



Prepared on behalf of International HCH and Pesticides Association (IHPA)

Aim

The aim of this newsletter is to disseminate information in a cost-effective way on the developments taking place in the area of POPs as implicated in the Stockholm Convention and other PTS of concern. It will cover, among others, the news on science and technology for disposal of obsolete stocks and remediation of POPs contamination which might be of interest for commercial exploitation both in developed and developing countries. Special emphasis will be given to bio-remediation related technologies which will benefit developing countries.

The newsletter will not go into technical details of selected scientific publications but only highlight salient features for the benefit of the readers. One can subscribe and read IHPA Newsletter (2 times/yr free of charge) at: <http://www.iHPA.info/subscription.php>

Note from the Editors

Since the last issue we had two major international meetings, one the 8th International HCH and Pesticides (IHPA) Forum held in Sofia, Bulgaria from from May 26-28, 2005 and the second one is the 3rd session of Strategic Approaches for International Chemicals Management (SAICM) in Vienna from Sept. 19-24, 2005.

Both these meetings are important milestones for international management of POPs and other PTS giving guidance on capacity building to implement the legally binding Basel Convention, the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent and the Stockholm Convention on POPs and overarching into Chapter 19 of Agenda 21.

In this issue instead of Review Articles we are giving the salient features of the above two meetings for the benefit of the readers during the holiday season

1. 8th Forum of IHPA in Sofia.

In the last issue we provided the draft Agenda for the meeting. The meeting was held at The University of Forestry, Kliment Ohridsky Boulevard, 10 Sofia, Bulgaria.

The **International HCH and Pesticides Forum** represents a platform for discussion between stakeholders of all kinds working on implementation of projects related to obsolete POPs pesticides and hazardous chemical waste. It acts as a catalyst in the exchange of information on topics essential for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention and other related multilateral environmental agreements, and the environmentally sound management of pesticides, pesticide waste and other chemicals.

The Forum brings together governments, donors, UN agencies, IGOs, NGOs and the private sector for an exchange of information in an open and informal atmosphere.

The Sofia Forum was initiated and enabled by the International HCH and Pesticides Association (IHPA) and hosted by:

- The International HCH & Pesticides Association (IHPA), The Netherlands
- The Ministry of Environment and Waters of Bulgaria
- The National Center for Agricultural Science, Sofia, Bulgaria
- The Institute for sustainable development, Sofia, Bulgaria
- The Federal Environment Agency of Germany (UBA)

There were 140 delegates from 44 countries.

Since the last Forum in Kiev in 2003, many countries have become Parties to the Stockholm Convention and are working on the preparation or finalising of National Implementation Plans (NIPs). Status reports were presented from many Central and Eastern European Countries. The discussion emphasised the importance of good quality NIPs as a basis for implementing sound chemicals and waste management required under these international agreements.

Country presentations demonstrated the potential for the impact of obsolete pesticides and other hazardous chemicals in the environment and for causing problems of soil and groundwater contamination.

This broad and important theme requires more attention and action on the international agenda in order to reduce risks to the global environment and to communities. The economic consequences of not taking action could lead to a loss of opportunities for exports in the agricultural and fisheries sectors and for reduced opportunities for the development of sustainable tourism. The Forum put emphasis on Environmentally Sustainable Management (ESM) of obsolete stockpiles of pesticides especially in Central and Eastern Europe and EECCA countries.

2. Sofia Declaration

The participants of the 8th International HCH and Pesticides Forum representing governments, IGOs, the private sector, civil society and academia, meeting in Sofia expressed their thanks and gratitude to the Government of Bulgaria for its hospitality and generous contribution in organising this Forum.

Furthermore the participants expressed their appreciation for the efforts of the Director of the IHPA and for his permanent support and contribution in keeping the issue of obsolete pesticides on the international agenda.

The participants:

Stress the continuing negative impact of POPs, obsolete pesticides and other hazardous chemicals on human health, the environment, wildlife and natural resources such as soil and groundwater and are aware of the economic consequences thereof,

Recognise the need for ensuring the dissemination of information and public participation in the decision making process regarding POPs, obsolete pesticides and hazardous chemicals,

Recognise the value of high quality NIPs and other studies as foundations for taking action towards the elimination of risks from POPs, obsolete pesticides and hazardous chemicals,

Call for accelerated action on the elimination of POPs, obsolete pesticides and hazardous chemical wastes,

Call upon governments and national organisations of the region to give priority to actions for eliminating POPs, obsolete pesticides and hazardous chemical wastes, Further **call on** the EU and other donors to support national initiatives for the implementation of elimination strategies for POPs, obsolete pesticides and hazardous chemical wastes,

Recognise the importance of sound national policies, legislation and chemical and waste management in preventing future accumulations of obsolete pesticides and other hazardous chemicals,

