

Press release from Jan de Beer, cell 082 456 3677:

United Nations Forum Briefed On Sapma's Anti-Leaded Paints Campaign

The SA Paint Manufacturing Association (SAPMA) struggle to have leaded paints removed from retail shelves was recently presented to a top-level United Nations Forum conference on the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paints (GAELIP) in India.

SAPMA's relentless campaign was presented by the International Paint and Painting Ink Council (IPPIC) at a GAELIP progress meeting organised by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) in New Delhi in late-September this year. IPPIC - a Washington-based global NGO that has consultative status with UNEP - approached SAPMA (which is a member of IPPIC) for a full report of its South African anti-lead campaign to showcase progress being made for this cause on the African continent. SAPMA is the only African association that has achieved substantial success in eliminating lead in paint from its manufacturing processes in accordance with national legislation.

In the paper, prepared for IPPIC by SAPMA Executive Director, Deryck Spence, SAPMA stated that the SA coatings industry had over the years been maligned and accused of being the major contributor to the lead poisoning of children as a result of high levels of lead pigments being used in the manufacture of enamel paints in South Africa.

The UN Forum was told that SAPMA had taken a leading role in voluntarily eliminating soluble lead in the early 1970s, in line with British and European standards, as well the establishment of the legislation under the auspices of the Hazardous Substance Act which was promulgated in 2009, which limited the use of lead in paint to 600ppm in all paint available to the retail sector of the SA market. SAPMA has also continuously proclaimed that companies still using outdated technology, such as lead pigments in the production of enamel paints, should be prosecuted under the terms of local legislation. But the pleas to the S.A. Department of Health had fallen on deaf ears.

"SAPMA has also participated jointly with the Department of Health in numerous awareness campaigns regarding lead in paint, but feel strongly that perpetrators will continue offending, because of the price advantage using lead pigments rather than alternatives, unless they are prosecuted - which the S.A. government has so far failed to do," SAPMA stated in the paper presented to GAELIP.

Ends

Caption:

SAPMA is the only African association that has achieved major success in eliminating lead in paint to prevent lead poisoning of children in particular, a UN Forum was told.

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