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International POPs Elimination Project

*Fostering Active and Efficient Civil Society Participation in
Preparation for Implementation of the Stockholm Convention*

Public Environmental Inventory of Pesticides in the Republic of Azerbaijan and Organisation of a Public Movement for Pesticides Elimination English Summary

Ruzgar

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About the International POPs Elimination Project

On May 1, 2004, the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN <http://www.ipen.org>) began a global NGO project called the International POPs Elimination Project (IPEP) in partnership with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). The Global Environment Facility (GEF) provided core funding for the project.

IPEP has three principal objectives:

- Encourage and enable NGOs in 40 developing and transitional countries to engage in activities that provide concrete and immediate contributions to country efforts in preparing for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention;
- Enhance the skills and knowledge of NGOs to help build their capacity as effective stakeholders in the Convention implementation process;
- Help establish regional and national NGO coordination and capacity in all regions of the world in support of longer term efforts to achieve chemical safety.

IPEP will support preparation of reports on country situation, hotspots, policy briefs, and regional activities. Three principal types of activities will be supported by IPEP: participation in the National Implementation Plan, training and awareness workshops, and public information and awareness campaigns.

For more information, please see <http://www.ipen.org>

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The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and not necessarily the views of the institutions providing management and/or financial support.

This report is available in the following languages: English Summary and Full report in Russian

Public Environmental Inventory of Pesticides in the Republic of Azerbaijan and Organisation of a Public Movement for Pesticides Elimination

English Summary

In the period from 01.07. to 20.12.2004

The following activities have been completed according to the Project Action Program:

1. With participation of the project implementation team (I. Mustafaiev, N. Yusifov, N. Mekhti, S. Guseinov, G. Safarov, E. Gurbanov); a mini-seminar was conducted to discuss the project methodology and the project implementation approach. The project co-ordinator - I. Mustafaiev - provided to other members of the project team a detailed account of "The Methodological Recommendations for NGOs on Primary Inventories of Banned and Obsolete Pesticides" developed by Eco-Accord NGO (Russia). The manual was used as a guideline for the project implementation, adjusted to specific conditions of the Republic of Azerbaijan. In the course of the seminar, the team members developed the key strategy, program and the approach to the project implementation. The group of public experts was established to analyse application, storage and elimination of pesticides in the country. Decisions of the seminar were mailed to all project implementation partners, including the Environmental Fund NGO (Gyanja), Bilasuvar Municipality (Azerbaijan), Eco-TEC NGO (Minchegaur), For Clean Caspian Sea Environmental Movement (Baku).
2. Information materials on application of pesticides in the agricultural sector of Azerbaijan in 1984-2004 were collected. We used reports of the Plant Protection Facility of the Ministry of Agriculture, reports of the Plant Protection Institute, the Committee for Statistics, separate articles, interviewed specialists, etc. We have found that, within the above period of time, 18735 tons of pesticides were produced in Azerbaijan and 429586 tons of pesticides (more than 100 different brands) were imported to the republic. In comparison to other republics of the former USSR, Azerbaijan was among the leading ones in term of application of pesticides and other chemicals per hectare of land.
3. We analysed applicable legislative acts of Azerbaijan regulating production, transportation, storage and application of pesticides. These issues are dealt with in 2 laws (Law on Pesticides and Agricultural Chemicals and Law on Plant Protection), and in more than 10 implementing regulations. In 1997, the Cabinet of Ministers approved "Rules of Elimination, Neutralisation and Collection of Banned and Obsolete Pesticides and Agricultural Chemicals"
4. Surveys were conducted in Saatlinskiy and Bilasuvarskiy districts to assess awareness of rural residents of application, storage and methods of elimination of pesticides. Findings of the surveys suggest that rural residents are inadequately aware of these matters (correct responses were provided to about 30% of questions).

5. We have found that now, production of pesticides ("Preparation 30") in the country had been terminated, and 12 companies operate in the sphere of pesticide import. All these companies maintain modern storage facilities that meet applicable sanitary standards. The range of main countries-importers incorporates Russia, Turkey and European countries.

6. In the course of field environmental inventories we found that local pesticide storages had been liquidated in connection with privatisation of lands of former collective and state farms. Some pesticide storage facilities still exist at 10 railway stations of the country (Yevlakh, Myusyusli, Dyalimyamyadli, Dyalilyuar, Sheki, Dzalilabad, Lenkoran, Solyany, Sabirabad, Goradiz). The most hazardous conditions were found at the site for liquidation of banned and obsolete pesticides (at a distance of 54 km from Baku). The public environmental inventory of the site allowed us to find that concrete containers for highly toxic pesticides and chemicals were opened and toxic substances are scattered at the site area. Residents of the nearby villages still apply these chemicals to their land plots. Relevant organisations were notified on the need to improve the situation at the site.

5. We analysed findings of research studies on health impacts of pesticides. In districts under heavy application of pesticides in agriculture, research results suggest that the daily food intake of pesticides of children from 11 to 15 years old reached 0.38-0.7 mg of pesticides per 1 kg of body weight. Safe thresholds for daily intake of pesticides are set as 0.03-0.11 mg/kg for HCCH, and 0.05-0.22 mg/kg for Fazalon. Some cases of large scale cattle poisoning by pesticides were identified in Udzarskiy district of the country.

6. On December 16, 2004, the seminar "Pesticides and the Environment" was conducted with participation of representatives of NGOs, municipalities, relevant governmental bodies (the Ministry of Agriculture, the Public Health Ministry, the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources) and mass media outlets. The seminar participants discussed results of the project implementation and approve resolutions on public participation in organisation of a movement for identification and elimination of banned and obsolete pesticides.

7. In the course of the project implementation, the project co-ordinator - I. Mustafaiev - participated in 2 international events (the Second Session of the Working Group on International Strategic Chemical Management and the Third Session on GMO), associated with application of chemicals in food production. "Ruzgyar" Environmental Society accumulated a large array of information materials for establishment of a public information resource centre on these matters.

8. The brochure, "Pesticides, Environment and Public Health" was developed (50 pages, in the Azerbaijani language). The brochure contains detailed information and methodologies of relevance to pesticides inventories in Azerbaijan. Now, the brochure is in the process of publishing and will be disseminated among interested public groups.