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**UN Expert Committee: Pentachlorophenol is one of the world's worst chemicals
*Agrees to incorporate climate change impacts in toxic chemical evaluation***

(Rome, Italy) A UN expert committee recommended global action on pentachlorophenol – a pesticide used for wood treatment including utility poles. The Committee justified its recommendation for the Stockholm Convention due to pentachlorophenol's persistence, bioaccumulation, long-range transport, and its toxic impacts. Governments around the world will decide on the recommendation in 2015.

“This is the beginning of the end of pentachlorophenol,” said Pam Miller, Alaska Community Action on Toxics. “Pentachlorophenol has global health implications since it is found in the bodies of people throughout the world including Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic. Now governments and the private sector need to get to work to eliminate this toxic chemical.”

The Stockholm Convention expert committee also agreed to include climate change as a factor in its assessments of candidate chemicals. The guidance document notes that warming temperatures can liberate toxic chemicals and increase their toxicity and exposure.

“There has been a fundamental shift in the committee, as they now must take into considerations the serious impact of climate change and endocrine disruption when they assess these very persistent and toxic chemicals,” said Dr Mariann Lloyd-Smith, senior policy advisor for IPEN

Unfortunately, India blocked further evaluation of the pesticide, dicofol, delaying the process for one year. India's government is the world's largest producer of the substance and was the only member of the Committee that disagreed with moving it forward in the evaluation. In fact, India denied that the substance possessed adverse effects despite the fact it is used to kill insects.

“It really is unacceptable that one country with such a clear conflict of interest can be permitted to undermine the credibility of the whole committee by using its privileged position to block a chemical that is clearly toxic, persistent and bioaccumulative”, said Dr Meriel Watts of Pesticide Action Network.

The Committee also recommended listing two new chemicals in the treaty; chlorinated naphthalenes and hexachlorobutadiene. Both substances are primarily generated by waste incineration but hexachlorobutadiene is also generated unintentionally during the production of the dry cleaning solvent, perchloroethylene. The Committee document notes that substituting perchloroethylene and trichloroethylene with safer alternatives could help reduce the production of hexachlorobutadiene.

IPEN is an international NGO comprised of 700 organizations in 116 countries that work to minimize, and whenever possible, eliminate, hazardous, toxic substances internationally and within their own countries. IPEN has been actively involved in the POPRC process for nine years.

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