

19 December 2021 – In the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 6 countries (Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan and Tunisia) celebrated the ninth International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week. This week of action is an initiative of the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint (the Lead Paint Alliance), which is jointly led by the United Nations Environment Programme and WHO. The primary goal of the Alliance is to promote global, regional, and national phase-out of lead paint through establishing appropriate legally binding measures to stop the manufacture, import, export, distribution, sale and use of lead paints worldwide.

International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is an opportunity to draw attention to the need for action on lead paint and other sources of lead exposure. The ninth International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week was held on 24–30 October 2021, with 9 events in 6 of the participating countries organized by governments, civil society organizations, health partners, academic, industry, and other institutions. The aim of the Week is to raise awareness about the health effects of lead exposure, highlight the efforts of countries and partners to prevent exposure, particularly of children, and to stimulate further action to eliminate lead paint through national regulation.

The Regional Centre for Environmental Health Action (CEHA) designed and produced face masks with a “Ban Lead Paint” logo to protect against COVID-19 infection. CEHA distributed the masks on the Regional Office and country offices, as well as to ministries of health.

Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, and other countries have successfully issued national standards to limit the use, import, export, and manufacture leaded paint in the past 2 years through the Lead Paint Alliance.

The objectives of International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week 2021 were to:

raise public/customer awareness about the health impacts of long-term exposure to leaded paint, especially on children and pregnant women;

accelerate the implementation of national lead paint standards;

enhance collaboration between ministries of health and other stakeholders in this regard; and

support national industries in phasing-out lead and its compounds from local paints.

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