



International POPs Elimination Network

Dubai, United Arab Emirates
6 February 2006

IPEN Declaration for a Toxics-Free Future

On the occasion today of the decision by governments and stakeholders to adopt a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) declares our expanded commitment to work for and achieve by the year 2020 a Toxics-Free Future, in which all chemicals are produced and used in ways that eliminate significant adverse effects on human health and the environment, and where persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and chemicals of equivalent concern no longer pollute our local and global environments, and no longer contaminate our communities, our food, our bodies, or the bodies of our children and future generations.

As IPEN Participating Organizations, we declare our firm resolve to work for and achieve a Toxics-Free Future by the year 2020 by joining communities, workers, and other relevant civil society organizations, and in cooperation with governments and intergovernmental organizations, to:

- 1. Phase-out and ban the production and use of POPs and other chemicals of equivalent concern**, and materials, products, and processes that generate and release POPs and other toxic byproducts, including those that contribute to significant health effects such as reproductive and developmental disorders (including birth defects and neurodevelopment problems such as behavioral and intellectual disorders), cancers, genetic mutations, and immune and endocrine dysfunctions;
- 2. Promote children's health as a paramount goal**, recognizing that developing fetuses, infants, and children are uniquely vulnerable to the harmful effects of toxic chemicals during all stages of their development;
- 3. Promote and require substitution** of cleaner products, materials, processes and practices, including clean production, clean technology transfer, and green chemistry, that avoid generation and release of toxic byproducts, giving priority to non-chemical alternatives whenever feasible;
- 4. Identify, secure, and properly destroy obsolete stockpiles and wastes** containing POPs and other chemicals of concern by means that ensure complete destruction (i.e., chemical transformation) and that do not themselves generate or release toxic pollutants or otherwise cause injury to the health, safety, or well-being of workers and surrounding communities; clean up and remediate contaminated sites and environmental reservoirs; take measures to prevent the future accumulation of obsolete stockpiles of POPs and other chemicals of concern;
- 5. Halt combustion and other environmentally inappropriate methods** of treating wastes and contaminated soils and sediments;

6. Ensure timely, full, and effective public participation by affected communities, local governments, and public interest NGOs and other civil society sectors (including the most vulnerable groups) in all decision-making processes related to chemical safety including, but not limited to, the implementation of internationally agreed conventions, programs, codes of conduct, and plans of action; promote cooperation between governments, public interest organizations, academia, industry, and others to ensure transparent multi-stakeholder approaches to decision-making, including through the provision of readily-accessible information, capacity building, awareness raising, public right-to-know, and other mechanisms essential to relevance at the local level;

7. Provide for a just transition whenever hazardous chemicals, polluting practices, or dirty technologies are phased out to ensure that special attention is given to the protection of impacted workers including women, peasants, and indigenous and other local communities, especially those in developing countries and economies in transition;

8. Achieve fundamental reform of current national chemicals laws, policies, and practices in all countries that is consistent with or exceeds the standards expressed in this declaration, and that includes provisions to, *inter alia*:

- **Incorporate the precautionary principle** into all decision-making related to chemical safety, ensuring that preventive measures are taken when there are reasonable grounds for concern, even when the evidence of a causal relationship between an activity and its effects is inconclusive;
- **Implement the principle of “no data, no market”** by requiring comprehensive data, including hazard, use, and exposure data, to be produced for all chemicals on the market and in products that is sufficient to permit an informed evaluation of the safety of the chemical for human health and the environment;
- **Reflect considerations of intergenerational equity** by taking into account the effects of chemicals-related decisions on future generations, noting especially that many chemicals persist in the environment for generations, and noting also that many chemicals disrupt the healthy development of the human embryo and fetus, damage genetic structures, and impact reproductive outcomes;

9. Adopt and implement comprehensive right-to-know laws in all countries, including laws establishing Pollutant Release and Transfer Registries (PRTRs), that ensure full, free, ready, and timely public access to information about all chemicals in commerce and in products and wastes, including data on their intrinsic properties and their effects on human health and the environment, information on their safer alternatives, and information on waste transfers on- and off-site; these laws should clearly state that any information pertinent to the health and safety of humans and the environment may not be regarded as confidential;

