

Lead Management in Low- and Middle-Income Countries

A Shifting Landscape With Increased Interest, Risks, and Opportunities

PURE EARTH

What: US-based non-profit,
established 1999

Mission: Reduce health impacts
from toxic chemicals in low- and
middle-income countries

Where: HQ in New York, 7
offices in LMICs

Partnerships: long history of
private sector partnerships to
advance solutions

Topics

1. Current Landscape – Battery Recycling & Lead Exposure
2. Growing Political Interest & Scrutiny
3. Resources for Improving Practices
4. Partnering with civil society



To Borrow a Phrase from Thea Soule's Presentation on Thur:

“Ignoring reality and refusing to adjust and innovate will ensure that this is a sunseting industry”

This is true for lead pollution just as it is for regulation...and the two are related



unicef
for every child

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2020 Toxic Truth report on lead exposure:

- Health impacts
- Exposure Sources
- Solutions

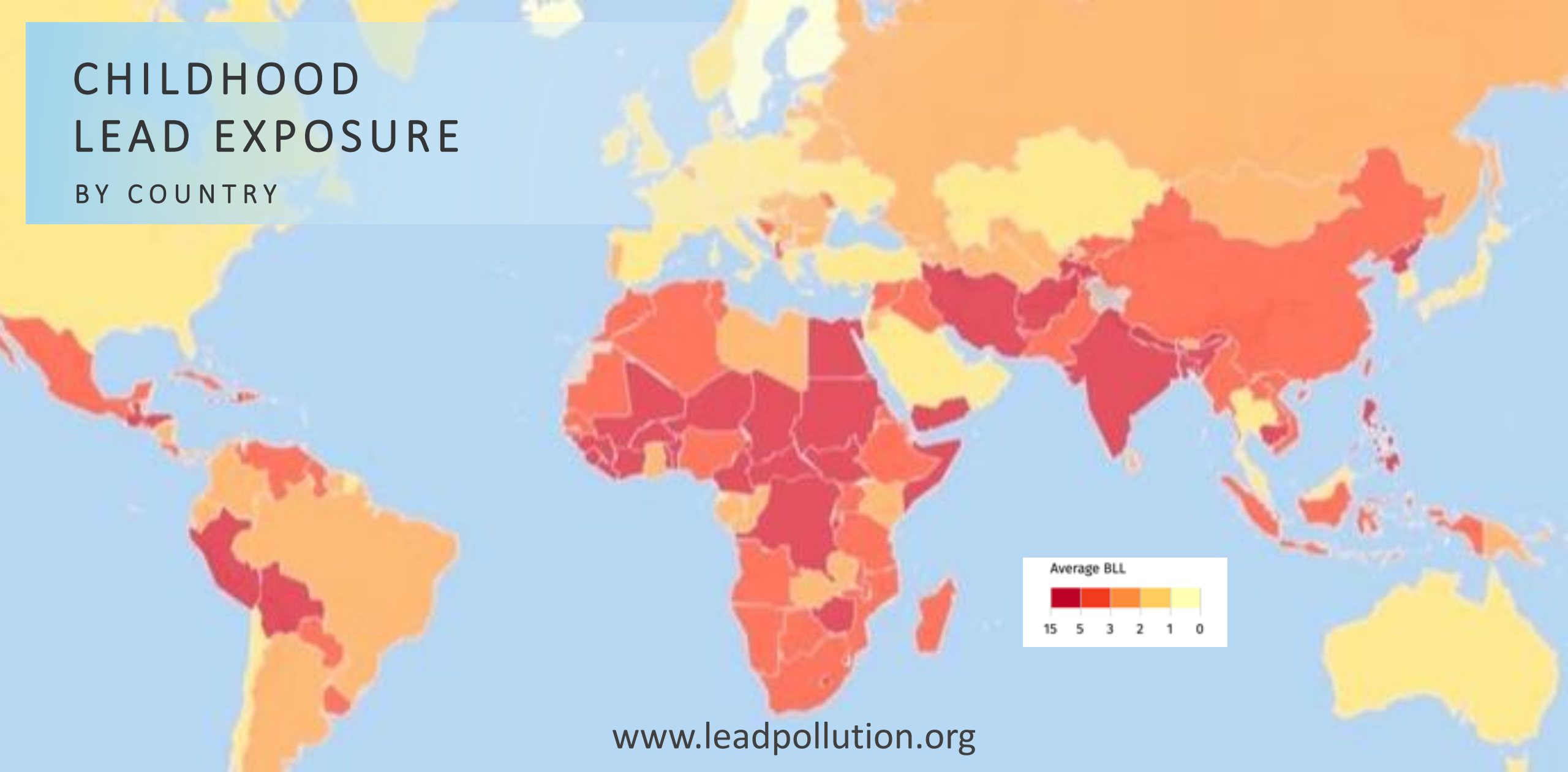
Top-level findings:

