SAICM/UCT
Chemicals in Products (CiP) Community of Practice
Discussion Forum

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<td>Time</td>
<td>14h00 – 15h30 (GMT+2)</td>
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<td>Facilitator</td>
<td>Andrea Rother, University of Cape Town</td>
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<td>Presenter</td>
<td>Olga Speranskaya, HEJSupport International Varuzhan Gyurjyan, Mankan LLC Gohar Khojayan, Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment Thony Dizon, EcoWaste Coalition Ram Charitra Sah, Centre for Public Health and Environmental Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Maxine Brassell, University of Cape Town</td>
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Please register for this discussion using the following link: https://unep.webex.com/unep/j.php?%3FRGID=rf8b485c66efa41cbeb9fa19ff6e3e9ca

NOTE:
✓ Since this is a discussion, we encourage you to prepare or at least think about the questions prior to joining.
✓ This guide lays out the background to the questions, presents the questions and provides resources if you should wish to read further on the issue.

- Details for joining this discussion are below. To participate in this discussion you will need to have signed up in advance at: www.saicmknowledge.org/community
- For technical assistance on the day of the discussion go to the CiP CoP WhatsApp group: https://chat.whatsapp.com/DVwGix7x04d1Q9b5usaJcr
- Connect with laptops/PCs rather than phones since the discussion is about typing.
- Should you NOT be able to join the discussion but still wish to contribute please click the link below and fill out the Form with your contributions: https://forms.office.com/r/aGXes5Jp2p

PRESENTER BIOSKETCH

Olga Speranskaya is a Co-Director of Health and Environment Justice Support (HEJSupport), an international organisation aimed to achieve a healthy environment and environmental justice for people. HEJSupport works at the global, regional and national policy level and directly with communities affected by toxic chemicals and waste. Dr. Speranskaya is also a Senior Advisor at the International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN), a global network of non-profit organisations in more than 120 countries working together for a toxic free environment. She received the 2009 Goldman and 2011 UNEP Earth Champion awards for grassroots environmental
activism in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. info@hej-support.org; http://hej-support.org

Varuzhan Gyurjyan is a director of Mankan LLC that is the leading toy manufacturer in Armenia. The first toy store was opened in Yerevan in 1998. The company produces toys for Armenia and other countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, and the EU. http://www.mankan.am

Gohar Khojayan is a Communications Specialist at Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment (AWHHE) NGO based in Yerevan, Armenia. Since 1999 AWHHE has successfully implemented more than 140 projects. AWHHE is national SAICM NGO focal point and a member of the International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN). Ms. Gohar Khojayan is responsible for public education, advocacy and stakeholder involvement. She represents AWHHE in the SAICM related processes. office@awhhe.am; http://www.awhhe.am

Thony Dizon has been working for the EcoWaste Coalition for more than 10 years. He handles the Chemical Safety campaign of the organization through the Project Toxic-Free for Human Rights and Sustainable Development in the Philippines (Project Toxic-Free Philippines). info@ecowastecoalition.org; http://ecowastecoalition.blogspot.com

Mr. Ram Charitra Sah, is having B.Sc., B.Sc. Forestry and M.Sc. Environmental Science. He is an Executive Director and Environment Scientist at the Center for Public Health and Environmental Development (CEPHED) dedicated for the protection of public health and environment through research, awareness and capacity building, and policy dialogue. CEPHED is IPEN participating organization and has been part of global and national campaigns and advocacy work on toxic chemicals, health, and environment. Mr. Charita Sah has pioneered the issue of Chemical Safety and Toxic Chemicals in Nepal through carrying out groundbreaking research in this area, including lead in paints, lead in cosmetics, bio-monitoring of mercury in fish and humans, mercury in skin whitening creams and heavy metals and phthalates in children toys, pesticide in food products, etc. info@cephed.org.np; www.cephed.org.np
A developing child's body is more sensitive to chemicals of concern and more vulnerable to their negative impact. Children absorb pollutants through the mouth, skin and breathing. Since children have a larger hand-to-mouth activity and faster breathing, they absorb more pollutants than adults compared to their body weight.