Recommend, after the preparation of NIPs, focusing attention on the identification and formulation of destruction and remediation projects,

Repeat the call, made at the 7th International HCH and Pesticides Forum for the creation of a regional network for the provision of expertise and experience sharing amongst governments, IGOs, NGOs and other stakeholders,

Recognise that effective hazardous waste management is an important component in the prevention of future accumulations of obsolete pesticides and other hazardous chemical waste,

Recognise the important benefits to be gained by the countries in the region from the integration of action under the multilateral chemical agreement ,

Acknowledge the role of the EU and the UN system as well as bilateral initiatives (twinning) in the implementation of actions to eliminate POPs, obsolete pesticides and hazardous chemical wastes in the countries of the region,

Call on the wider chemical industry to participate with relevant policies in support of projects,

Welcome and support the initiative for establishing a Central and Eastern European Regional POPs Centre under the auspices of the Masaryk University, Czech Republic and the ICS, Trieste Centre of UNIDO,

Recognise the impact on policy-makers and donors of visual demonstrations of the threats from POPs, obsolete pesticides and hazardous chemicals and the negative impacts of these wastes on human health and the environment. In this connection, the photos of the Georgian obsolete pesticide sites were highly appreciated, and it is recommended that stakeholders organise such expositions in different countries and during conferences as well as in the European Parliament.

3. Statements were made by:

The Bulgarian Ministry of Environment
The Bulgarian Parliament
The Romanian Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development
Members of European Parliament
The European Commissioner for Environment

4. Women's Role.

One of the highlights of the Forum was the active role of the women NGO Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF) represented by its Water and Agriculture Coordinator Margriet Samwel and the Director of Armenian Women for Health and a Healthy Environment, Elena Manvelyan. Their activities could be seen at <http://www.wecf.de>. It was interesting that two women with connection to Armenia played an important role in the 8th IHPA Forum. The second one is the dynamic President of an NGO organization Association of Former United Nations Industrial Development Experts (AFIDE), Dr. Atchuk Tcheknavorian Asenbauer who took keen interest in the activities of IHPA Forum. In the 7th Forum she made a convincing plea to the parliamentarians of Ukraine. Her speech was putting emphasis on sustainable development. She said that all those countries which had integrated sustainable development as their strategy while advancing their economical and human resource development, succeeded in much higher economic performance. Those countries whose economies were driven only for development without considering sustainability have reduced their economic performance and acquired many industrial, technological and environmental disasters (eg. Bhopal disaster, recent benzene spilling into Shonghua river in Harbin, Northeast China and also see a timely article in Time magazine dt December 5, 2005 entitled Lesson of Harbin). She said that AFIDE will join hands with Kiev IHPA Forum recommendations based on the desire of the host country Ukraine and other CEE and EECCA countries. She took this message again to the 8th IHPA Forum held at Sofia, Bulgaria and chaired the final session where she said that IHPA Forum under the directorship of John Vijgen is creating a better understanding on obsolete pesticides and their elimination in order to create a safer place for our next generation. She added that as president of AFIDE she will bestow the greater interest of AFIDE experts to support the cause of Kiev and Sofia recommendations. In this connection she announced that AFIDE will be opening offices in Prague and Yerevan to cover EECCA region. The Editor would like to remind that AFIDE website has cross links to IHPA website.

5. The International HCH and Pesticides Association (IHPA) strongly supports the recommendations of the Sofia Forum, by giving assistance to:

- Inventory methods and instruments
- Training programmes
- Programme management
- Quality assurance
- Documentation
- Technology transfer
- Evaluations
- Public participation
- Assistance in the set-up of country networks of important stakeholders

6. Forum sponsors.

The International HCH and Pesticides Forum in Sofia was sponsored by:

- Ministry of Environment and Waters of Bulgaria
- BalBok Engineering JSCO, Bulgaria
- European Crop Protection Association (ECPA)
- Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management of Austria (BMLFU W)
- Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), United Kingdom
- Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, SDC, Switzerland
- Ramboll, Denmark
- Tauw Group, The Netherlands
- Orel - G. Holding Ltd., Bulgaria

New Website for the Sofia Forum was prepared. All details of the Forum are now available at <http://www.Pesticides.ramboll.dk>

7. Ambassadors of IHPA.

During the 8th IHPA Forum there were a number of requests for being ambassadors of IHPA and also in obtaining IHPA certificate. The certificate is valid for two years. It will state:

"This is to certify that Mr/Ms Ambassador of the international HCH and Pesticides Association (IHPA), engaged to bring awareness on the problems of obsolete pesticides, spread the information of IHPA's activities and extend its Network with the objective to help eliminating obsolete pesticides in Central, Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and other parts of the Globe."

