



a toxics-free future

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International Mercury Treaty Enabling Activities Program (IMEAP)

Following the signing of the Minamata Convention on Mercury (the ‘mercury treaty’) in 2013 and the release of the IPEN Minamata Declaration on Toxic Metals, IPEN expanded its Mercury-Free Campaign and developed a broad program of treaty-enabling activities to be implemented in conjunction with IPEN Participating Organizations (POs). The International Mercury Treaty Enabling Activities Program (IMEAP) is geared toward raising awareness about the mercury treaty while generating data on key thematic elements of mercury pollution to help enable countries to implement the Minamata Convention.

IPEN launched IMEAP in early 2014 and continues to mobilise resources for IPEN POs to conduct activities that support implementation of the mercury treaty¹.

The key objectives of the IPEN IMEAP are:

1. *Preparing for Treaty Ratification & Implementation:* Creating synergies between NGOs in developing countries with ongoing UN agency or government-led mercury activities and NGO priority-setting.
2. *Enabling Activities to Prepare Countries for Treaty Ratification & Implementation:* Support to NGOs to carry out national and thematic mercury treaty activities.
3. *Communication of Issues Related to Mercury and Treaty Ratification & Implementation:* Global dissemination of project results & south-south collaboration.

The following project forms part of the overall IMEAP activities and contributes to the greater global understanding of mercury pollution issues while providing information that may contribute to Minamata Initial Assessments (MIA) and raise public awareness in preparation for early ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

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IPEN Mercury Treaty Enabling project: Lebanon

Name of the NGO: IndyACT

Date: December 2015 (IMEAP 2014 Phase)

Country: Lebanon

Title of project: National Public Awareness Campaign

Summary

This IMEAP report by IndyACT, an environmental NGO based in Lebanon, describes the extensive awareness-raising activities undertaken by the organisation to facilitate the rapid ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. IndyACT held civil society workshops, engaged with high level government officials and generated extensive media activities to promote ratification of the Mercury Treaty. In addition, IndyACT compiled a country situation report that describes the current mercury situation in Lebanon, including a list of traded materials that contain mercury, industrial sources, discussion of the hazards of mercury for human health, and the steps needed to phase-out mercury and comply with the Mercury Treaty. IndyACT raised awareness among government representatives and the public about the ongoing use of mercury in the Lebanese medical and paramedical sectors, especially the use of dental amalgam and the poor disposal practices of mercury waste from the medical sector via unlicensed incineration.

Activities

1. Organized bilateral meetings:

- ***IndyACT (represented by Dr. Naji Kodeih) met representatives and officials from the following Ministries of Lebanon:***
 - a. Ministry of Environment, meetings with the following officials:
 - Ms. Samar Malek, Chief of Service of Environmental Technology
 - Ms. Viviane Sassine, Head of Department of Chemical Safety
 - Ms. Nancy Khouri, Head of Department Foreign Relations

The discussion was about the Minamata Convention on Mercury, and the possibility to work together with the team of the Ministry for a rapid ratification process and the national

implementation of the Convention. Emphasis was put on the cooperation between the Ministry of the Environment and other concerned national officials and the NGOs active in this field: IndyACT and other representatives of the civil society, industry, the health sector; including dentistry sector, academia, customs and media. Cooperation between these parties will lead to the success of this complicated process.

b. Ministry of Industry, meeting with the following officials:

- Mr. Dany Gedeon, Director General
- Mr. Ramzi Shasha, Chemical Engineer at the Ministry

The discussion was about the need for the active involvement of the Ministry of Industry in the process of pushing the rapid ratification of the Minamata Convention and its national implementation. The Director General gave the green light to Mr. Ramzi Shasha to work closely with Dr. Naji Kodeih (IndyACT) at a national level on all issues related to the Minamata Convention.

c. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, meeting with the following official:

- Ms. Jocelyne Nakouzi, Directorate of International Organizations

The discussion was about the need for the quick ratification of the Minamata Convention, and the steps to be taken by Lebanon in order to ratify the treaty.

