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PRESS RELEASE

Recent Study finds Lead in 100 % of House Paint in Nigeria



Popular brands such as **CAPL, BERGER, MEYER** included
Children at risk of poisoning; safer substitutes available

(Lagos) – A study of new household paints sold in Lagos, Nigeria found that many paints contained lead. The study found lead in all thirty (30) paint samples tested (100 %). All the 30 paint samples exceeded permitted lead levels for paints in the USA (that is far beyond the recommended limit of 90 ppm). Brands tested included *CAPL, Berger, DN Meyer, Chemstar, President, Portland*. This is the first extensive study of lead in paints conducted in Lagos in recent time.

Key findings of the study:

- The study (conducted jointly by SRADev Nigeria, IPEN and Toxic link) analysed 23 enamel (7 plastic) paint samples from 6 brands
- **100%** exceeded the current US lead in paint standard of 90 ppm
- Nigeria currently has no standard or legal limit for lead in paints. The general public is at the mercy of paint manufacturers.
- The highest sample contained 129,837 ppm lead, 1442.6 times greater than the global limit of 90 ppm.
- Brands of lead paint included **CAPL, Berger, Meyer, Chemstar, President, Portland.**
- Out of the 10 developing countries from where paint samples were collected and analysed for total lead contents, **Nigeria paints** showed highest percentage of samples containing more than 90 ppm of lead followed by **Tanzania, Mexico, South Africa, Belarus, and Senegal.**

Lead causes irreversible nervous system damage and decreased intelligence at extremely low

doses. Lead exposure in childhood has been associated with lower vocabulary and grammatical-reasoning scores, increased absenteeism, poorer eye-to-hand coordination, and lower class standing in high school. The U.S. EPA has determined that lead is a probable human carcinogen. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) Healthy Environments for Children Alliance, *“There is no known safe blood lead level but it is known that, as lead exposure increases, the range and severity of symptoms and effects also increases.”* One of the largest causes of lead exposure is lead-contaminated dust from decaying paint. Lead ingestion and poisoning typically occurs through hand-to-mouth activity.

“Lead threatens a child’s brain development and health,” reports pediatrician, **Dr. (Mrs) Disu (Head, Pediatrician Dept, Lagos State University Teaching hospital)**. *“Child lead poisoning should be taken seriously, and parents should be aware of possible pathways of exposure including lead paint in one’s home. Cases of lead poisoning with its attendant symptoms has been found to be common with children brought to the hospital for treatment”.*

“Lead is a poison and it should not be present in paint or other products to which children are exposed,” said **Leslie Adogame (Executive Director, SRADev Nigeria)**. *“Europe banned lead in paint in the 1920s. What are we waiting for when safer alternatives are available? We need to protect our children and eliminate lead from paint.”* *In the absence of any mandatory standard for lead in paints, industries, big and small, continue to use lead without regard for its environmental and health impacts. We are alarmed by the high lead levels in Nigeria paint compared to other countries. Urgent effort needs to be put in place to eliminate lead in paint as was achieved in petrol phase out”.*

The study comes on the heels of a global commitment to eliminate lead in paint in all countries. In May 2009, at the 2nd International Conference on Chemicals Management, **Nigeria** was among more than 100 countries that endorsed a Global Partnership to Eliminate Lead from Paint.

In 2002, WHO’s *World Health Report* identified lead exposure as one of twenty leading selected risk factors contributing to the global burden of disease and stated that worldwide, 40 percent of children have blood lead levels greater than 5 µg/dl, and that 97 percent of the affected children live in developing regions.

To address this lead threat, the **Sustainable Research and Action for Environmental Development - SRADev Nigeria (IPEN focal point on heavy metals in Nigeria)** in collaboration with **Friends of The Environment** together with the International POPs Elimination Network and Toxics Link (India), have launched the **“Children’s Health First: Eliminate Lead Paint”** global campaign, which aims to both eliminate lead paint and promote safer alternatives via the Global Partnership to Eliminate Lead from Paint under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), an approach which Nigeria is actively committed to as African Regional focal point.

Link to study & campaign webpage www.ipen.org or http://www.ipen.org/ipenweb/work/lead/lead_paint.html

SRADev Nigeria is a professional NGO, non-partisan, non-profit think tank on environmental health research and development, advocacy and action organization that seeks to be the voice for environmental development in Africa particularly, Nigeria while acting as a catalyst, advocate, educator and facilitator to promote the wise use and sustainable development of the environment. SRADev Nigeria is committed to bridging the yawning gap between knowledge and action by carrying out research, information dissemination, networking, training to increase public awareness on environmental health issues towards improving health and the quality of life for all humanity. It's headquarter is located in Lagos, Nigeria.

The International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) is a global public interest NGO network with more than 700 Participating Organizations in over 100 countries and in all regions. IPEN works with NGOs around the world toward a future where toxic chemicals no longer cause harm to human health or to the environment.
www.ipen.org
