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International POPs Elimination Project

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

Country Situation Report: Information, training, and popularization of the Stockholm Convention in Burundi

Propreté Environnement Santé (PES)

**Burundi
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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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Overall objective

Develop a country situation report on POPs and the Stockholm Convention in Burundi and participate in the elaboration of the National Implementation Plan.

Specific objectives

- Collect and organize information on the POPs in Burundi
- Popularise the Stockholm Convention with the public authorities and the decision makers of POPs production.
- Put at the disposal of the general public information tools on the adverse effects of POPs on health and the environment.
- Sensitise the media and the public on problems related to POPs.
- Suggest common strategies for the resolution of problems related to POPs' use, generation and import.

Information on POPs in Burundi

Burundi signed the Stockholm Convention on 2 April 2002 and ratified it on 2 August 2005. The Ministry of the Town and Country Planning, Tourism and the Environment is the designated focal point.

The main sources of POPs in Burundi appear to be:

- For the dioxins and furans:
 - Uncontrolled combustion
 - Bushfires
 - Charcoal combustion
 - Firewood
 - Peat
 - Textile industry
- For the PCBs: oils from imported transformers
- For the pesticides: the obsolete stockpiles because POPs pesticides import and use are banned in Burundi. The current legislation bans POPs import into Burundi

These obsolete stocks should be collected, kept and disposed of. The government is carrying out an environmentally sound and rational management of these POPs-contaminated sites.

General Training and awareness workshops

To help raise public awareness of the Stockholm Convention, four training and awareness workshops on POPs were organized in Burundi for the benefit of farmers or the various crops; manufacturers for the management of chemicals used or generated during processing; commercial importers and customs officers; political decision makers for the Stockholm Convention and the associated protocols; academic and research organizations; and health, environmental and agricultural trainers and technicians. The workshops were held on the following dates:

From July 12th to July 13th 2004
August 19th to August 20th h 2004
September 27th to 29th 2004
November 25th to 26th 2004

Under the patronage of the Ministry of Land Use Planning, Environment and Tourism, the seminars were contained the following topics:

- Content of the Stockholm Convention ;
- Conventions ratified by Burundi for chemicals management
- Chemical management and risks in Burundi
- Chemicals legislation in Burundi:
- The Information network and system on chemicals.

The following recommendations were made after the discussion and information exchange:

1. The Stockholm Convention should be brought to all the stakeholders' knowledge.
2. The chemicals legislation should be put in circulation so as to put an end to their management related problems.
3. Burundi must produce documents of POPs management policy and strategies.
4. Set up effective awareness and popularization tools of POPs management, the national radio TV will be the first to be utilized.
5. Establish financing mechanisms of POPs projects in Burundi steered by PES.
6. POPs import should undergo strict legislation.
7. Set up a sub-regional information network on POPs management.
8. Each stakeholder's responsibilities in the management of POPs (Government, NGOs, firms, importer traders) must be specified.

Media work

Broadcast messages, a spot announcement and advertising bills on socio-economic impacts, and the chronic and synergistic effects inherent to the generation, use and import of POPs have been periodically organized. The broadcast messages are aired every three

weeks and outline problems raised by POPs in Burundi, the role of each stakeholder in the management of POPs, and the fight against the illicit traffic of POPs.

Bills are put in heavy human concentration places and where the environment has been destroyed. There are even the same themes in the messages.

A spot announcement is aired once a week. This consists of small sketches performed on the radio by the communities on the management of POPs.

In addition, files for the promotion of teaching programs including the chemical safety in schools were suggested with the following themes:

- What do POPs mean?
- The negative effects of POPs on human health.
- The hazards of POPs use in the environment in general
- The Burundian legislation as far as POPs are concerned.

These files are developed in a few lines and just provide general ideas, they will be deepened gradually.

Specialized Training and Awareness workshops

Two specialized awareness workshops for political authorities and manufacturers on the transfer and adaptation of less polluting technologies and roundtable debates were carried out on 13 – 14 January 2005 and 15 – 16 February 2005.

The two workshops took place in Bujumbura and gathered the members of the ministries affected by the management of POPs (Environment, Justice, Health, Agriculture, Trade and Industries), firms (Bujumbura textile complex, pharmacies, chemical plants), and NGOs. The communications were about the following themes:

- Strategic approach to chemicals management in the national context;
- Prevention of groups vulnerable to POPs ;
- How to control the illicit traffic of hazardous substances and chemicals in a poor country like Burundi;
- Identification of the best environmental techniques of chemicals management for the national development;
- Pesticides use in Burundi: advantages and challenges.

