CONCEPT NOTE

International Photo Contest on Greener Healthcare Waste Management

Goal

- To increase public awareness on the issues related to healthcare waste treatment and management (HCWM) through visual and artistic medium.
- To promote best practices on HCWM along with non-incineration waste treatment and mercury-free technologies for greener healthcare practices.

Target Audience

- Professional and amateur photographers.
- Participation of healthcare workers, environmental health workers and especially women and youth from developing countries is particularly welcomed.

Organizers and Partners

- **Organizer**: GEF financed UNDP/WHO/Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) supported project, *"Reducing UPOPs and Mercury releases from the Health Sector in Africa",* implemented in Ghana, Madagascar, Tanzania and Zambia
- **Government Partner**: the Republic of Madagascar - Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MoE) and Ministry of Health (MoH).

Key Dates:

- Official launch of the photo contest: April 30, 2019
- Submission of applications: April 30 - July 15, 2019
- International jury voting: July 15 -22, 2019
- Announcement of winners: July 22, 2019

Venue:

- Official launch of the photo contest in Geneva during a side event at BRS COPs[1].
- All information related to the contest will be available on the International photo contest website: www.GreenHealthCareWaste-Photos.org

[1] Meetings of the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions were held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 29 April – 10 May 2019. The meeting theme was "Clean Planet, Healthy Water: Sound Management of Chemicals and Wastes". About 1,600 participants attended from over 180 parties.

http://www.brsmeas.org/2019COPs/Overview/tabid/7523/language/en-US/Default.aspx

Categories of the Photo Contest:

Photos will be accepted in two categories:

Category 1: "HCWM for People and Planet"

- Two finalists will be awarded on this category.
- There will also be additional special nomination awards for photos depicting positive images for the following special categories (one for each):
  - **"Alternatives to healthcare waste burning/incineration"**
  - **"Mercury-free healthcare"**
  - **"HCWM for better infection prevention"**
  - **"Women and HCWM"**

Category 2. "Greener healthcare I want to see in the future"

- Two finalists will be awarded on this category.

Awards:

- In total, 8 prizes of $400 vouchers/cheques (or whatever is applicable)
- Appreciation certificates for tbe best 30 photos

Selection Process:

Evaluation of photos will be conducted in two stages:

Initial stage – preliminary selection. If the number of photos received exceeds 30 photos, preliminary selection of photos will take place. Up to 30 photos (by 20 photos in Category 1 and 10 photos in Category 2) will be selected for the second stage.

Second stage - evaluation and selection of the winners by international Jury Team. The Jury Team, consisting of organizers and experts, representing different countries, will select the winners of the photo contest in each category. In total, there will be 4 winners (2 in each category) and additional 4 winners in special nominations.

Background – HCWM issues

Healthcare waste refers to all waste generated by healthcare establishments and 10% to 25% of healthcare waste is potentially harmful to human health and environment. This includes infectious waste, sharps, expired pharmaceuticals, chemical products, and radioactive waste.

Inadequate handling, disposal and reuse of infectious healthcare waste is significant, as such practices not only impact the health of medical staff, but also that of hospital patients, their visitors, surrounding community. It also impacts hospital and non-hospital staff and workers involved in the handling and treatment of infectious healthcare waste.

In developing countries, the generation of healthcare waste (HCW) is rapidly increasing. These countries face particular challenges in dealing with increasing HCW quantities, since HCW treatment technologies that meet international guidelines and fit local circumstances, are simply not available at market prices that facilities and governments can afford. As a result, countries most often opt for low technology incinerators, which result in significant releases of unintentional persistent organic pollutants (UPOPs), like dioxins and furans.

Long-term, low-level exposure of humans to dioxins and furans may lead to the impairment of the immune system, the impairment of the development of the nervous system, the endocrine system, the reproductive functions and several type of cancers. Such pollutants are persistent substances that do not readily break down in the environment, bio-accumulate in the food chain, and are able to travel long distances far away from the place where they were produced, they are considered a global threat to human and environmental health worldwide. For this reason, these substances are controlled under the Stockholm Convention on POPs.

Similarly, developing countries also face challenges in handling products and wastes containing Mercury, which is one of the world's most ubiquitous heavy metal neurotoxicants and has been an integral part of many medical devices such as thermometers and sphygmomanometers. When these devices break or leak with regularity, they add to the global burden of mercury in the environment and expose health care workers to the acute effects of the metal itself.

Exposure to elemental Mercury, Mercury in food, and Mercury vapors may pose significant health problems including kidney, heart and respiratory problems, tremors, skin rashes, vision or hearing problems, headaches, weakness, memory problems and emotional changes. Like POPs, Mercury remains in the environment for decades, it is transported long distances and is deposited in the air, water, sediments, soil and biota in various forms, also is incorporated by microorganisms and is concentrated up the food chain. It is because of these characteristics, Mercury is also regarded as a global pollutant. Considering the harmful effect of Mercury, manufacture, import and export, in other words, phase out of mercury thermometers and sphygmomanometers by 2020 are anticipated under the recently entered-into-force Minamata Convention on Mercury.