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Implementation towards the achievement of the 2020 goal of sound chemicals management: emerging policy issues and other issues of concern: proposal on highly hazardous pesticides as an issue of concern

Pesticides Action Network and International POPs Elimination Network proposed terms of reference for a global alliance to phase out highly hazardous pesticides

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to circulate, for the information of participants, a proposal submitted by the Pesticides Action Network and the International POPs Elimination Network on terms of reference for a global alliance to phase out highly hazardous pesticides (see annex). It is presented as received by the secretariat, without formal editing.

* SAICM/ICCM.4/1.

Annex

Highly Hazardous Pesticides

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) and IPEN

September 2015

Terms of reference for a global alliance to phase out highly hazardous pesticides

1. The following terms of reference are for a global alliance to phase out highly hazardous pesticides to support implementation of:

(a) Paragraphs 84 and 86 of the 131st Session of the Council of the Food and Agricultural Organisation,¹ in which the Council endorsed SAICM and recognized FAO's role in SAICM implementation through activities on risk reduction, including the progressive ban of highly hazardous pesticides and promoting good agricultural practices; and

(b) Sustainable Development Goal #2, "*End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.*"² This includes a focus on Target 4, "*By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.*"

2. The global alliance is established under the auspices of the International Conference on Chemicals Management.

Overall goal

3. The overall goal is to promote the implementation of paragraphs 84 and 86 of the 131st Session of the Council of the Food and Agricultural Organisation on the progressive ban of highly hazardous pesticides and promoting good agricultural practices.

Objectives

4. The broad objectives are to phase out highly hazardous pesticides. Specific objectives are:

(a) To raise the awareness of government authorities and regulators, farmers, rural communities, indigenous peoples, private industry, consumers, workers, trade unions and health-care providers about the harms of highly hazardous pesticides and the availability of safer alternatives;

(b) To catalyse the design and implementation of appropriate prevention-based programmes to phase-out highly hazardous pesticides, replace them with nonchemical alternatives, agroecological practices and ecosystem approaches to sustainable food and fibre production, and public health vector control as a priority. When processes for phasing-out highly hazardous pesticides are put in place arrangements must be made to ensure a fair and safe transition that protects workers' health and employment;

(c) To provide assistance to farmers to enable them to phase out highly hazardous pesticides while maintaining their agricultural livelihood;

(d) To provide assistance to health professionals on identifying and reporting pesticide poisonings to promote efficient surveillance and identification of highly hazardous pesticides;

(e) To provide assistance to government authorities with identifying appropriate alternatives, particularly for public health vector control;

(f) To promote the establishment of appropriate national regulatory frameworks to stop the manufacture, import, sale and use of highly hazardous pesticides, as well as the sound disposal of highly hazardous pesticides;

(g) To provide guidance and promote assistance to identify, reduce and avoid exposure to highly hazardous pesticides including for communities near areas of cultivation and urban areas.

¹ Report of the Council of FAO, 131st Session, 20 – 25 November, 2006, CL131/REP

² United Nations (2015) Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/#8d796abdf942e9d1e>

Membership

5. The global alliance is a voluntary and collaborative relationship between various parties, whether governmental, non-governmental, public or private, in which all participants agree to work together systematically to attain the overall goal of phasing out highly hazardous pesticides.
6. The global alliance is open to Governments, intergovernmental organizations, research and academic organisations, and representatives of civil society and the private sector that support the partnership goal. It is open also to any other entity or individual who agrees to work towards the goal of the partnership.
7. Participation will be encouraged from the following groups:
 - (a) Representatives of national Governments including those:
 - (1) That have already phased out various highly hazardous pesticides in their countries and are willing to share experiences and provide help to those who are now prepared to do so;
 - (2) That have experience in the implementation of nonchemical alternatives, agroecological practices and ecosystem approaches to sustainable agriculture and public health vector control;
 - (3) Where highly hazardous pesticides continue to be used;
 - (b) Representatives of relevant intergovernmental organizations (such as the Food and Agricultural Organisation, World Health Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research; and the United Nations Committee on Trade and Development).
 - (c) Representatives of international and national companies that manufacture or produce pesticides, biopesticides or biological controls; and possibly of their relevant trade organizations;
 - (d) Representatives of international and national organic, agroecology, and biological farming organisations and movements;
 - (e) International and national medical, housing and public health organizations, WHO Collaborating Centres and poison control centres;
 - (f) Academics with expertise in relevant fields;
 - (h) Representatives of international and national non-governmental organizations that work on agricultural and environmental health issues and that have experience of public policy, outreach and awareness campaigns, design and implementation of alternatives, or of implementation of monitoring and prevention programmes at the community or national levels;
 - (i) Trade unions at the national and international levels, so as to foster the effectiveness of the partnership.