- 1 in 3 kids has elevated BLL (815M > 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$)
- >90% in LMICs
- 1M annual deaths (mostly CVD)
- \$1T in GDP loss/year

**The Toxic Truth: Children's Exposure to Lead Pollution
Undermines a Generation of Future Potential**

CHILDHOOD LEAD EXPOSURE

BY COUNTRY

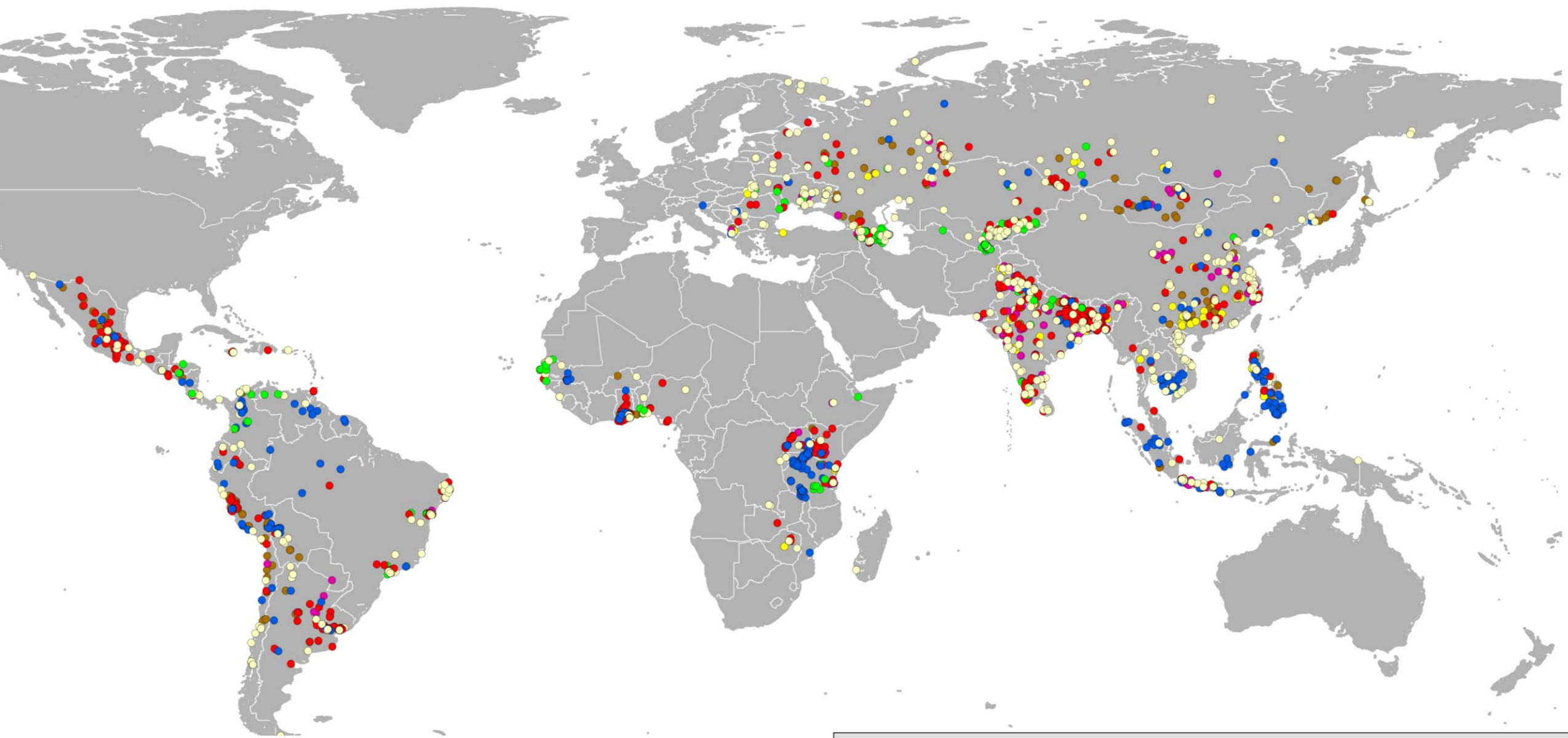


www.leadpollution.org



Impacts of Unsound ULAB Recycling

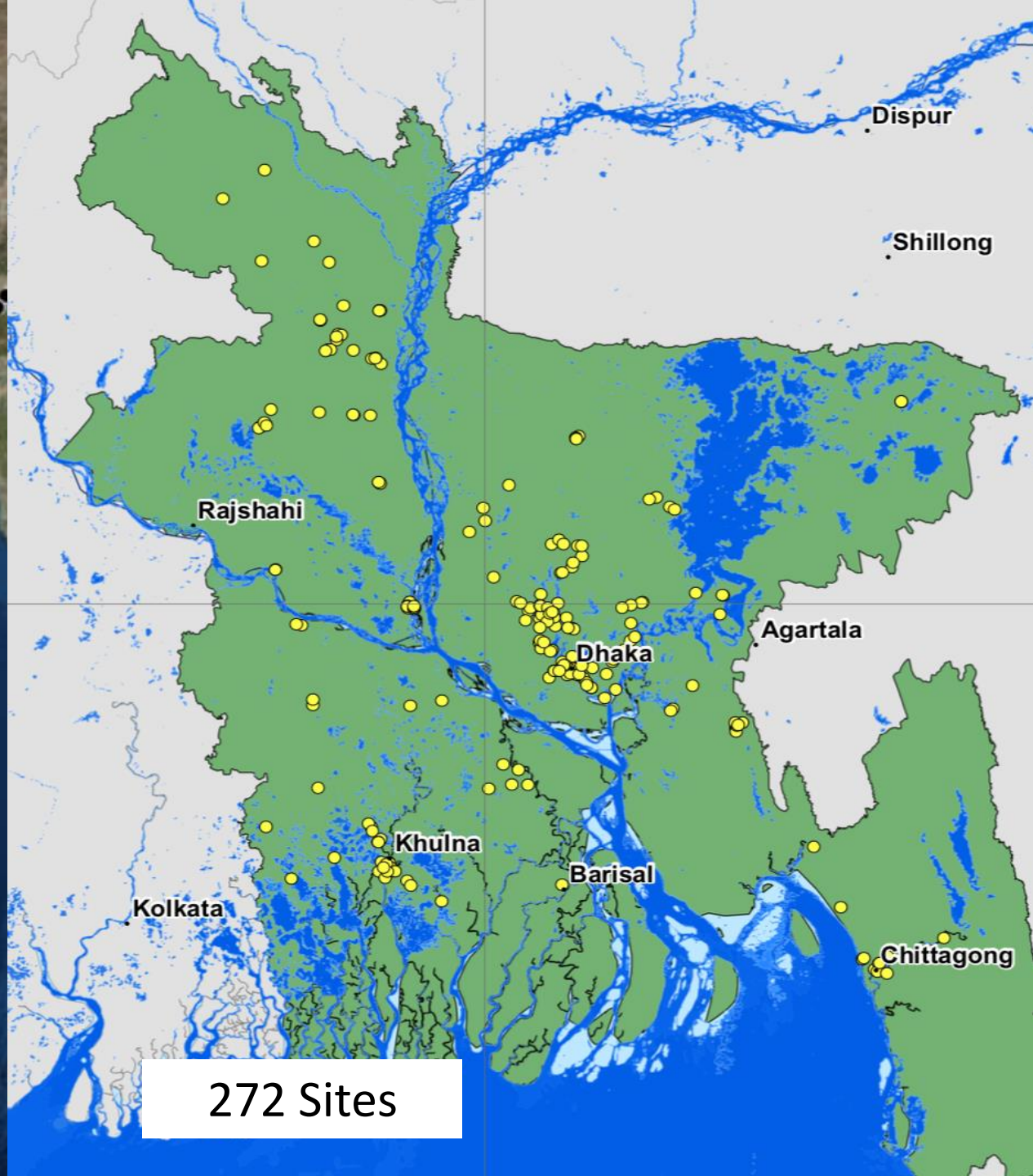
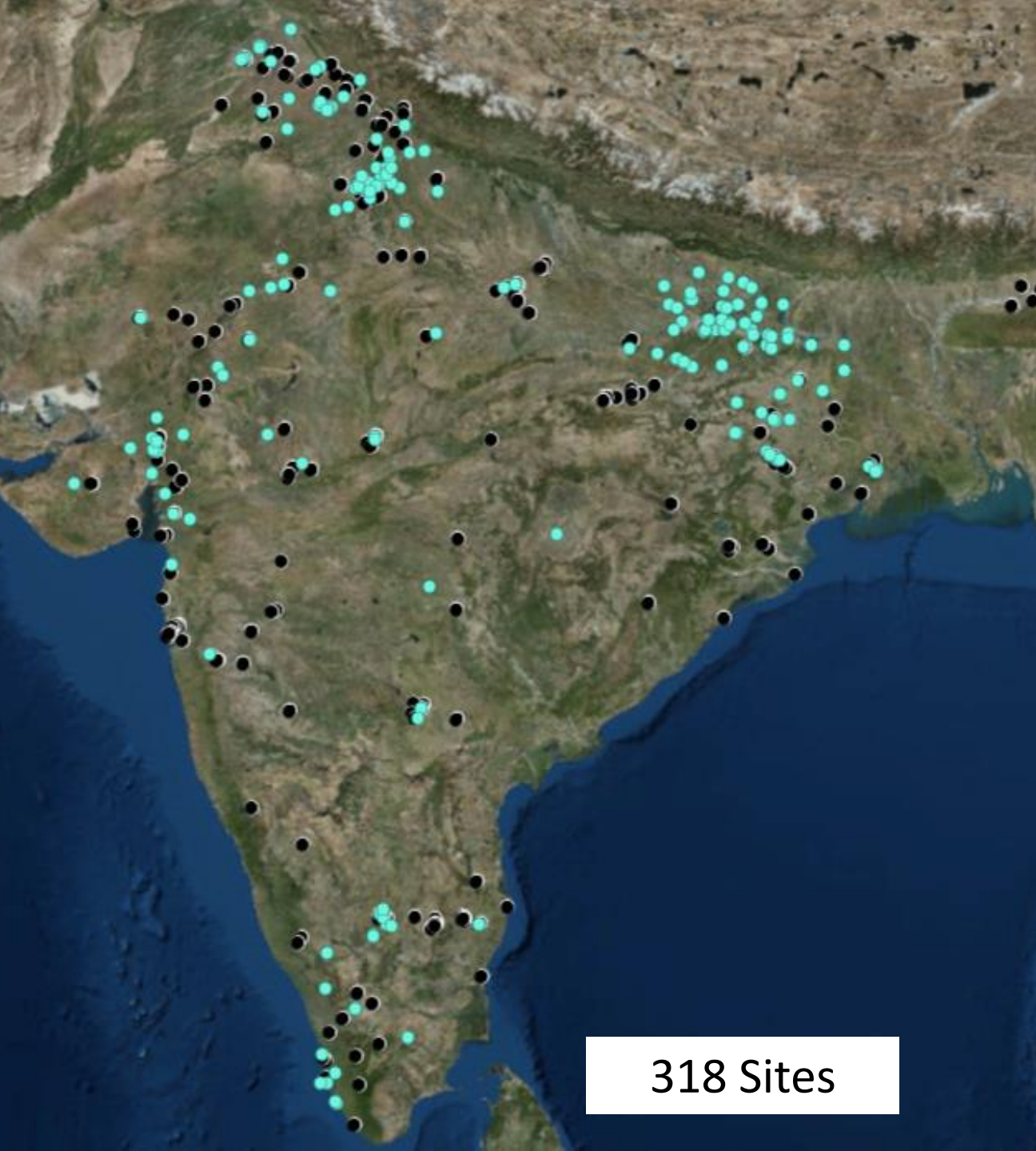
- Most LAB are made, used and recycled in LMICs
- 10K-30K informal ULAB sites, affecting 6-17M people
- 1,100 in Bangladesh alone (World Bank)
- ULAB recyclers in LMICs: avg BLL of 64 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$.
- Mean BLLs for children 0-4 years living near recyclers in LMICs is 31 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$