A number of telephone calls and email correspondences were conducted with officials from the Ministries of Health, Economy and Commerce, about the importance of the Minamata Convention for Lebanon, and the importance of an active role of these ministries in the ratification process and in the preparation of the country for the quick ratification and successful implementation of the Convention.

- During the contact with officials and representatives of different ministries interested in the Minamata Convention, IndyACT (Dr. Naji Kodeih) explained the steps needed for Lebanon to ratify the treaty. An official letter was prepared by the Ministry of Environment, addressed to the Council of Ministers and to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the national importance of ratification of the Minamata Convention. Once the Council of Ministers takes a decision, a draft law should be prepared and sent to the parliament to be discussed and adopted. This law gives a permit to the government to ratify the Convention.

- We assisted government officials to identify stakeholders: The Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Economy and Commerce, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Other stakeholders at the national level are interested and involved: Chamber of Commerce, Order of Dentists, Order of Pharmacists, Syndicate of Hospitals, Association of Industrialists, and representatives of the civil society and NGOs.

- We assisted government officials in understanding the many benefits that will come to Lebanon from the rapid ratification of the Convention, and the negative impacts of non-ratification of the Convention.

- ***IndyACT (represented by Dr. Naji Kodeih) met representatives and officials from the following NGOs in Lebanon***

- We met a number of representatives of the civil society, NGOs and coalitions who participated in several workshops organized by IndyACT:

- a. The Lebanese Environmental Forum (45 organizations) represented by Ms. Rebecca Baisari
- b. The Lebanese Environmental Movement (60 organizations) represented by Mr. Paul Abi Rached
- c. The Lebanese Green Party, represented by Ms. Marie-Therese Seif
- d. Byblos Ecologia for Development and Environment represented by Dr. Fifi Kallab
- e. Development for People and Nature Association (DPNA) represented by Mr. Fadlallah Hassouna
- f. Coalition of Zero Waste in Lebanon, represented by Ms. Lama Ghaddar
- g. Coordination Committee of Social and Environmental organizations in South Lebanon – Nabatieh represented by Mr. Ahmad Badreddine

We discussed with them the importance of the Minamata Convention, and the benefits of the rapid ratification of the Convention, and the serious preparation for the implementation of the Convention. Civil society is very active in Lebanon: it is pushing the government to ratify and implement the Convention.

IndyACT is the only NGO working largely and in depth on chemicals in Lebanon. There are also some other NGOs that are interested in working on waste management, are against incineration, and from time to time participate in some chemical-related activities organized by IndyACT or by the Ministry of Environment. There are also a number of professional journalists interested in industrial pollution and related topics. As a result of a number of communications and meetings continuously initiated by IndyACT prior to the beginning of this project, 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 is now established, led by IndyACT. It works on preparing a NGOs/ civil society national action plan for the rapid ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention.

2. Researched the current mercury situation in Lebanon regarding the list of traded materials that consist of mercury and that should be banned, and the facilities in Lebanon that emit mercury:

Use in Lebanon of the listed products to be phased-out under the Convention

Type of specified products	Use in Lebanon to be phased-out
Batteries	Mercury oxide batteries and zinc air batteries with a mercury concentration greater than 2%. These batteries are being phased out in favor of newer alternatives.
Switches and relays	There is an indefinite exemption for switches and relays where no feasible alternative exists.
Lamps – CFLs and LFLs	This category is primarily mercury-containing energy saver light bulbs (“CFLs”) and fluorescent tube lights (“LFLs”), with mercury contents above certain thresholds.
Lamps – HPMVs	High pressure mercury vapor lamps are primarily used domestically in street lights
Lamps – CCFLs and EEFLs	These lamps are primarily found in liquid crystal display (“LCD”) screens in televisions and computers.
Certain mercury containing cosmetics	Cosmetics containing mercury are not yet banned in Lebanon.
Pesticides, biocides and topical antiseptics	There are no mercury pesticides or biocides registered in Lebanon.
Electronic measuring devices with feasible mercury-free alternatives	Used in hospitals and other medical care facilities, the meteorological service and calibration facilities in Lebanon.

