The International POPs Elimination Project (IPEP)

Fostering Active and Effective Civil Society Participation in Preparations for Implementation of the Stockholm Convention

CA.P.A.NET.

(CAMEROON PESTICIDE ACTION NETWORK)

Cameroon Country Situation Report

CAPANET
Appolinaire Etono Ngah
Daniel Souop
Josephine Beyala

Cameroon
August 2005

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

IPEN gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Global Environment Facility, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Swiss Agency for the Environment Forests and Landscape, the Canada POPs Fund, the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM), Mitchell Kapor Foundation, Sigrid Rausing Trust, New York Community Trust and others.

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; full report in French

Executive summary

Considering their hazards on health and on the environment, Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) are currently a real concern for many countries including Cameroon. That is the reason why this country has signed the Stockholm Convention on POPs on 5th October 2001 and has started its ratification process.

POPs are chemical toxic substances and persistent in the environment. They contaminate food, waters and accumulate in the food chain, are present in the human body and can cause diseases and health troubles.

The Stockholm Convention has currently established the "Dirty Dozen list" divided up in 3 classes.

a) Substances released unintentionally during thermal processes with the help of organic matters and chlorine (these are dioxins and furans);
b) Substances produced intentionally and used as industrial chemicals (polychlorinated biphenyls) and hexachlorobenzene (HCB);
c) Substances made intentionally and used as pesticides (Aldrin, Chlordane, DDT, Dieldrin, Endrin, Hexachlorobenzene, Heptachlor, Mirex, Toxaphene)

It is important to mention that, due to the incomplete combustion or chemical reactions, **hexachlorobenzene** and **PCBs** are equally released unintentionally during thermal processes with the help of organic matters and chlorine.

Objectives of the study

Cameroon has not yet made its national POPs inventory, a crucial stage for an effective POPs management in the country. This study has been led to fill in this gap. The study falls in the framework of the IPEN (International POPs Elimination Network) International POPs Elimination Project (IPEP).

This study globally aims to evaluate POPs in Cameroon in order to put at the disposal of the main actors involved in POPs management relevant information for use in their respective activities.

Therefore, it specifically aims the following:

- Identify POPs sources and use in Cameroon
- Describe POPs-relating problems in Cameroon
- Describe the legislation regarding POPs present in Cameroon
- Describe the convention ratification level and activities carried out at governmental and industrial level within the framework of POPs management
- Evaluate NGOs capacities in terms of POPs
- NGOs involvement in the development of the NIP implementation
- Awareness-raising and information activities on POPs among authorities and populations
- Propose solutions to the POPs management in the country.

Methodology of study

The methodology described in the project document has been adopted. It encompasses:

- The documentary review: it was about consulting among the different sources, all documents on POPs in Cameroon. Studies, reports, legislative texts, etc.
- Inventory/investigations in possible areas with high POPs use in Cameroon: mainly Yaounde and Douala.
- Exploitation of data: analysis and interpretation;
- Making of the final report

Results obtained

POPs sources and uses in Cameroon

By examining the updated list of pesticides homologated or temporarily authorised for sale in Cameroon (annex 3), we notice that there are none targeted by the Stockholm Convention on the list of pesticides officially authorised for use in this country. It is worth mentioning that 200kg of heptachlor and 625 kg of dieldrin have been recorded in obsolete pesticide stocks; an evidence that POPs pesticides were authorised in Cameroon. The main POPs sources and uses in Cameroon might come from:

- The unintentional production of dioxins and furans: incinerations, chemical facilities, diverse combustions, bushfires, putrefactions,

- The use of industrial chemicals: polychlorobiphenyls (PCBs) and hexachlorobenzene (HCB) in electricity companies, industrial facilities, research laboratories, dumpsites collecting industrial and local wastes.
- Wastes containing PCBs that can be found in many areas and stemming from different activities: the use of obsolete oil, the repairing and maintenance of equipments, demolition of buildings, evaporation, lixiviation of dumps, recycling operations.

Investigations carried out reveal that many fields of activities in Cameroon are still dependant on PCBs. The main activities identified are: the electricity company, industries conversing aluminum, copper, iron, chemicals and plastics and oil development and refining companies, residential/ industrial buildings including schools, households, hospitals, offices and stores, car maintenance facilities, surface treatment for the textile**...**

Problems posed by POPs in Cameroon

There is unfortunately no mechanism allowing an efficient POPs monitoring to evaluate their impacts on health and on the environment. Moreover, never has a study on POPs been led in Cameroon. Still, we think that data relating to problems generally caused by POPs on health and on the environment apply perfectly to Cameroon. Thus, dumps receiving industrial wastes and equipments using PCBs are highly suspected of being contaminated by PCBs. It is about among others, the open-air dump of Ngousso (Yaounde) receiving obsolete transformers containing PCBs and about the closed dump of Makepe.

Legislation on POPs and implementation of the Stockholm Convention in Cameroon

The Stockholm Convention ratification process is under way. It is noticed a significant breakthrough with the approval of the general assembly concerning the government bill relating to this. We expect this ratification in the near future by a presidential act. At internal level, Cameroon has reformed its legal framework and many laws and regulatory texts that can contribute to the Stockholm Convention implementation in Cameroon have been adopted.

NGOs and POPs

Except Cameroon Pesticide Action Network (CAPANET) and WWF that are involved in the Stockholm Convention National Implementation Plan, few NGOs in Cameroon are involved in

the chemical management. This can be explained by the fact that they are not active in this field due to a lack of expertise. For this reason, we deem that awareness-raising actions planned in the near future should give priority to the civil society actors and to NGOs in particular.

Besides, investigations carried out among people have revealed that the populations are badly informed about POPs issues. Investigations also revealed that among target groups met, doctors are moderately informed, teachers and officials are insufficiently informed, student weakly informed whereas information are inexistent among traders and unemployed.

The study's recommendations for POPs management in Cameroon

The study suggests some solution that can contribute to the improvement of POPs management in Cameroon. These proposals concern public authorities, industries and the Civil Society actors. These are the following:

- The systematic awareness-raising among the different actors of POPs hazards on health and on the environment;
- The encouragement of industrials by the government to declare their stocks in POPs and POPs-contaminated sites;
- The promotion and collaboration between all sectors and the active involvement of the Civil Society in the setting-up of an effective awareness-raising mechanism;
- The creation of an official collection and stocking system for products and wastes polluted by POPs for a better monitoring and for their ecologically rational disposal in the future.
- Technical capacity building among resource people to make a POPs inventory and to develop effectively strategies and sectoral plans in POPs management in Cameroon;
- The carrying-out of an impacts' study on the PK 12 dumpsite, at the AES SONEL and at ALUCAM to better evaluate PCBs, dioxin and furan impacts on people working in these structures and on the environment. The promotion of the Best Available Techniques and of the Best Environmental Practices (BAT/BEP) in Cameroon to reduce the U-POPs production.