8. The Third session of SAICM meeting, Sept. 19-24, Vienna, Austria.

The SAICM meeting held in Vienna attracted more than 600 delegates representing Governments, NGOs, UN organizations, World Bank OECD, EU etc. It was held in the famous Austria Centre. The SAICM consist of three components with a high level declaration, an overarching policy strategy, and a global plan of action. The delegates, over five days, discussed all these including a mammoth draft global plan of action containing 288 concrete measures to be undertaken by stakeholders. More than 30 pre-session documents were circulated. The concrete measures included measures to support risk reduction, strengthening knowledge and information, governance, strengthening of institutions, law and policy, enhancing capacity building, addressing illegal international traffic, and improved general practices. SAICM mainly addresses the issues related to hazardous substances such as those that are carcinogenic, mutagenic and toxic to reproduction, persistent, bioaccumulative toxic substances, endocrine disruptors and heavy metals such as mercury, cadmium and lead. A draft overarching policy strategy document was a high level declaration was considered by the third session of SAICM. There was an issue paper on financial considerations pertaining to SAICM and a paper by the international POPs Elimination Network on internationalisation of SAICM costs within relevant producer industries. There were parallel Asia-Pacific, African and Latin American and Caribbean, Central and Eastern European regional consultations pertaining to SAICM. There were a number of exhibition stands by UN Agencies, World Bank, GEF, NGOs providing wealth of information on issues, controversies, training manuals and other publications.

9. Review Article:

This issue will not contain any review article but we make a reference to an interesting article written by our IHPA Director Mr. John Vijgen entitled "**obsolete pesticides: how to solve a world wide society problem?**". It is an excellent review of the present situation of POPs with breath taking pictures of obsolete stocks in Moldova, HCH residues in Romania. The article emphasises that for every ton of lindane, 8-12 tons of HCH residuals were produced and with lindane production of 700,000 tons during 1940-1990 one could assume 5-10 million tons of HCH wastes are still to be found around the world. It specifies the situation in Africa and Central and Eastern Europe. It has reference to work of FAO, Stockholm Convention on POPs, long range transport protocol, creating political awareness including EU support to the efforts of IHPA, Africa Stockpiles programme, networking etc. The full article could be found in Soil and Sediment Remediation - mechanisms, technologies and applications edited by P. Lens *et al*, p 331 (2005), ISBN :1843391007, pages 523, Euros 143. It can also be downloaded for free from the IHPA library.

10. IHPA takes a proactive role:

Following the 8th International Forum the Director of IHPA wrote a strong pleading letter to the European Commissioner urging the Commission to come up with a systematic plan of action to eliminate obsolete stockpiles of POPs. For the benefit of the readers we are reproducing the letter in *italics*.

European Commissioner for Environment

Mr. Stavros Dimas

European Commission

BERL 11/106

B-1049 Brussels

Belgium

Holte, 5th October 2005

Dear Commissioner,

In May 2005, you had addressed a strong and encouraging message to the participants of the 8th International HCH and Pesticides Forum in Sofia on Obsolete

Pesticides. You had underlined the very active involvement of the European Commission in the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and drawn the attention to the fact that the European Community had adopted a specific Regulation for this purpose.

Allow me to come back to the issue of obsolete pesticides. Indeed, a study which two private companies had made for the Commission in 2002, revealed that there are the following estimated stocks of obsolete pesticides in the new Member States:

Country	Amounts in tonnes
Poland	18.000 – 20.000
Lithuania	2062
Latvia	1750 – 2000
Estonia	438 (+100?)
Czech Republic	No data
Slovakia	More than 30 tonnes, no precise data
Hungary	50 –100 tonnes; data available for up to 30 percent of stocks only
Slovenia	40 – 60

The situation has not changed since 2002.

The Regulation quoted by you, Regulation 850/2004, states that stockpiles of prohibited substances should be treated as waste (Recital 12) and, since the Stockholm Convention on POPs had also been ratified by the Community, "the Community and Member States share competence in that regard, implementation plans should be drawn up both at national and Community level" (Recital 17).

It is thus, in my opinion, up to the Commission to draw up a plan for the systematic treatment or elimination of the stocks of obsolete pesticides.

Until now, the Commission has always avoided, with good words, to explain its position. However, as Regulation 850/2004 itself recognizes that it is also up to the EC to draw up a plan for the management of obsolete pesticides, I hereby urge you to assume your responsibilities and ensure that such a plan is being drawn up by the Commission.

From my previous correspondence you know quite well that the problem of obsolete pesticides extends beyond the EC Member States: Bulgaria and Romania, the Balkan Region and countries from the former Soviet Union also have considerable stocks of obsolete pesticides. It would be an important political step if you were taking the initiative and tackle the "ticking time bomb" which obsolete pesticides constitute for water, agriculture, food, human health and the environment. The necessary financial means for a number of the States mentioned above are available in the EC budget; for the others, means can be found with the support of the European Parliament.

