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I'd like to share with you an interesting case that has happened in Brazil, more specifically, on lead in paints.

In 2008, the Brazilian Association of Environment Protection - APROMAC - collected some samples of paints in the market to contribute to the IPEN global study on lead in paints. Many Brazilian brands had excessively high levels of lead, one of them showed more than 170,000 ppm of lead. The brands were very popular and largely sold in the whole country.

At that time, Brazil had a specific law in force establishing a maximum level of 600ppm of lead in paints and other severe wording inconsistencies that hampered its enforcement. Forgetting their legal competencies and the international agreements, each one of the health and environment authorities declared to me that they were not responsible for enforcing the law because the legal text did not expressly establish the competent authority to take the responsibility of controlling lead in paints. The fact was that without an authority to enforce the law, Brazil did not have a law on lead in paints, as it does not have up to now.

To solve it would be enough to issue a decree correcting the gaps of the law, making it enforceable. However, Brazilian authorities did not take this decision. So, our challenge to protect the children and environment from the high risk of contamination by lead in paints had another complex component: we were not able to identify any available source of financing in national or international level to work on the necessary strategy.

Then the more feasible solution was to file a complaint with the Public Prosecutor, even knowing that the access to justice public services for cases involving chemicals and social conflicts are time-consuming and full of obstacles for civil organizations and citizens in Brazil.

In fact, 5 years passed when the Public Prosecutor decided to close the case. Federal government remained negligent. Disappointed by the decision of stopping the process at the public defense level, we contested and another public prosecutor assumed the process.

The time was passing, and again, 2 years later, the second public prosecutor decided to close the process without taking action against Union's omission. We had no choice but to contest again, while we continued to seek financial support without success.

7 years of struggle and millions of children continue running the risk of exposure to high levels of lead. The public remains unaware about what happened.

After our second contest, the public prosecutor had no choice but to file a civil action against the Union. Then the Ministry of Environment created a working group on lead in paints and together with the government and industry stakeholders, we could draw up a reasonable decree to regulate the gaps of the unenforceable law. Since the middle of the last year – 2017 - the decree is ready for the President's signature. A new project of law was also draw up by the Working Group establishing 90ppm for lead in paints, and it is under public consultation right now.

Thanks.