Guidance for a working definition of “highly hazardous pesticide”

8. The definition contained in the International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management is taken as the working basis for defining “highly hazardous pesticide”:
 - (a) The term “highly hazardous pesticide” means a pesticide that is acknowledged to present particularly high levels of acute or chronic hazards to health or environment according to internationally accepted classification systems such as WHO or GHS or their listing in relevant binding international agreements or conventions. In addition, pesticides that appear to cause severe or irreversible harm to health or the environment under conditions of use in a country may be considered to be and treated as highly hazardous;
 - (b) The criteria for “highly hazardous pesticides”, as developed by the FAO/WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticide Management (JMPM), and as contained in the International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management Guidelines on Highly Hazardous Pesticides, developed at the direction of the FAO Council, and any further criteria developed by the JMPM, are taken as the criteria for “highly hazardous pesticides”.
 - (c) Countries may consider additional criteria such as for aquatic toxicity, bee toxicity, endocrine disruption, etc.

Guidance for a working description of “ecosystem approaches to agriculture”

9. A description of “ecosystem approaches to agriculture” is based on the International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management Guidance on Pest and Pesticide Management Policy Development, the Stockholm Convention’s POP Review Committee Evaluation of Nonchemical Alternatives to Endosulfan, and the FAO Publication *Save and Grow: A Policy Maker’s Guide to the Sustainable Intensification of Smallholder Production*. Ecosystem approaches to agriculture rely on ecosystem management rather than external inputs, with the first line of defence against pests being a healthy agroecosystem. They are knowledge-intensive, location specific farming systems based on conservation practices, appropriate seed varieties, plant nutrition based on healthy soils, efficient water management, and the integration of crops, pastures, trees and livestock. The focus is on managing the agroecosystem to avoid build up of pests, using wherever possible cultural, biological, and mechanical methods instead of synthetic materials. Practices include using resistant varieties, crop diversity, crop rotation, intercropping, optimised planting time and weed management, conserving natural enemies, and managing crop nutrient levels to reduce insect reproduction. Decisions to apply external inputs as supplementary controls are made locally, in response to critical levels of pest incidence and are site-specific. Practices include selection of resistant or tolerant varieties, site and crop selection, seed-bed sanitation, attention to soil, nutrient and water management. External inputs may include beneficial organisms such as pest predators, parasites, parasitoids or pathogens of pests (biological control); manual removal of pests; physical barriers; mechanical devices; pest attracting lures; pheromones; pest traps; biological or chemical pesticides. The choice depends on the situation. The use of pesticides is a last resort if economically viable non-chemical pest control techniques or inputs are not available, or failed to control the pest. Such approaches are generally described as agroecological and can include organic agriculture and ecosystem-based IPM. Agroecology, long considered the foundation of sustainable agriculture, is the science and practice of applying ecological concepts, principles and knowledge to the study, design and management of sustainable agroecosystems.

Activities

10. Partnership activities may include the following:
 - (a) Information
 - (1) Exchanging information on pesticides that meet the criteria for highly hazardous pesticides;
 - (2) Exchanging information on the effects and potential effects of highly hazardous pesticides on health and the environment;
 - (3) Exchanging information on pathways of exposure to highly hazardous pesticides for children and adults;
 - (4) Exchanging information on highly hazardous pesticide use in various countries;
 - (5) Exchanging information on national, provincial, State and local regulations, legislation, and policies restricting and prohibiting highly hazardous pesticides in various countries;
 - (6) Exchanging information on highly hazardous pesticides that have been or are being phased out in countries;
 - (7) Exchanging information on national, provincial, state and local regulations, legislation, and policies prioritizing nonchemical substitution and providing for the implementation of ecosystem-based agriculture;
 - (8) Exchanging information on nonchemical alternatives, agroecological practices and ecosystem-based approaches;
 - (9) Exchanging information on labeling and certification systems with regard to the presence and concentrations of highly hazardous pesticides in food;
 - (10) Exchanging information on methods to make fields safe for work by or presence of pregnant women and children;
 - (11) Exchanging information on suggestions for warning labels on food grown with highly hazardous pesticides alerting users to the health risks that could result.

