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International POPs Elimination Project

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

Stockholm Convention in Action in Jordan

Land and Human to Advocate Progress (LHAP)

**Jordan
April 2006**

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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Stockholm Convention in Action in Jordan

Introduction

For the past 40 years, awareness has been growing about the threats posed to human health and the global environment by the ever-increasing release in the natural environment of synthetic chemicals. Mounting evidence of damage to human health and the environment has focused the attention of the international community on a category of substances referred to as Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). Some of these substances are pesticides, while others are industrial chemicals or unwanted by-products of industrial processes or combustion. POPs are characterised by *persistence* – the ability to resist degradation in various media (air, water, sediments, and organisms) for months and even decades; *bio-accumulation* - the ability to accumulate in living tissues at levels higher than those in the surrounding environment; and *potential for long range transport* – the potential to travel great distances from the source of release through various media (air, water, and migratory species).

Specific effects of POPs can include cancer, allergies and hypersensitivity, damage to the central and peripheral nervous systems, reproductive disorders, and disruption of the immune system. Some POPs are also considered to be endocrine disrupters, which, by altering the hormonal system, can damage the reproductive and immune systems of exposed individuals as well as their offspring.

Concerning POPs, Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 is of special importance. A goal to be met by the year 2000 was set to achieve worldwide environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals, including prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous products. Pursuant to this the Stockholm Conference established in 1994 the Inter-governmental Forum on Chemicals Safety (IFCS), through which countries regularly discuss their activities and priorities for the sound management of chemicals. Further, FAO, OECD, ILO, UNIDO, UNEP and WHO established in 1995 the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), a co-operative agreement to co-ordinate linking and integrating their respective programmes in the area of chemical management and safety.

What was achieved so far thanks to this joined international efforts:

- The Basel Convention on Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Waste was adopted in 1989 and entered into force 1992. 147 states, including Jordan, are parties to this convention.
- The Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent has been adopted in 1998. The Convention has at the moment 73 signatories and 41 parties, needing 50 parties in order to enter into force.

- The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants has been adopted in 2001. The Convention has at the moment 151 signatories and 125 parties and entered into force in May 2004.
- UNITAR/IOMC Programme on National Profiles for Sound Management of Chemicals was developed in the late 1990s. To date, 60 countries, including Jordan, have developed their National Profiles and 22 are in the process to do so. Thirty countries have requested funding to elaborate their NP.
- On the regional level the Protocol on POPs to the UN ECE Convention on Long range Trans-boundary Air Pollution was adopted in 1998, and has 36 signatories and 14 parties to date.

Parties to the Stockholm Convention are required to develop National Implementation Plans (NIPs) describing how they will meet the obligations set by the Convention. All developing countries and countries with economies in transition, signatories or parties to the Convention, are eligible to receive GEF capacity building support for enabling activities to strengthen their ability to implement a systematic and participatory process for the preparation of the NIP, and for the NIP production.

Jordan signed the Stockholm Convention and ratified the convention in November 2004, and already enters into force by February 6 2005. To meet her obligation under the Convention, Jordan has to prepare and implement a phase-out plan of action on POPs.

The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) has been entrusted to operate the financial mechanism established for the implementation of the convention. Jordan has started a project funded by GEF to establish a National Implementation Plan for POPs under the Stockholm Convention.

Project objectives

- Raising community awareness about the Stockholm Convention and POPs. Organize six public meetings to disseminate the information collected and the publications produced.
- Collect information about POPs and the Stockholm convention with particular focus on the sources of production of POPs, how POPs can affect human health and environment and how to deal with stockpiles of POPs and the need to end their production and usage.
- To raise public awareness of POPs and the Stockholm Convention;
- To produce and circulate some publications about the Stockholm Convention and POPs.
- Collection of information on POPs and the Stockholm Convention Review the present national and international studies and documents.
- Browse the Internet to collect information on the Convention, POPs and their impacts on the natural and human environment.

Project Outputs

- Conducting a study on the country situation to use the information in the public awareness campaign.
- Designing and printing 1000 copies of each of the following:
 - A poster
 - A sticker
 - A pad
 - A brochure
- Organizing six public hearings in the country addressing different groups and different geographical areas of the country.
- The formation of a team of experts and a steering committee.
- Assisting other neighboring Arab countries such as Syria, Lebanon, Morocco and Saudi Arabia by sharing the experiences gathered during this project.
- Circulating the publications in LHAP activities that are mainly addressing youth 12-16 years of age.

Project outputs in detail

With the purpose of making Jordanians aware of POPs and their danger to various aspects of life including making them aware of the international efforts such as the conventions signed to manage and control these dangerous chemicals, LHAP pursued the following detailed activities to make this happen as follows:

- Recruited of the project coordinator and identified the experts who are going to be involved in the project implementation. The team of experts included
 - Dr. Ziyad Abo Kadoora / Ministry of Environment.(MOE)
 - Mr. Ziyad Alawneh / Land and Human to Advocate Progress.
 - Dr. Mohammad Khashashneh / Ministry of Environment
 - Eng. Ruba Anbar / Land and Human to Advocate Progress.
 - Eng. Nabil Kasasbheh / Chemical Engineer.
- Forming the project steering committee, which is consisted of:
 - Dr. Ziyad Abo Kadoora / Ministry of Environment.(MOE)
 - Mr. Ziyad Alawneh / Land and Human to Advocate Progress.
 - Eng. Ruba Anbar / Land and Human to Advocate Progress.
 - Eng. Layla Nazmy / project coordinator.
 - Eng Nabil Kasasbheh / LHAP
- The production of a summary country situation report. The report was then published in a brochure where 1000 copies were printed and distributed during the community consultations.
- The project publications were accomplished included:

