



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mike Flenniken
(909) 937-9642
mike.flenniken@iapmo.org

**APEC Forum Explores Importance of International Standards
for Safe Drinking Water, Product Compliance and Properly Trained Workforce**

Seattle (Aug. 14, 2023) — The International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO®) and its charitable arm, the International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation (IWSH™), helped host a daylong water forum during the recently concluded Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Third Senior Officials' and Ministerial Meeting. The event was sponsored by the United States government and co-sponsored by Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Philippines, Chinese Taipei, and Thailand. It provided an opportunity for senior officials from APEC Economies to discuss the importance of drinking water quality and to begin to develop a roadmap for future action.

Titled "Reducing Lead in Drinking Water Through Standardization," the forum follows a global lead-free water pledge launched during the UN 2023 Water Conference that has secured commitments from governments and other partners to prevent lead in drinking water systems.

APEC is a regional economic forum established in 1989 to leverage the growing interdependence of the Asia-Pacific. APEC's 21 members aim to create greater prosperity for the people of the region by promoting balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure growth and by accelerating regional economic integration.

These economies spoke about the importance of recognizing and adopting or adapting international standards for drinking water, ensuring products are verified for compliance and the need for properly trained plumbers installing products.

Cooperation among APEC economies to strengthen and standardize regulation and enforcement around lead-free drinking water can be an important step toward ensuring safely managed drinking water for all and serve as a template for addressing other drinking water contaminants. This meeting is intended to be a first step toward developing a broader water quality agenda within APEC.

"APEC brings together governmental and private sector participants to address pressing global challenges such as public health. We are excited to highlight the role that standards and technical regulations can play to ensure clean drinking water in the APEC region," said Kent Shigetomi of the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, who served as project overseer.

"Lead has been identified by WHO as a chemical of major public health concern, requiring action to reduce exposure," said Jennifer DeFrance of the World Health Organization. "This includes reducing exposure through drinking water, needing cooperation and action from a number of stakeholders to address this challenge. By bringing together a number of stakeholders, including standard setting agencies, certification organizations and manufacturers, this event was an important step to address this issue."

"Australia recognizes the dangers presented by lead in drinking water, is actively taking steps to address this in our buildings and is proud to work with the international community on this effort," said Anne-Maree Campbell of the Australia Building Codes Board.

Representatives from the World Health Organization, University of North Carolina, and World Vision presented the state of the evidence on the challenges represented by lead in drinking water, the adverse health impacts of these exposures, and response options to prevent these harms. Discussion then focused on commitments and next steps to strengthen supply chains and achieve safe, lead-free water for APEC economies.

The event included four expert panel discussions moderated by senior IAPMO officials — Dain Hansen, Christopher Lindsay, and Shirley Dewi – and Aaron Salzberg, Ph.D., director of the Water Institute at the University of North Carolina, in which the participants also delivered presentations.

- The first panel reviewed the state of the evidence on the challenge represented by lead in drinking water and the adverse health impacts of these exposures. It included representatives from the World Health Organization, the University of North Carolina, and World Vision.
- The second panel was a government discussion on shared perspectives that included representatives from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); the Australian Building Codes Board; Badan Standardisasi Nasional, the national standardization agency of Indonesia; and the Bureau of Philippine Standards.
- The third panel reviewed challenges and opportunities for manufacturers seeking to ensure safe supply chains for lead-free drinking water and water service delivery. The panel included representatives from LIXIL International, Apex International and TOTO USA.
- The final panel included standards development organizations and conformity assessment bodies highlighting challenges and considerations in the development of international standards. The panel included representatives from NSF International and ASTM International.

#

Sponsor of the Uniform Codes, IAPMO® — The International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials — works in concert with government and industry for safe, sanitary and resilient plumbing and mechanical systems. Learn more about IAPMO at www.iapmo.org.