

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENTALISTS (LTD).



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PRESS RELEASE

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Kampala – This week is the International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week of Action (ILPPWA) that is celebrated world over. The week is used to raise awareness and promote actions to address the human health effects of lead exposure, especially for children. During the week, governments, academia, industry and civil society promote efforts to prevent childhood lead poisoning, and specifically laws to eliminate lead in paint. While many countries have long-established bans on lead paint, it is still legal in Uganda to sell lead paint for use in homes, schools and other buildings. As you are all aware, Goal 3 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals calls upon governments To **Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-Being for All at All Ages**. Indeed, good health is important for all ages including for our children. We all know how important it is to be in good health.

Lead paint is a major source of childhood lead exposure. During the last year and part of this year, **NAPE with support from IPEN** carried out a study to assess the levels of lead in paint that is produced in Uganda. In the report that we are launching today, the term lead paint is used to describe any paint to which one or more lead compounds have been added. The cut-off concentration for lead paint used in the report is 90 parts per million (ppm, dry weight of paint), the strictest legal limit enacted in the world today.

From July to October 2016, NAPE purchased a total of 30 cans of solvent-based paint intended for home use from stores in Kampala, Uganda. The paints represented 14 different brands produced by 14 manufacturers. All paints were analyzed by an accredited laboratory in the United States of America for their lead content, based on dry weight of the paint. The laboratory that was used participates in the Environmental Lead Proficiency Analytical Testing (ELPAT) program operated by the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), assuring the reliability of the analytical results.

20 out of 30 analyzed solvent-based paints for home use (67 percent of paints) were lead paints, i.e., they contained lead concentrations above 90 parts per million (ppm, dry weight of paint). This is also the regulatory limit for lead in decorative paint in e.g., India, the Philippines, and the United States of America. Moreover, 11 paints (37 percent of paints) contained dangerously high lead concentrations above 10,000 ppm. The highest lead concentration detected was 150,000 ppm in two yellow paints sold for home use.

On the other hand, 10 out of 30 solvent-based paints for home use (33 percent of paints) contained lead concentrations below 90 ppm, suggesting that the technology to produce paint without lead ingredients exists in Uganda.

12 out of 14 analyzed brands (86 percent of paint brands) sold at least one lead paint, i.e., a paint with lead concentration above 90 ppm. 9 out of 14 analyzed brands (64 percent of paint brands) sold at least one lead paint with dangerously high lead concentrations above 10,000 ppm.

Yellow paints most frequently contained dangerously high lead concentrations above 10,000 ppm. Of 10 yellow paints, 9 (90 percent of yellow paints) contained lead levels above 10,000 ppm, and of 10 red paints, 2 (20 percent of red paints) contained lead levels above 10,000 ppm.

To address the problem of lead in paint, NAPE and IPEN therefore propose the following recommendations:

The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) to move faster in drafting and consequently in developing legislation and the necessary regulations that will ban the manufacture, import, export, distribution, sale and use of paints that contain total lead concentrations exceeding 90 ppm, the most restrictive standard in the world. They should also require paint companies to display sufficient information indicating toxic content on paint can labels and provide a warning on possible lead dust hazards when distributing painted surfaces.

The Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) and the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) should routinely carry out assessment of lead paint from different outlets and factories.

Paint companies that still produce lead paints to expeditiously stop the use of leaded paint ingredients in paint formulations. Paint companies that have

shifted to non-lead paint production should get their products certified through independent, third party verification procedures to increase the customer's ability to choose paints with no added lead.

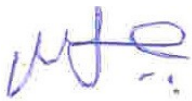
Paint consumers to demand for paints with no added lead from paint manufacturers, as well as full disclosure of a paint product's content. Household and institutional consumers should ask for, consciously buy, and apply only paints with no added lead in places frequently used by children such as homes, schools, day care centers, parks and playgrounds.

Public health groups, consumer organizations and all other concerned entities to support the elimination of lead paint, and conduct activities to inform and protect children from lead exposure through lead paint, lead in dust and soil, and other sources of lead.

NAPE calls upon all stakeholders to come together and unite in promoting a strong policy that will eliminate lead paint in Uganda.

Finally, NAPE and IPEN calls upon all paint companies that still produce lead paints to expeditiously stop the use of leaded paint ingredients in paint formulations. We propose the certification of paint companies that have shifted to non-lead paint production through independent, third party verification procedures to increase the customer's ability to choose paints with no added lead.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY



Muramuzi Frank
Executive Director