- Designing and printing 1000 copies of a poster.
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- Designing and printing 1000 pads each made up of 14 pages containing at the bottom educational information on POPs. The educational information included the definition of POPs and then each chemical of the 12 is introduced explaining its source and its impact on health. The purpose is to let participants to the consultations and public hearing sessions read while waiting to commence the activity, keep them with something beneficiary to get educated on the same issue. It is a different communication technique to pass the message to the targeted audience.
- Designing and printing 1000 stickers.
- Designing and printing 1000 copies of a brochure summarizes the Jordan country situation report.
- The POPs poster was published on the inside cover of quarterly newsletter (20 pages) of which 1000 copies printed. The mailing list of the newsletter distribution includes public, private, academic, international organizations and NGOs in Jordan. The newsletter, moreover, was distributed to 100 important international and national organizations to voice out national and local issues and problems.
- LHAP organized the POPs Global Day Action during which 100 university students of the North universities (4) attended the meeting. They have as well discussed chapter 9 of the National Jordanian Youth Strategy on environment.
- LHAP organized six community consultations to raise community awareness about POPs and their health and environment impact. The areas include the following parts:
 - In Tafileh Governorate during which many stakeholders attended the meeting headed by the governor and the developmental departments directors.

With an approximate number of 40 participants, Land and Human to Advocate Progress (LHAP) in collaboration with Khaldyia Ladies Society and Investment and Environment Protection Society organized a community consultation in line with the awareness campaign LHAP launched to address Jordanians at large about POPs. The meeting took place on July 30, 2005 and presented to the participants facts on the following issues:

- What is the Stockholm Convention, and the position of Jordan on this agreement including the major points?
- What are POPs and their health, environmental, social and economic impacts?
- How we can protect ourselves from these chemicals?

Media attended the consultation. The community expressed high concerns on these chemicals and wonder if they are so toxic, what immediate actions and precautions need to be taken.

Each participant was given a folder with a sticker, a poster, a brochure and a pad. These publications contain information people can read when they go back home and drives them to act as this is the main goal of our campaign: making the people aware and drive them to act to protect their health.

The activities were comprised of an opening session, presentation time and then discussion with the community.

Badia Society for Environmental Protection and Land and Human to Advocate Progress collaborated with Mafraq Chamber of Industry and Commerce and Farmers Union of Marfaq to organize a community consultation meeting to present the country situation report prepared by the Badia Society for Environmental Protection. The meeting took place on Saturday September 3, 2005 and was attended by the farmers, industrialists and interested people with an approximate number of 30 attendees. The meeting was patronized by the governor of Mafraq and with the presence of the Chamber of Commerce president and the Farmers Union president. Media also attended the meeting (clippings of media coverage are shown later on in this report).

The activity was divided into three parts; the first is the opening where the governor, the presidents of both the chamber and farmers union addressed the audience. Then the president of LHAP and the Badia organization also addressed the audience.

The second part was the delivery of presentation outlines by three speakers: Engineer Nabeel Kasasbheh of LHAP who introduced the Stockholm Convention and its important aspects. Mr. Ziyad Alawneh who has tackled the social and economic aspects of POPs and then Dr. Ziad Abu Ghadourah who presented the country situation report.

The third part concentrated on the feedback by the audience. The audience expressed concerns about these chemicals that are considered by many to be new. Also when speakers spoke of the health and environmental aspects of POPs, they got shocked and expressed high concerns.

In Jerash governorate, more that 200 mainly young people attended the meeting. During the meeting an exhibition was organized where the POPs publications were displayed and distributed.



In more than 13 schools in which LHAP implemented a human rights and democracy project, students were taught about the links between human rights and environment with emphasis on POPs. In these schools an essay writing and drawing competition was organized in 130 schools on the issue of human rights and environment. The results of the drawings were documented in a poster and the some of the other drawings and articles in the ' Human Rights Observatory' issued by the 13 schools.

Conclusions and recommendations

The audience attending the various activities of POPs project expressed high concern and sorted out the recommendations into:

Government level:

- Government has to develop a legal system that protects people.
- Government has to conduct studies and research to assess the current situation of POPs residues in the various elements of the environment.

Civil society level:

- Launch awareness campaign to educate people about these chemicals.
- Lobby on the polluters and the government to take action that would protect people's lives.
- Civil society has also to conduct studies to assess the current situation of the POPs levels of pollution in the various elements of the environment.

Industrial and agricultural sector:

- Bear the responsibility of how to handle and dispose of these chemicals.
- Train and build the capacity of workers on how to handle the chemicals at the national establishment.
- Avoid using chemicals that are imported into to the country illegally

In **conclusion** more efforts need to be taken in the form of education, awareness raising and conducting research to uncover the facts about the actual situation. Civil society plays an important and sincere role in this regard and therefore, needs to be considered for future financial and technical support.