An important way for toxic chemicals to enter a child's body is through toys. Many studies already revealed chemicals of concern like heavy metals, endocrine disrupting chemicals and persistent organic pollutants in toys purchased in different countries and regions that can have a harmful effect on children's health.

However, few systems are developed to inform on what exactly is in such products. Some countries have advanced system of regulating toxic chemicals in toys, but the majority of developing and transition economies do not have such systems in place, or they are not advanced or enforced.

While sharing information on chemicals in toys between all stakeholders involved in the life-cycle is important for protecting children's health, countries still lack approaches to ensure transparency for chemicals in toys within and outside supply chains.

This discussion engaged with questions from five presenters from HEJSupport, Mankan toy manufacturing company (Armenia), AWHHE (Armenia), EcoWaste Coalition (The Philippines), CEPHED (Nepal).

Resources:

Global Chemicals Outlook Tool

WHO (2016): Preventing disease through healthy environments
https://www.who.int/quantifying_ehimpacts/publications/preventing-disease/en/

https://undocs.org/A/HRC/33/41

UNEP Review of chemicals-related Toy Safety Policies and Regulations in selected Low- and Middle-Income Countries
QUESTION 1 – (14:10 GMT+2)  Regulating chemicals in toys

Background:

- Children are more sensitive to the effects of toxic chemicals. Their bodies, their organs, hormonal system and brains are developing rapidly. Endocrine disrupting chemicals, including but not limited to bisphenol A, phthalates, brominated flame retardants, or pesticides are of special concern. Exposure to these and other hazardous chemicals can cause diseases, which can also occur later in life. These include certain cancers, diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular diseases among others.

- The Report of the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes\(^1\), highlights various violations of children's rights and states that “businesses have a responsibility to respect the rights of the child” and “to prevent children from being exposed to toxics from their activities, both directly and indirectly”. The Report further requests specific attention “to the potential for children to be exposed to toxics by their activities, through the products that they manufacture or sell”.

- Toys are manufactured products and can be an important factor in children's exposure to toxic chemicals. The global toy market is growing rapidly and is expected to be worth $131 billion by 2025.

- Children across the world play with toys made with toxic plastics, lead and endocrine disrupting chemicals. In order to ensure toy chemical safety for children it is important to regulate chemicals of concern in toys. Some countries and regions have advanced regulations in place while many others are lagging behind.

- Different regions and countries have different regulations, and there is no international agreement on which chemicals should be banned or restricted in toys in the first place. Therefore, toy manufacturers have to comply with the requirements of different jurisdictions in order to be able to export their products.

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\(^1\) UN General Assembly A/HRC/33/41 (2016): Report of the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and waste; [https://undocs.org/A/HRC/33/41](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/33/41)
• Some toy manufacturers are willing to go beyond the chemicals already regulated chemicals and use safer alternatives, but gaps in the availability of information on chemicals in the toy supply chain are an obstacle to achieving transparency of information and, as a result, chemical safety of toys.
• Case study from Armenia

**Question 1:**

Does your country have regulations on chemicals of concern in toys, are these functioning and enforced and which chemicals in toys are regulated?

**Resources/Information for the Discussion:**


• Chemicals of concern in plastic toys – ScienceDirect [https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160412020321498?via%3Dihub]


• IPEN initiatives on Chemicals in Children's Toys [https://ipen.org/tags/chemicals-childrens-toys]

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**QUESTION 2 – (14:40 GMT+2) Monitoring of chemicals in toys**

**Background:**

• Only a small number of chemicals of concern identified in toys is regulated. This number varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, resulting in different levels of protection for children living in different countries and regions.

• Toxic chemicals are still detected in all jurisdictions around the world despite of the availability of regulations. Some chemicals already banned internationally are identified in toys because of unsafe recycling.

• Governments, scientific institutes, and NGOs conduct research on certain chemicals or certain substance groups with known harmful effects in toys, including heavy metals, endocrine disrupting chemicals, or persistent organic pollutants but rarely cover a wide
range of potentially harmful chemicals. Some of them are used as alternatives however further assessment is needed to avoid regrettable substitution.

