



The International POPs Elimination Project

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

Global Day of Action on POPs in Nigeria

Nigerian Environmental Society (NES)

Nigeria
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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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Global Day of Action on POPs in Nigeria

Youth Awareness and Aggressive Outdoor Media Campaign in Nigeria on 7th November 2005

Background

POPs chemicals are not manufactured in Nigeria but imported mostly from developed countries such as France, United Kingdom and Japan. Formulation plants for POPs pesticides, owned by multinational companies, which existed in Lagos, Kaduna and Port Harcourt, were shut down in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Federal Environmental Protection Agency Regulations in 1990 banned the importation of POPs pesticides in response to international concern about POPs and their effects. Following adoption of the Stockholm Convention on POPs, Nigeria signed and ratified it on 23rd May 2001 and 24th May 2004 respectively.

The Nigerian Federal Ministry of Health indicated that *aldrin*, *dieldrin*, *chlordan*, *DDT* and *endrin* are POPs pesticides used for control of arthropods of medical and veterinary importance and their use was stopped in 2002. The use of DDT for malaria control continues on a continual as needed basis. Data is generally lacking on POPs imports and consumption. Inadequate funding is claimed to be responsible for the low levels of obsolete stocks of POPs as chemicals were consumed as soon as they were purchased.

Although a potentially POPs-contaminated site with variable levels of contamination could include but not limited to manufacturing facilities for POPs chemicals, storage and distribution facilities and places where POPs chemicals have been used (agricultural lands, electric power stations, landfills etc.), there have been no studies undertaken to identify the hazards of these sites to humans and the environment.

As part of the Global Day of Action (GDA), the *Nigerian Environmental Society (NES)* in collaboration with its *Environmental Protection and Awareness Clubs (EPACs)* organized a “Youth awareness and aggressive outdoor media campaign in Nigeria” on the 7th November 2005. The event was kicked off with a public lecture on “*Dirty Dozen and the Nigerian Environment*” presented by an invited Guest lecturer - Dr. Law Ezemonye.

GDA Activities

Within the scope of this programme, the stages of the GDA awareness activities carried out were:

- identification/ selection of youths among EPACs;
- identification/selection of relevant media representatives (electronic/print);
- Youths Volunteer (EPACs) meet-the-media interaction section;
- Youths “*Keep the Promise*” dialogue section;
- a communiqué on “*Save Our Future from POPs*” issued and circulated to media, Ministries of Environment, Industries etc, Organized Private Sector - Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) and other key government offices/officers.

Objective of the Campaign

The main objective of the campaign was to create awareness first among the media and youths based on the principle “*Touch the Youths and You Touch the Parents*” about POPs and effects in the Nigerian environment. Also, to bring their attention to the *Keep the Promise* Campaign and the need for concerted efforts for action towards advocacy for the POPs Convention.

This strategy was considered necessary because it has been NES standing ideology in youth training, awareness, enlightenment/educational programmes. Aggressive environmental campaigns are a part of information education, which would help to increase youth’s knowledge about the environment. It is an environmental strategy that emphasizes attitudes, values, skills and knowledge, motivation and participation to solve environmental problems.

Outcome of the Campaign

The participants came out with a “**Save Our Future**” communiqué with the some resolutions.

Resolutions

As part of the main events of the campaign, the “**Keep the Promise**” dialogue session was held. At the end of the events the following resolutions were arrived that:

- *The Nigerian government should as a matter of urgency begin the process of implementation of the Stockholm Convention. Very importantly the workshop emphasized the need of POPs-specific policy and legal framework in the country.*
- *The Nigerian government through the Federal Ministry of Environment should intensify the nationwide inventory and assessment studies on POPs-contaminated sites, and collate and make data available for all stakeholders’ easy access in Nigeria.*

