



IAPPS NEWSLETTER

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UNIDO/SP-IPM PARTNERSHIP WORKSHOP ON THE SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVES TO BANNED/RESTRICTED POPs IN AFRICA

Preamble

The governments of the world have adopted an international treaty known as the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants [POPs] aimed at restricting and ultimately eliminating the production, use, release and storage of POPs. The Convention targets 12 particularly toxic POPs which currently include eight organo-chlorine pesticides, two industrial chemicals and two industrial by-products. With funding from the Global Environment Fund (GEF), signatories to the Convention have initiated POP enabling activities to meet their obligations to the Convention. United Nations Industrial Development Organization [UNIDO] is one of a number of specialized agencies that is executing the POP enabling activities in a number of countries.

In recognition of the fact that overall success of POP enabling activities hinges on strategic alliances and functional linkages to harness pre-requisite complementary strengths of key stakeholder groups, UNIDO and the Systemwide Program on Integrated Pest Management [SP-IPM] of the CGIAR agree to work together to facilitate POP enabling activities in Africa by focusing efforts of the partnership on the search and promotion of alternatives to banned and/or restricted POPs in sub-Saharan Africa. As a first step, UNIDO and the SP-IPM convened a consultative partnership workshop at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture [IITA], Biological Control Center for Africa, in Cotonou, Republic of Bénin February 9 -13, 2004. There were sixty-one participants comprising national and technical coordinators of national POP enabling activities from 20 African countries, researchers from national and international research institutes in Africa, and representatives of leading industry on bio-rational alternatives from France and the USA.

Workshop recommendations

On the basis of workshop activities, discussions and outputs, the participants recommend that pertinent stakeholder groups urgently undertake a plan to effectively address the following cross-cutting issues that stand in the way of the search and promotion of alternatives to POPs in the intervention areas of agriculture/food production, health/vector control, environment/biodiversity, construction/infrastructures, and industry:

1. **Government support.** National Governments recognize the value of the POP enabling activities in expanded national development efforts and explore the possible integration of the outputs of this workshop into their existing programs on POPs. Additionally, Governments representatives are encouraged to publicize achievements of this workshop as part of the POP awareness campaign in their respective countries at periodic intervals.
2. **Up-scale proven alternatives:** The workshop identified examples of biopesticides and botanicals that have excellent potential as alternatives to POPs. The lack of constructive dialogue with the industry and low market incentives continues to discourage private sector participation in the local production of these proven alternatives to POPs in most of Africa. The participants underlined the need for enhancing the dialogue with the private sector with the view to identify short-run measures that will increase and sustain access of end-users to these biologically based products. In the longer term, it is hoped that this will create the market incentives required to initiate and sustain local production of the products and at affordable market prices. Also, sustainable partnerships between reputable private sector/industry and the research community in Africa will be critical to the need to diversify the range of technically and economically feasible alternatives to POPs.

The workshop recommends that UNIDO/SP-IPM partnership with the countries initiates the development of reliable data on 1) technical and economic feasibility, 2) quality of products, and 3) international biosafety standards as the basis to promote private-public sector partnership for local production and/or initial delivery of biologically based alternatives in selected countries, and eventually to increase confidence in end-users to adopt locally produced biological options to replace POPs (including imported conventional pesticides). The actual and potential benefits of the proposed private-public sector partnership should be measured, amongst other criteria, in terms of the ability in use of the products to a) reduce Africa's dependency on POPs and other

harmful and imported pesticides; b) increase effective and safe use of these biological options to assure greater personal and environmental health benefits compared to current POP use practices; c) increase end-user (e.g., farmers) income; and d) promote sustainability of the ecosystems and production systems.

3. **Capacity building:** The search for biological alternatives to POPs is rooted in the scientific capacity to understand that biodiversity (invertebrates and plants) is an invaluable source of biological control agents and biopesticides. At the same time, adequate taxonomic capabilities have proved to be the cornerstone for the development and deployment of these natural alternatives to POPs. However, taxonomy impediments (training, services, products and infrastructure) in many African countries continue to undermine self reliance in the search for candidate biologically based alternatives to POPs. The paucity of taxonomic products and services are critical to quality control and biosafety concerns in the production of biopesticides, botanicals and invertebrate biological control agents. Related to the taxonomic impediments, is the need to address poor capacity building for accredited laboratories and personnel development to correctly isolate active ingredients in alternatives identified from biodiversity in the sub-regions. Similarly the capacity to formulate botanical pesticides (especially to promote stability and efficacy) is practically non-existent in the national programs.

The workshop recommends that UNIDO/SP-IPM partnership with the countries collaborate with the African sub-regional networks (known as Locally Organized and Operated Partnerships, LOOPS) of BioNET INTERNATIONAL as the bases to address the capacity building needs that underpin the search for sustainable alternatives to POPs. The sub-regional networks are in West/Central Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa and Northern Africa, and each of these networks is endorsed by the respective governments. The LOOPS also provide a ready-made framework to integrate taxonomy capacity building with capacity building to isolate active ingredients in materials that would be screened.

4. **Develop regulatory framework:** At present, the regulatory framework for registration of biopesticides and botanical pesticides is inappropriate, hence the need for harmonizing the legislation within collaborating countries. In West Africa, for instance; most countries have generic laws for pesticide registration; which are unable to cater for POPs alternatives such as botanical/biological pesticides.

The workshop recommends that the UNIDO/SP-IPM partnership with the countries initiates programs to develop sub-regional regulatory frameworks for production, quality control, commercialization and safe and efficient application of biopesticides, botanicals, biocontrol agents and other biologically-based alternatives to POPs in Africa. The policy framework should include development of research capacity to provide/evaluate eco-toxicology data required for biopesticides and botanicals registration.

5. **Prevent reversion to use of certain POPs:** The workshop noted with concern the rapid increase in the number of countries wishing to revert to DDT and some other POPs and examined the reasons provided for the reversion. In the continued absence of support to promote existing alternatives to the POPs and develop new ones, reversion to these POPs pesticides will greatly undo the gains POP enabling activities will make.

The workshop recommends that the UNIDO/SP-IPM partnership with the countries establishes effective mechanisms to monitor, evaluate and assess the impact of POPs as well as the progress and impact of alternatives to POPs. The continued existence and poor storage of stockpiles of obsolete pesticides, as well as illegal trafficking of POPs, need to be addressed urgently in order to discourage widening of requests by the countries to go back to POPs.

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USEFUL LINKS

For a complete and updated calendar of worldwide IPM events (conferences, congresses, workshops etc.), please check the below link on the Consortium for International Crop Protection (CICP) website:
<http://www.ipmnet.org/calendar.html>

The Global Invasive Species Program (GISP) has a new, completely re-designed website: <http://www.gisp.org>

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IAPPS Mission: to provide a global forum for the purpose of identifying, evaluating, integrating, and promoting plant protection concepts, technologies, and policies that are economically, environmentally, and socially acceptable.

It seeks to provide a global umbrella for the plant protection sciences to facilitate and promote the application of the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to a the world's crop and forest ecosystems.

Membership Information: IAPPS has four classes of membership (individual, affiliate, associate, and corporate) which are described [here](#).

The *IAPPS Newsletter* welcomes news, letters, and other items of interest from individuals and organizations. Address correspondence and information to:

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