10. Implement the polluter pays principle, especially through the establishment of accessible, affordable, and effective liability and compensation mechanisms, to ensure that those who produce, use, and dispose of chemicals must pay the full costs of any harms to human health and the environment that they cause, and that victims of such harms are quickly and fully compensated;

11. Require chemical-producing industries to bear all legitimate costs that governments and others incur in establishing and sustaining robust chemical safety programs; further require such industries to contribute to mandatory, government-administered funds that pay for the remediation and

clean-up of toxic spills and chemical stockpiles and wastes when the costs of remediation and clean-up are unrecoverable from the persons responsible for such harms;

12. Minimize and phase-out anthropogenic sources of mercury and methyl mercury in the environment;

13. Ensure that all governments establish and sustain effective national integrated chemical safety programs and infrastructure, especially governments of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, with full cooperation and coordination by all relevant ministries, including Environment, Health, Labor, Agriculture, Industry, Development, Education, and others; provide new and additional bilateral and multilateral financial assistance to help achieve this objective;

14. Promote the integration of chemical safety considerations into the poverty reduction strategies and development agendas of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups, including women, children, and indigenous and other local communities;

15. Adopt a life-cycle approach for all chemicals that includes promotion of cradle-to-cradle strategies and that considers the impacts of chemicals at every stage in their life-cycle, including not only the chemical itself, but also its by-products, break-down products and reaction products; that considers these in the course of a chemical's design, production, use, and re-use; in a chemical's presence in products, wastes, ecosystems, and human bodies; and in the chemical's ultimate environmental fate;

16. Promote sustainable, ecological agriculture, including organic farming, progressive substitution of pesticides and other chemical inputs in agriculture, community integrated pest management, agro-ecological methods of pest control and other sustainable agriculture techniques aimed at achieving good yields through practices that are healthy, environmentally sustainable, and financially affordable, especially for low-income groups, peasants and indigenous communities;

17. Substitute lower impact and integral methods of pest and vector control to achieve effective public health practices that are economically affordable, environmentally sound, and take into account timely, informed community participation;

18. Reduce and aim to eliminate the generation of wastes by promoting waste reduction at source; by changing the design, manufacture, purchase, use, and consumption of materials and products (including packaging) to reduce both their volume and their toxicity; and by promoting maximum reuse and recycling of non-toxic products and materials;

19. Acknowledge the common but differentiated responsibilities of all governments and of industry, NGOs, labor, and other stakeholders in view of their different contributions and vulnerabilities to global environmental degradation and health impacts from chemicals and the different financial and technical resources they command.

20. Encourage donor countries and donor agencies to provide new and additional financial and technical assistance that enables developing countries and countries with transitional economies to implement fully all of their commitments under international chemicals and wastes agreements and initiatives; provide additional assistance to identify and support chemical safety initiatives at the local level;

21. Establish a chemical safety focal area within the Global Environment Facility (GEF) with new and additional funds to encompass not only the GEF's present POPs Operational Program, but also to include additional operational programs that support implementation of other chemicals conventions, as well as integrated approaches to chemicals management called for in the SAICM;

22. Secure the ratification by all countries of the Stockholm Convention and other chemicals and wastes agreements including the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent; the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, including its Ban Amendment; the 1996 Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (London Convention); the ILO Convention 170 Concerning Safety in the Use of Chemicals at Work; and others;

23. Expediently expand the Stockholm Convention's current list of twelve POPs to incorporate other POPs of global concern and to establish appropriate commitments and obligations leading toward the elimination of all chemicals that exhibit POPs characteristics;

24. Expediently expand the list of chemicals covered by the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent (PIC) to include all chemicals and pesticides that present a hazard to human health or the environment under their ordinary conditions of use in developing countries or countries with economies in transition, including but not limited to chrysotile asbestos; discourage and prohibit the export to developing countries and economies in transition of obsolete, polluting technologies and chemical products that are banned in the country of origin;

25. Promote full and effective national implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS), with special emphasis on its implementation in chemicals-importing countries and on the rights inherent in the GHS to prohibit the importation of chemicals that are improperly classified or labeled.

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