

Towards a Pollution-Free Planet: The Global Campaign to Eliminate Lead Paint

Lead is a toxic substance, and young children and pregnant women are the most vulnerable to its effects. Every year, some 600,000 children are intellectually disabled because of their exposure to lead paint, which is still widely available on the market in developing countries and countries in transition.

Objectives:

The Global Campaign to Eliminate Lead Paint aims to build awareness and understanding of the health burden and dangers of lead paint. It also works to generate commitments from governments and the private sector. The initiative falls under the framework of the Global Lead Paint Alliance, which is working to raise awareness and prevent and minimize exposure to lead from paints. The campaign's ultimate aim is to completely phase-out the manufacture and sale of paints containing lead by 2020.

This year, the campaign is bringing together industry leaders to form a global coalition that will do the following:

- Set voluntary commitments to phase out paints with added lead;
- Pledge to start labeling commercially available paints as "Unleaded / Lead Free"; and
- Raise the issue of lead poisoning, prevention and solutions during the week of action in October.

To support the objectives of the programme, this advocacy campaign aims to work closely with industry partners, raising their awareness of the issue and encouraging them to take voluntary actions to help prevent exposure to lead.

This year, the campaign is targeting a group of CEOs from the top global coatings and pigments manufacturers, including AkzoNobel, PPG Industries, Henkel, BASF Coatings, Jotun, Nippon Paint, Hempel, Asian Paint, FlintGroup Pigments, Sudarshan Chemical Industries Ltd., Changzhou Longyu Pigment Chemical Co., Ltd, among others.

The campaign complements the programme of the Global Lead Paint Alliance, which – in collaboration with the World Health Organization, the US Environmental Protection Agency and Toxics-Free Future (an NGO) – helps countries establish harmonized standards for lead paint.

On the road to the UN Environment Assembly:

The major moment for this campaign is the week of action that takes place in October each year. It's during this period that companies and countries are expected to come forward and announce their commitments to act on this issue. This will likely see multimedia materials, events in addition to a social media campaign to raise awareness around this issue.

At the UN Environment Assembly we hope to:

- Announce major commitments: A joint declaration by CEOs to halve the market share of paints containing lead by 2020 is being prepared for an announcement by private sector companies at the UN Environment Assembly in December.