- *All stakeholders should network for exchange of information on POPs issues in Nigeria. The media was identified and enjoined to step up efforts in bridging the yawning gap between knowledge and action, by widely informing the public on POPs.*
- *The level of public awareness on POPs is dangerously low that immediate and continuous awareness and enlightenment actions are required in Lagos State and across the country. The importance of awareness activities in schools was particularly highlighted.*
- *Urgent action should be taken to reduce and eventually eliminate POPs and other persistent toxic substances in the country at large.*
- *The labour organizations should be adequately carried along in issues of POPs control and elimination.*
- *There should be scientific research and awareness on alternatives to POPs and POPs products in Nigeria.*
- *Materials, products and processes that generate and release dioxins and other unwanted by-product POPs should be phased out. In other words, actions should be taken to promote cleaner products, materials, processes, and activities that avoid the generation and release of toxic by-products.*
- *Clean up and remediation actions would be required for identified contaminated sites and environmental reservoirs containing POPs and other persistent toxic substances.*
- *The reduction and aim to eliminate the generation of wastes, including municipal solid waste, medical waste, and hazardous waste should be promoted.*
- *Environmentally sound methods, such as the Integrated Pest Control Management (IPCM) approaches should be adopted for pest and vector control to achieve effective agricultural and public health practices.*
- *More youth-oriented programmes should regularly be organized and supported by the Federal government to keep the tempo ongoing. Other international groups - UNDP, UNIDO, IPEN, PAN-UK etc were also encouraged to be more involving in capacity development of youths, media and NGOs in Nigeria.*

Lastly, participants to the event commended the efforts of the Nigerian Environmental Society for organizing the event and reiterated the important role of civil society groups on POPs control, elimination and remediation

initiatives. The workshop thus strongly recommended the mobilization and incorporation of relevant NGOs/CBOs on POPs-based activities.

Programme Evaluation Summary

The campaign had the following impact to the Nigerian population:

- increased awareness and a well-sensitized populace on POPs;
- youth development and increased knowledge and skills in information dissemination;
- increased mass media attention on POPs issues in Nigeria;
- increased government attention on POPs issues and commitment to elimination;
- sensitized Nigerians on the country's IPEP initiative;
- generated the needed and desired attention and road map towards Stockholm Convention implementation starting with COP1.

Event Media Coverage

The occasion received wide publicity from the electronic and print media especially through local FM radio stations. The *meet-the-media* interaction was very well moderated and afforded the youths a rare opportunity of meeting face to face with some key reporters, correspondents and news presenters in the media industry. Questions were asked by the inquisitive youths about the role of the media in POPs awareness and appropriate answers were provided accordingly.

As a result of the coverage, some members of the public (youths) contacted the programme secretariat to be enlisted as members of the youth group (EPACs) and more EPACs are being initiated for inauguration in three (3) additional secondary schools in Lagos.

Public Lecture/ Dialogue

The lecture and dialogue components of the event were successfully executed and it achieved its main objective. It certainly contributed towards awareness-raising among the youths and media, instilling in them information on attitudes, values, skills and knowledge, motivation and participation to solve environmental problems in their immediate surroundings.

It also sets the way forward for advocacy in terms of the ***keep the promise*** communiqué which was circulated to relevant government agencies and parastatals (state-owned enterprises).

Generally, despite insufficient funds to execute the outdoor component of the campaign, the entire campaign was a huge success.

PHOTOS



P1: A cross section of the Rapporteur/Communiqué drafting committee members
From left: Mr. John Ebire – NES Project Officer, Mrs. B.A Odeneye- Federal Ministry of Environment, Lagos, Mr. Eugene Itua - NES Workshop Committee Chairman, and Mr. Lasisi - Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA)



P2: A cross section of youths (EPACs) during the dialogue section



P3: A cross section of the participants



P4: Dr. Law Ezemonye, during the presentation of the "Dirty Dozen and the Nigerian environment"



P5: Mr. Leslie Adogame, during the opening session of the meet-the-media/dialogue session