Your initiative to start tackling the problem of obsolete pesticides would have the political support from the European Parliament and would, at the same time, be approved of by public opinion all over Europe.

Dear Commissioner, the problem of obsolete pesticides can be solved, if you show the political will to do so. The environment is never protected by good words only; it needs action – and as matters stand, such action only can come from you

Yours sincerely,



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11. News and Events

Stockholm Convention on POPs

The article 8 of the Convention provides guidance for including any potential chemical (s) for inclusion in the POPs list. There are many strict criteria to fulfil prior to acceptance of any new chemical by the Conference of Parties. Environmentalists and toxicologists are already knocking the doors of PBDEs (polybrominated diphenyl ethers), HCH/lindane, endosulphan etc. to issue arrest warrants to put them behind the bars along with the dirty dozen. Of course article 4 of Stockholm Convention allows countries to ask for bail application for any new chemical put behind bars giving certain guaranties for special uses and time limitations. See IPEN April 2005 on next generation of POPs (see item 12 below). See UNEP/POPs/POPRC.1/8.

12. POPs and India

A leading news paper in India (The Hindu, dt. Aug.14, 2005) says that "though use of DDT as a pesticide in agriculture is banned in the country, it has been found that Indian dietary of DDT is the highest in the world". There are no supporting figures. A study by Toxic Links in South Asia says "POPs like drins, DDT, heptachlor continue to show up in foodstuffs including oils, spices and meat products despite being banned or regulated". The study also implies PCBs showing up in the region. One of the PCB resources is linked to massive ship breaking activity at Alang in Gujarat. According to the study, breast milk, fat samples and human food show high level of POPs implicated in the Stockholm Convention. The newsletter cannot make any comments since there are no figures given in the article. According to the Director of Toxic Link, The Indian Government is yet to ratify the Stockholm Convention on POPs though it signed the treaty in 2002. Ratifying the treaty immediately will show the Government's serious concern for public health and environment". The International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) in its April 2005 issue gives data on lindane in 23 locations world wide including three locations in India. The Indian readings for lindane and beta HCH (both are in the waiting list for inclusion in SC) are very high. The writing is on the wall for the Global Community and we plead to India to ratify the convention which will give a boost to SC. India is already a big player in agrochemicals and pharmaceutical industry and if it has to become one of the leading exporters of agricultural products it has to tow the global trends and requirements for its own benefits and to the world at large.

13. In India even God is not protected from the claws of the International Conventions.

In India the Festival of the Elephant God, well known as Lord Ganesha, is very popular and is hand made in different sizes, shapes, colours and materials and finally the idol is immersed in the sea, rivers or lakes. Now the Pollution Control of India has put many restrictions on the materials used, dyes used, banned any plastic materials, all direct impact of Basel Convention and Stockholm Convention...

14. Boom in organic Food sales defies science and sense:

Two leading newspapers Times UK and the New York Times surprisingly gave prominence to organic food in their own way. According to UK Times, the market in the US for organic food will increase from \$13 billion in 2003 to \$26 billion and big increase alike are likely in Germany, France and the UK. According to the paper this growth is even more impressive given the fact that no absolute evidence exists that organic food is better for you. The Soil Association of UK which champions organic food agrees that organic farmers use seven approved pesticides but only as a last resort. Despite the debate, it is plain simple that organic farming is friendlier to the environment though no proven fact about the same to health aspects. According to Times "organic food is no better and no worse for you. It is just more expensive" According to the New York Times, organic food is big business and even companies that use synthetic substances in their food processing are entering the organic market. Now in a closed meeting the Republicans restricted the use of synthetics substances in organic food. In all, the battle was for getting organic label to get premium market. According to New York Times organic is not merely a label. It means a way of raising crops and livestock that is better for the soil, the animals, the farmers and the consumers themselves, a radical change from conventional agriculture. However the industry giants will see they a rapidly and highly profitable niche market which is the driving force. So we at the end the year leave the readers with an interesting argument over where we stand by meaning "organic food" which contains nothing but proteins/carbohydrates, sugars/ alkaloids/ medicinal chemicals, lignin/salt, vitamins etc. all nothing but chemicals not made by man but by nature.

15. REACH trying to reach more stakeholders in the supply chain

The UK under its EU Presidency is putting compromising proposals taking into account the proposals from the British Chemical Distributors Association. They want more SMEs involved and include distributors in the supply chain. (Chem. & Ind. Issue 17, page 16(2005), issue 22, page 20(2005).

The editors of the newsletter extend the Season's greetings and wish A Very Happy and Prosperous New Year!!!

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