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Centre for Environmental Justice (Guarantee) Limited



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20/A, குறுப்பு வீதி, கொழும்பு 08.
20/A, Kuruppu Road, Colombo 08, Sri Lanka.
Tel/Fax: ++94-11-2683282
email: info@ejustice.lk web: www.ejustice.lk

PRESS RELEASE

ACT FAST ON SKIN WHITENING CREAMS -CEJ DEMANDS COSMETICS, DEVICES AND DRUGS AUTHORITY

May 9th 2013, Colombo, Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ) a public interest environmental organization based in Colombo demands the Cosmetics, Devices and Drugs Authority (CDDA) to act fast on regulating the mercury in skin whitening creams. With the report published in December 2012 by the CEJ on mercury contamination in cosmetics, general public expressed a great interest on the matter.

Mr. Hemantha Withanage, Executive Director of the Centre for Environmental Justice said that “CDDA has approved number of whitening creams with high levels of mercury as high as 30,000 ppm in the past, without considering the safety of the consumers. It was found that out of 40 samples tested, 25 of them have some levels of mercury and few among them have very dangerous levels.”

According to the Section 3, 4 and 26 of Cosmetics, Devices and Drugs (CDD) Act No. 27 of 1980, it is the duty of the Cosmetics, Devices & Drugs Regulatory Authority to perform their statutory duties on this regard. Considering this critical state of health effect and the delay in taking a proper action, CEJ sent a Letter of Demand on 03/05/2013 to the Director General, CDDA demanding **(a) to make necessary regulations and gazette maximum permissible mercury level in the skin whitening cream, (b) to cancel the current toxic creams registered under the CDDA (c) to direct the companies that involve in selling these contaminated creams to recall their products from the market (d) to inform the public on the danger of using such contaminated skin creams.**

Chalani Rubasinghe, Environmental Officer of the CEJ said “Mercury is one of the most toxic heavy metals to be contaminated and the skin being the largest organ of the body with its character of readily absorbing any form of mercury, has the highest tendency of accumulating mercury if contaminated body lotions are used.”

For more information:

Hemantha Withanage- Executive Director, 0777600503

Nilmal Wichramasinghe- Legal Officer 0112683282