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## **International Expert Committee: Endosulfan requires global action Pesticide moves closer to a global ban**

GENEVA - After a heated debate, an international expert scientific panel concluded that the pesticide endosulfan requires global action to prevent further harms to human health and the environment.<sup>1</sup> The decision by the Stockholm Convention POPs Review Committee (POPRC) sets the stage for a global ban of the chemical under the treaty. The panel acknowledged that endosulfan is persistent in the environment, is transported though the air to the Polar regions where it bioaccumulates in the food chain, and is of such high toxicity that it is a threat to humans and wildlife.

“Endosulfan is poisonous and indefensible. This decision puts the world on notice that production and use of endosulfan must stop,” said Dr Meriel Watts of Pesticide Action Network. “For the sake of protecting their own people and the health of the planet, China, India, Israel, and South Korea should cease manufacturing this poison.”

India is the world’s largest remaining manufacturer of endosulfan and the government itself owns a major endosulfan factory. In what is now regarded as one of the world’s worse pesticide incidents, the aerial spraying of endosulfan on cashew nut plantations in Kerala, South India resulted in hundreds of deaths and chronic illnesses including birth defects of nearby villagers.

“Endosulfan not only kills people but contaminates our environment, our wildlife, human breast milk, women’s placentas, and even our newborns. It is clear that the time for this old, outmoded and dangerous pesticide is over,” said Dr Lloyd-Smith, Co-Chair, International POPs Elimination Network.

During the meeting, the POPRC committee member from India tried to delay and block the decision. In the final moments, India refused to agree to a consensus decision and forced a vote to be taken. India was the only country to vote against the proposal to proceed with the evaluation. Before the meeting Pesticide Action Network (PAN) and the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) expressed concern about allowing a country such as India with a clear conflict of interest to participate in decision making.

Endosulfan moves steadily to colder regions, contaminating the Arctic. “This decision is especially critical for the protection of the health of the Arctic indigenous peoples who are exposed to endosulfan through their traditional foods such as fish, marine mammals and seabird eggs. Given that endosulfan levels are not diminishing in the Arctic and are likely to increase this decision is all the more necessary and urgent”, said Pam Miller, biologist and Executive Director of Alaska Community Action on Toxics.

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<sup>1</sup> The language of the decision states, “...endosulfan...is likely, as a result of long range environmental transport, to lead to significant adverse human health and environmental effects, such that global action is warranted”