted that these initiatives are pivotal in addressing the countries that have yet to implement lead paint laws and in tackling other persistent sources of lead exposure. She also mentioned ongoing efforts to develop guidelines focused on prevention, screening, and surveillance, which will support targeted work in countries moving forward. The growing production of lead and the new Global Framework on Chemicals, along with the interest from the G7, help keep the issue of lead exposure in the public eye. This multi-faceted approach is seen as essential in maintaining momentum and addressing lead poisoning at both the policy and community levels.

Nafisatou Cissé, Lead Exposure Elimination Project

Cissé discussed the efforts of the LEEP in raising public awareness, particularly among policymakers in low- and middle-income countries. LEEP focuses on engaging and supporting governments to overcome barriers in implementing effective solutions to lead exposure.

Cissé highlighted the organization's role in organizing national meetings, which are instrumental in maintaining engagement with civil society organizations. These meetings ensure that the voices and needs of the most vulnerable communities are considered in policy formulation. She provided an example of LEEP's impact in Malawi, where swift action was taken to implement mandatory standards limiting lead content in paint. This initiative positioned Malawi as one of the few African countries recognized by the WHO Observatory for controlling lead in paint. Additionally, she mentioned that the country is working closely with major domestic paint producers to transition entirely to lead-free paints, showcasing a successful model of public awareness leading to policy change and industry adaptation.

Q&A

QUESTION 1

Is there any data on the recycling level of Lead Used Acid Batteries in different African countries?

Muhammed Omotola, UN Environment Programme

Omotola addressed the concern about recycling levels of lead acid batteries in Africa, noting that much of the recycling is unfortunately conducted in the informal sector. He pointed out that while some countries have developed plans to manage this waste, challenges remain, including insufficient materials being sent to recycling centres and the need to formalize the informal recycling sector. Omotola also mentioned the crucial role of strengthening extended producer responsibility and acknowledged that only a few countries have comprehensive plans in place, highlighting the need for broader and more effective national strategies to address this issue.

QUESTION 2

India has the largest population in the world and also increasing pollution including lead poisoning. How can the global community help reduce and improve the environment?

Elena Jordan, World Health Organization (WHO)

Jordan discussed the global community's role in assisting India, which faces increasing lead pollution challenges due to its large population. Jordan emphasized the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement and the need to identify pollution hotspots as a first step. She mentioned WHO's efforts in developing guidance to identify these hotspots and called for support from partners in this endeavor. The goal is to have a targeted number of countries implement this guidance, which can be connected to the development of specific strategies tailored to each country's needs, such as risk assessments or health status evaluations of children.

QUESTION 3

Public awareness of lead is critical in reducing their health implications. The media has played a key role in awareness creation. Interactions with vulnerable communities to share their stories have been helpful. However, there is limited government commitment to this.

Angela Bandemehr, United States Environmental Protection Agency

Bandemehr spoke about the varying degrees of government commitment to raising public awareness about lead. She shared insights from the EPA's perspective, highlighting their work across different government sectors to bring a multi-disciplinary approach to the issue. Bandemehr also mentioned the EPA's efforts to engage with communities through public processes, allowing them to input on government actions regarding lead. She noted the EPA's focus on Environmental Justice, particularly in

working with communities more exposed to industry-related pollution and those with heightened health vulnerabilities.

Mihaela Paun, UN Environment Programme

Paun addressed the need for evidence-based science to influence policy makers, especially regarding vulnerable groups like children and indigenous peoples. She stressed the importance of bridging the gap between scientific research and policy decision-making to effectively tackle lead exposure. Paun suggested that strengthening the science-policy interface could drive meaningful change in managing lead hazards.

Elena Jordan, World Health Organization (WHO)

Jordan highlighted two successful pathways in policy implementation based on WHO's experiences with the GEF project: the formulation of policies by policymakers based on evidence and science, and the communication of these policies to decision-makers to underscore their necessity. Jordan underscored the challenge of implementing policies with limited resources and time, advocating for regional collaborations to assess economic and health impacts, which can be persuasive in getting regulations approved.

Useful Resources

UNEP, [Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint](#)

BRS Secretariat, [Technical Guidelines for the Environmentally Sound Management of Waste Lead-acid Batteries](#)

BRS Secretariat, [Guidance on developing inventories of hazardous wastes](#)

BRS Secretariat, [Training Manual for the Preparation of National Used Lead Acid Batteries Environmentally Sound Management Plans in the Context of the Implementation of the Basel Convention](#)

WHO, [WHO's role and work on Lead](#)

UNEP, [After decades of use, paint makers cut ties with lead](#) (specific mention of work done in the ECOWAS region)

WHO, [Our children's future: a call to end childhood lead poisoning](#)

UNEP, [Lead Paint Reformulation Technical Guidelines](#)

UNEP, [Lead Paint Law Compliance and Enforcement Guidance](#)

UNEP, [Model Law and Guidance for Regulating Lead Paint](#)

UNEP, [Toolkit for establishing laws to eliminate lead paint](#)

WHO, [Legally-binding controls on lead paint](#)

WHO, [International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week 2023](#)

UNEP, [Lead Recycling Africa Project](#)