Lebanese facilities listed for emissions under the Convention

Specified emission sources	Facilities in Lebanon
Coal-fired power plants	There are no coal-fired power plants in Lebanon
Coal-fired industrial boilers	There are no coal-fired industrial boilers in Lebanon, but there is one facility with a coal-fired metal smelting kiln
Smelting and roasting processes used in the production of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lead, - Zinc, - Copper, and - Industrial gold. 	There are none of these kinds of industries in Lebanon except the one mentioned above.
Waste incineration facilities	There are some medical waste incinerators working illegally. At this moment no permitted waste incinerator exists.
Cement clinker production	There are 4 cement clinker production facilities in Lebanon. Three in Chekka region in North Lebanon and 1 in Sibline in Mont-Lebanon region.

The document containing this research also includes a preliminary gap analysis of existing law vis a vis treaty requirements and information about legal obligations imposed by the Convention, needed new related legislation in Lebanon, and the presence of mercury in current legislation and decisions.

3. Organized a relevant stakeholder meeting (hospitals, dentists, physicians):

- The invitation:



٢٠١٥ أيار ٢١ الخميس: الزمان

صباحاً المكان ٩:٣٠: الساعة

الحمرا الكومودور، فندق

الاحضور تسجيل	ص ١٠:٠٠ - ص ٩:٣٠
قديح ناجي الدكتور - المؤتمر أهداف	ص ١٠:٣٠ - ص ١٠:٠٠
نهرا عاطف الدكتور - لبنان في الأسنان أطباء نقابة كلمة	ص ١٠:٤٥ - ص ١٠:٣٠
في المس تشقيقات نقابة في البيئية الشؤون لجنة رئيصة كلمة حداد منى السيد لبنان	ص ١١:٠٠ - ص ١٠:٤٥
إستراحة	ص ١١:٣٠ - ص ١١:٠٠
بركات سابين الدكتورة - البيئية وزارة كلمة	ص ١١:٤٥ - ص ١١:٣٠
- الختام البيان و النقاش باب فتح قديح ناجي الدكتور	ظب ١٢:٣٠ - ص ١١:٤٥



Slide from a presentation in the conference:



4. Engaged the media:

A great number of media reports and interviews on the mercury issue and on the Minamata Convention were produced on radio stations, TV satellite channels, newspapers and electronic newspapers and social media:

- Radio stations:
 - Al Risala FM radio station: covered the issue 3 times
 - Al Nur FM satellite radio station: covered the issue twice
 - Radio Al Hourriya (Freedom radio): covered the issue 2 times
 - Radio Loubnan Al Horr (Free Lebanon Radio): covered the issue once

- Radio Lebanon (governmental official radio station: covered the issue 2 times
- TV satellite channels:
 - Al Jadid TV: 1 interview + 2 reportages
 - Al Manar TV: 1 interview+ 1 reportage
 - NBN TV: 1 interview
 - MTV: 1 interview
 - LBC: 1 reportage
 - OTV: 1 interview + 1 reportage
 - Télé Lumière TV: 1 interview
- Newspapers:
 - Al Akhbar: call interview: 3 times
 - Al safir: 1 Article
 - Al Nahar: call interview
- Electronic newspapers:
 - Al moudon: 2 interviews
 - Green area.me: 3 articles and a lot of call interviews

Deliverables:

- High presence on media platforms
- Documents that contains: the current mercury situation in Lebanon, list of traded materials that consist mercury, the danger and the influence of this material on peoples health and what is needed to phase out mercury.
- Production of material for public consumption such as flyers, posters and distribution of this material.