



SHORTLISTED POLICIES FOR THE FUTURE POLICY AWARD 2023

Argentina – Resolution 583/2008 banning phthalates in toys

The Resolution sets out essential safety requirements to protect children from exposure to toxic chemicals, specifically targeting phthalates in toys and childcare articles. It considers the already available scientific evidence and toxicological risk assessments and take references to the restrictions set by EU Directive 2005/84/EC. The resolution prohibits the manufacturing, importing, commercializing, or freely distributing childcare articles and toys containing six phthalates. Importers are required to present a certificate of compliance with the phthalate requirements based on test results issued by a duly accredited laboratory. Regularly, the Government of Argentina issues a list of products including toys that are prohibited to export or import. As Argentina is part of MERCOSUR the policy complies to MERCOSUR's technical regulations on toy safety and is reviewed every year.

Bangladesh – Guideline for Cosmetic Products in Bangladesh, BDS 1382, 2019

Bangladesh is one of the very few Asian countries that regulate heavy metals and other chemical compounds in cosmetic products with a mandatory standard. Lighter skin being an important element in the matchmaking culture, many young people, especially women, use skin lightening cremes containing mercury, and also apply them to children in the hope to raise their chances for career and marriage. Since the implementation of the Standard, around 10 million US Dollars' worth of cosmetics have been seized from the Bangladeshi market, reducing the negative impact on human health and the environment.

Denmark – Danish Order on food contact materials and on provisions for penalties for breaches of related EU legislation, 2020

The ban of PFAS (also called "Forever Chemicals") in paper and board food contact materials is an excellent example of the precautionary approach. By targeting the entire group of PFAS without evaluation of single substances, the Order is a great role model in the discussion on a ban of PFAS in all products currently happening in the EU. In the light of increased consciousness of the impact of plastic on human health and the environment, many packaging solutions turn to paper and board. But if it contains substances that are potentially immunotoxic, endocrine disruptors and harmful to

reproductive systems, paper is a poor substitute. Thanks to the ban, most Danish food wrappings that typically contain PFAS as grease and water repellents, are now free of these hazardous chemicals. Overall, this policy highlights where there is potential to reduce or eliminate the use of PFAS, and that industry is able to react once it is necessary.

Nepal – Decision ‘Regarding Mercury based Equipments and Dental Amalgam’, 2019

The Nepali law is the first in Asia to ban the use of dental amalgam fillings for children under 15 years and pregnant and nursing women while aiming at a complete phase out as soon as possible. Dental amalgam consists of approximately 50% mercury, a heavy metal toxic to the nervous, digestive and immune systems, especially for developing children. Thanks to the law, most Nepali dentists have now shifted to alternatives like glass ionomer cement, significantly reducing the risk of mercury intoxication for both patients and dentistry staff. Beyond, the environmental contamination with mercury has seen great improvement, with areas like Chitawan National Park being declared free from mercury pollution.

Beyond, the campaign connected to the law has led to areas like Chitawan National Park being declared mercury-free, protecting human health and the environment.

The Philippines – Administrative Order banning phthalates in plastic toys, 2008

The Philippines is a driving force among the neighbouring countries in regulating chemicals. This AO recognizes the necessity to reduce children’s exposure to hazardous chemicals as a particularly vulnerable group. Although national safety standards on toys have already been issued, this AO enforces a comprehensive monitoring and inspection procedure to ensure the compliance of toys with the safety standards. It provides for action in relation to three aspects: market entry requirements (certification, license to operate), labelling and packaging requirements and sanctions. Moreover, the amendment regulating 6 phthalates is a key step forward. The Philippines is the first country in the region to align its regulations with international standards and scientific evidence demonstrating phthalates as endocrine disruptors. The AO is an essential basis for raising public awareness, supporting consumers’ right to information and providing a legal basis in case of non-compliance.

Rwanda – Ministerial Order No. N°20/38 of 2016 determining the list of cosmetics whose use is prohibited in Rwanda

With its policy from 2016, Rwanda was able to take many cosmetics - 13,596 units in 2020 alone - from the market that contained hazardous chemicals threatening the health of people, especially women, fetuses, and children. A special campaign highlighted the dangers of creams aimed at lightening the skin with the help of substances like mercury and hydroquinone. Skin irritations, damages to the nervous system, and cancer are just some of the risks that come with these chemicals. With the message “Black is beautiful”, the campaign also tackled prevailing beauty standards that support internalized colourism among the Black population of Rwanda.

Tanzania – Regulations for the Control and Management of Mercury and Mercury Compounds, 2020

Tanzania's law tackles the very present problem of mercury pollution in the country which affects people and the environment alike. One of the biggest sources of mercury pollution is small-scale gold mining which in turn receives part of its supplies through the dentistry sector. By removing dental amalgam from the Central Medical Store Department's procurement list and prohibiting the use of mercury for dentistry in bulk form, this supply route is cut off. So besides directly protecting children under 15 and pregnant and nursing women, the law also aims to reduce contamination of the environment, drinking water and soils with mercury. Despite extremely limited resources, the law is thus a splendid example for other African countries in similar situations.

Vietnam – National Technical Regulation on Safety of Toys, 2019

The National Technical Regulation on Safety of Toys is a comprehensive policy that includes both chemical and physical safety standards, test methods and enforcement mechanisms. It modernizes the restrictions on chemicals already regulated in the country, replacing them with more recent and protective standards on, e.g., lead, cadmium, mercury, formaldehyde, and it establishes a restriction on 6 phthalates. This is a considerable step forward in protecting children's health in view of their harmful properties. In addition to setting standards, the policy establishes procedures for implementing them, like certification, CR marks, or labelling. The purpose is to tackle the circulation of non-compliant toys on the market as well as to inform and educate the public about hazardous chemicals and to change consumer behaviour.