(b) Monitoring:

(12) Encouraging nations to monitor health to estimate the prevalence of highly hazardous pesticides in use and in the environment, food, and/or humans;

(13) Encouraging nations to conduct monitoring to estimate the prevalence of highly hazardous pesticides in the environment (for example, in water, soil and animals);

(14) Encouraging nations to conduct market surveys to estimate the prevalence of highly hazardous pesticides in food.

(c) Capacity building and expertise:

(15) Building capacity to monitor health to estimate poisonings due to highly hazardous pesticides;

(16) Building capacity and providing training in nonchemical techniques, agroecological practices, and ecosystem approaches to pest and crop management, including farmer exchanges;

(17) Building capacity and providing information and knowledge in human and laboratory equipment to facilitate laboratory tests for highly hazardous pesticides;

(18) Building capacity and providing information and knowledge to help officials in a range of ministries to test for highly hazardous pesticides;

(19) Providing technical expertise in the design and implementation of studies to estimate the levels of highly hazardous pesticides in the environment, food, and/or humans;

(20) Providing expertise in policy development at the national level on implementing nonchemical techniques and agroecology.

(d) Regulatory

(21) Discussing and providing technical assistance on steps that could be taken to phase out highly hazardous pesticides worldwide;

(22) Encouraging the use of financial incentives to support the use of nonchemical alternatives, agroecology and ecosystem approaches to agriculture and public health vector control;

(23) Developing guidelines for establishing national standards, including those that would regulate and stimulate use of organic agriculture;

(24) Encouraging nations to require that only crops grown without highly hazardous pesticides be supported with government funds;

(25) Encouraging nations to require that crops grown with agroecology be given preference for public procurement;

(26) Providing guidance for and information on effective enforcement of national standards, including on how to avoid smuggling of highly hazardous pesticides;

(27) Building the legal enforcement capacity of environmental health officers in ministries, local authorities and mines;

(28) Providing international support to developing countries by devising further methods to enact comprehensive legislation to phase out highly hazardous pesticides completely;

(29) Exchanging information and providing international support to strengthen and harmonize existing national legislation that focuses on protecting public health in relation to the phase-out of highly hazardous pesticides;

(30) Enhancing the elimination of highly hazardous pesticides around schools and other areas where children will be present, given children's special vulnerability to highly hazardous pesticides;

(31) Minimizing risks of previously applied highly hazardous pesticides by using effective containment.

(e) Research and extension

(32) Sharing knowledge on the availability of safer alternatives to replace highly hazardous pesticides;

(33) Developing agroecological alternatives to highly hazardous pesticides;

(34) Developing guidelines with descriptions of simple analytical methods and test kits to identify highly hazardous pesticides;

(35) Assessing the hazards of substitutes for highly hazardous pesticides.

(f) **Outreach to industry and market.**

(36) Encouraging wholesalers and retailers to halt sales of highly hazardous pesticides;

(37) Assessing the feasibility of the voluntary phase-out of highly hazardous pesticides in cooperation with business and industry, including at the (sub) regional level.

11. The global partnership will develop and implement a monitoring mechanism for tracking progress on activities undertaken through and by the partnership.

Method of work

12. The global partnership will undertake its work primarily through electronic communication mechanisms. Opportunities in conjunction with regional meetings of Strategic Approach stakeholders and international, regional and national meetings on chemical management will be used.

13. The global partnership will be supported by the secretariat of the Food and Agricultural Organisation and will:

(a) Provide administrative and secretariat support;

(b) Facilitate information exchange;

(c) Help to bring new partners to participate in the global partnership, as appropriate; and facilitate reporting on progress of the global partnership to the International Conference on Chemicals Management.

14. A chair will be designated from among the members to facilitate the overall coordination of the global partnership.

Resources

15. Each entity or individual, upon becoming a member of the global partnership, will commit to contribute resources (financial or in-kind) or expertise to the development and implementation of partnership activities. Members will work to identify potential relevant donors and resources including Government donors or other institutional donors with an interest in providing resources to for the partnership activities.

16. A budget and fund-raising plan will be prepared for each activity by the lead sponsor(s) and interested partners. Countries and organizations in a position to do so are encouraged to provide the identified resources needs. Submission of project activity proposals to relevant funders will be pursued.