- Some jurisdictions have systems in place to recall toys for safety reasons. This inter alia includes the EU Rapid Alert System (RAPEX) for dangerous non-food products and the US list of recalls. Many toys are recalled for chemical safety reasons.
- Monitoring of toxic chemicals in toys can trigger important legislative decisions. For example, researchers from IPEN had revealed that across Europe and North America, alarming levels of toxic banned flame retardants known as PBDEs, which originated largely from electronics waste, were contaminating the recycling stream and new consumer goods, including toys made from recycled plastics. The European Union (EU) and Canada reacted to that by taking a decision to no longer allow materials containing this class of toxic banned flame retardants to be recycled.

- Case study from the Philippines

**Question 2:**

If your country conducts monitoring of chemicals in toys, is this information available to the public? If your country does not conduct monitoring of chemicals in toys, what is needed for this to occur?

**Resources/Information for the Discussion:**

- IPEN: Toxics in products
  [https://ipen.org/site/toxics](https://ipen.org/site/toxics)

- IPEN: Raising Awareness on Health Hazards of Phthalates in Toys in Armenia

- IPEN: Harmful chemicals in toys in the Philippines

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**QUESTION 3 – (15:10 GMT+2) What information on chemicals in toys is available to consumers?**

**Background:**

- In the meantime, even in developed countries information for consumers is often limited to that on toy labels which becomes an obstacle to sound decision-making by stakeholders outside the supply chain.
- Toy labelling rules and schemes differ from region to region and from country to country. Some toy labels may even lack information required nationally, including basic information
Some labels may mislead consumers while some may contain false information. None of the toy samples analyzed by IPEN member organizations in different countries and regions for levels of toxic metals or phthalates had any indication of these hazardous chemicals on the label. There was no warning information for buyers about the potential danger of the chemicals contained in the toy.

The absence or lack of information about toxic chemicals in toys on product labels raises concerns about the environmental effects of toxic toys, especially when products are discarded, dumped in landfills, or disposed of by open burning or incineration. Toxic chemicals in toys can be released into the environment, causing pollution and affecting health.

The European Chemical Agency set up a good example of disclosing toxic substances in products by developing a database that provides greater transparency of information to manufacturers, consumers, recyclers. The requirements demand that all substances of very high concern identified under the EU chemical legislation REACH in concentrations of at least 0.1% by weight of all constituent components of products, must be reported to the EU Chemicals Agency and will be included into the database.

Case study from Nepal on the status of labeling in toys

**Question 3:**

How will knowing what chemicals of concern are in toys help consumers and regulating authorities in your country make the right choice?

**Resources/Information for the Discussion:**

- IPEN: Phthalates in Plastic Toys and Childcare Articles in Serbia

- IPEN: Toxic Chemicals in Children's Products in Nepal

- EU Database on Substances of Concern in Products
Instructions for joining this discussion on the set date:

This discussion will be held in *Cisco WebEx*.

- Please register for this discussion by clicking on the following link: https://unep.webex.com/unep/j.php%3FRGID=rf8b485c66efa41cbeb9fa19ff6e3e9ca
  a. Once you have clicked on the link, you will be asked to provide some details for registration purposes.
  b. Fill out your details and click “Register”.

- You will receive an email in the inbox of the email address you provided during registration with a calendar invite and a link to this discussion with the meeting ID and passcode.

- On the day of the discussion, click on the link in this email or on the button that says “Join now”.

- You will be redirected to the discussion.

If you have not received any communications for this discussion, make sure you are signed up for the Chemicals in Products Community of Practice or send an email to: uctcops@outlook.com

Format of how the discussion will operate:

- To participate in this discussion, sign up at: www.saicmknowledge.org/community

- Should you require assistance or have questions, contact: uctcops@outlook.com

✓ This live discussion will be run WebEx in the chat section on the set day. Members will introduce themselves upon arrival into the chat room.

✓ The discussion presenter will briefly present a verbal introduction.

✓ Three questions will be posted during the 1 ½ hour discussion for 25 minutes discussion. The presenter/s will address comments in the chat section of WebEx and all are encouraged to engage.

✓ All are welcome to join the discussion which will be held in English. Feel free to write in another language if you are struggling with English and members will assist where possible.

This activity is supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) project ID: 9771 on *Global Best Practices on Emerging Chemical Policy Issues of Concern under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)*.