5,000 Contaminated Sites
(1,700 Lead Sites)

Toxic Site Identification Program - sites by pollutant

- | | | | |
|-----------|------------|--------------|---------|
| ● Arsenic | ● Chromium | ● Mercury | ● Other |
| ● Cadmium | ● Lead | ● Pesticides | |











These Are
Licensed
Recyclers

Formal
Recycling
Can Be Very
Dirty Too



Growing Political Interest & Scrutiny

Recent Events / Rising Interest

- G7: already on agenda
- G20: likely to be on agenda under Indian presidency
- UN's Science Policy Panel
- Strategic Approach to Int'l Chemicals Management
- World Bank & Asian Development Bank interest
- “Get The Lead Out” event in Washington DC
- Government engagement (US, Europe, India, etc.)

Emerging Data, Estimates, Research

- WHO & IHME will updated Burden of Disease estimates
- World Bank releasing estimates of mortality and GDP cost
- American Heart Assoc. Statement on Lead & Heart Disease
 - “exposure to non-essential metals such as lead, cadmium, and arsenic is a significant contributor to cardiovascular disease worldwide”
- US EPA study on lead poisoning and violence due Q4
- Trend: greater attention & scrutiny

What Can Responsible Companies Do?

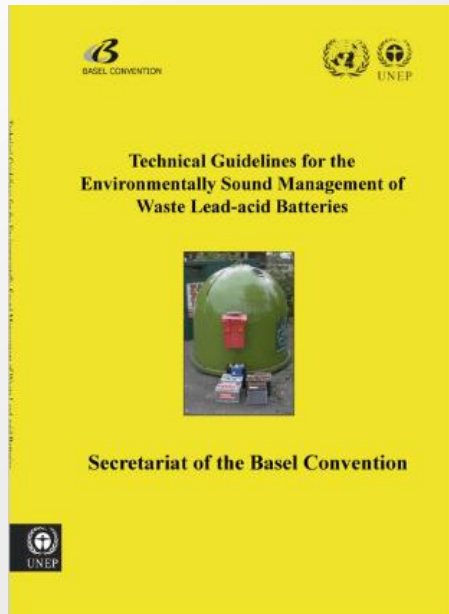
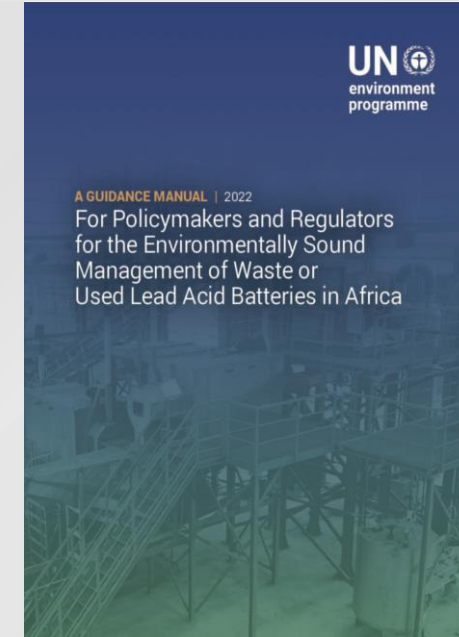
What Should Responsible Businesses Do?

- Ensure your value chain is 100% visible to you and perfectly clean at every stage
- B2B leverage - Demand best practices from partners
- Make positive impact beyond your footprint
- Embrace Lead Battery 360 program
- Support ILA to work with civil society
- **Partner directly with civil society**

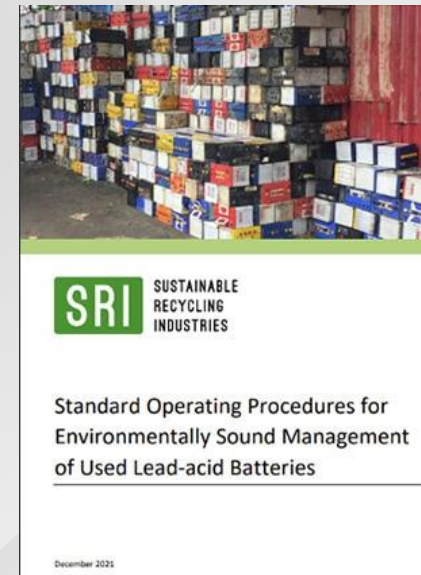
Consequences of a Mobile Future – policy guidance to improve battery management by Global Battery Alliance



Guidance Manual for Policymakers and Regulators on the Environmentally Sound Management of Waste Lead Acid Batteries – UNEP



Basel Technical Guidelines – Currently bring revised. Adoption in 2025



Standard Operating Procedures for Environmentally Sound Management of Used Lead-acid Batteries

Partnering with Civil Society

Global Response to Lead Exposure

- Lead exposure and AIDS take a similar mortality toll globally, but...
- Lead receives 0.0005% of the international funding
- Industry benefits from stronger int'l response to reduce lead poisoning

660,000-gallon Olympic swimming pool



3-gallon water jug



Our Mutual Interests

- None of us want lead poisoned kids
- Eliminate informal & substandard recycling
- Ensure recycling is not in residential areas
- Ensure licensing/inspection system functions well

What We Do – Programmatic Toolbox

- Site assessments
- Facility improvements (with industry consultants)
- International advocacy (Basel Conv., G7, G20, US & Europe, Global Battery Alliance...)
- Remediation of contaminated sites
- Push for stronger gov't response to informals
- Address other sources of lead poisoning



Other Ways To Engage in Lead Safety

- Support programs to identify and reduce exposure from non-battery lead sources
- Lead poisoning from other sources hurts the industry