After the communication sessions, the following observations were drawn:

1. Pesticides have been used for years in farming especially for industrial crops such as coffee and cotton with a currency inflow for the country. However, this chemicals use has had negative impacts on human health.
2. For the management of POPs, there must be a consultation framework between the use sectors and the conventional sectors to harmonize approaches and develop information changes.

3. The Burundian legislation as far as POPs use is concerned is slight and there is not any health and environmental costs studies related to their use.
4. “The perverse effects of POPs uses are not affordable to farmers”. Their toxicity for animals and human beings obliges us to implement natural alternative methods of crop protection.
5. For the generation, industries do it on the grounds of profits.
6. It is accepted to replace some production systems with heavy external inputs use by a highest utilization of local resources. To succeed in doing it, chemicals should undergo a high taxation so as to deter their import and promote the local resources production.
7. All the participants were unanimous in improving the capacities of industries, agricultural organizations and NGOs.
8. The knowledge of the communities as far as POPs and POPs-related problems are concerned must be improved so as to contribute to the establishment of a base for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention in Burundi.
9. Develop national plans for Convention implementation.

The creation of a POPs « watchdog » and the texts governing it

It proved necessary to organize an inclusive and participatory open forum so as to enforce the legislation of the management of chemicals, particularly POPs. This legal framework consists of 10 members from the different utilization sectors of POPs and steered by PES (Officials from the different ministries, NGOs, firms, and experts participate in this strategic framework). This watchdog is set up to harmonize the texts and laws, help the country define the priorities and play an active role in the strengthening of the coordination mechanisms at all levels. Its slight structure is composed of a president, a secretary and members. Governed by articles, it meets once a year to analyse all the issues related to the management of POPs in Burundi.

Population affected by the project activity

As part of the setting up of effective legislation and policies of national strategies and action plans, the project was potentially beneficial to various social strata categories:

1. Pilot farmers using pesticides for their improvement of the least polluting risks methods.
2. The national authorities for the production of less hazardous chemical substances
3. Industries have acquired technologies transfer methods with less polluting derivative waste.
4. Health authorities have improved the knowledge on POPs harmful to human health.
5. Commercial importers of chemicals recognized and sanctioned.
6. PES NGO for the capacity building.

Project constraints

Linked to the low financial means:

- PES has added 30% of the budget to the allocated funds to carry out the expected activities.
- The awareness and information sessions have been reduced by 80%
- The number of beneficiaries have dwindled by 30%

Inherent to participation:

- The beginning of the project is always difficult, so we register a low participation of political decision makers. It was only about the end that this participation rate had increased.
- The ban of POPs import in Burundi has not been really been fully understood by the public

Inherent to the Project nature:

- Such a project is not easy to popularise in as much as it affects many sectors of life.
- The interest of such project does not directly generate palpable effects, thus difficult to popularise.

Conclusions

Restate basic facts on POPs in Burundi; mention awareness activities; summarize watchdog group.

Burundi signed the Stockholm Convention on 2 April 2002 and ratified it on 2 August 2005. The current legislation bans POPs import in Burundi. The inventory of POPs in Burundi revealed that dioxin and furans are generated in the country from uncontrolled combustion, bushfires, charcoal combustion, firewood, peat, textile industry, etc...Also, the Burundi do not produce pesticide POPs but among the obsolete stockpiles, there is obsolete pesticides POPs. There are also some imported transformers using PCBs oil. The government is Carrying out an environmentally sound and rational management of the obsolete stockpiles and the contaminated sites.

In order to enforce the legislation of the management of chemicals particularly POPs in Burundi, it was necessary to organize an inclusive and participatory open forum. This legal framework consists of 10 members from the different utilization sectors of POPs and steered by PES (Officials from the different ministries, NGOs, firms, and experts participate in this strategic framework). This watchdog is set up to harmonize the texts and laws, help the country define the priorities and play an active role in the strengthening of the coordination mechanisms at all levels. Its slight structure is composed of a president, a secretary and members. Governed by articles, it meets once a year to analyse all the issues related to the management of POPs in Burundi.

In top of these governmental actions, PES contributed also to the national actions aiming to manage POPs in Burundi. These actions consisted mainly in raising awareness activities. Thus, four training and awareness workshops on POPs were organized in

Burundi for the benefit of farmers, decision makers, academic and research organizations, health sector actors, commercial importers and customs officers. In top of that, media work was done by broadcasting periodically announcement and advertising bills on socio-economic impacts, and the chronic and synergistic effects inherent to the generation, use and import of POPs.