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Landscape SAEFL

International POPs Elimination Project

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

Global Day of Action on POPs in Morocco

**Societe Marocaine de Toxicologie Clinique et Analytique
(SMTCA)**

**Morocco
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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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Lecturers:

Dr. Sofian bin Yehia

Dr. Na'eema Rahalem

Dr. Monsef Edris

The Earth Day Celebrations started at three o'clock. The people present were welcomed. Dr. Edris welcomed the lecturers and the audience. He started talking and said: Earth Day is a day on which we dream that everything becomes beautiful and free from pollution. It is a day on which we raise flags and say, "Celebrate GDA, No to pollution. No to persistent organic pollutants, which affect the health of humans and the environment".

The lecturers introduced themselves to the audience, and talked about persistent organic pollutants and the Stockholm Convention. Their talk focused on the following points.

First: What are persistent organic pollutants?

Chemical substances known as persistent organic pollutants (POPs) are used as powerful pesticides and serve a wide range of industrial purposes. Some POPs are emitted as incidental by-products resulting from the incineration and industrial processes. While hazard levels differ from one POP to another. All these chemicals are common in four properties as it is clear from their definition.

POPs bioaccumulate up the food chain and predators accumulate higher and higher levels. Fat cells increase in cold climates because fish, birds and mammals need thick layers of fat to use as natural insulators for facing temperatures that go below freezing levels. Consequently, these organisms are highly polluted with such chemical substances. Persistent organic pollutants include 12 substances. They are aldrin, endrin, chlordane, DDT, mirex, dieldrin, heptachlor, toxaphene, hexachlorobenzene, PCBs, dioxins and furans

Second: Stockholm Convention

The Stockholm Convention targets 12 toxic substances of such POPs to eliminate and finally get rid of. Here are the most important points about the Stockholm Convention. It lays down a system for dealing with additional chemical substances which have been designated as hazardous.

It states that special efforts should be exerted to gradually get rid of some chemical substances related to some applications.

It also aims at making good use of resources for the purpose of getting rid of stocked substances and storehouses of current POP waste.

Finally, the Convention states the way to achieve a future free from POPs.

It promises to change the way our economy depends on toxic chemical substances.
The aims of the convention are as follows:

Aim No. 1

To get rid of POPs, starting with the worst substances, totaling 12 substances.

Aim No. 2

To support switching to less harmful alternatives.

Aim No. 3

To target other POPs and take measures against them.

Aim No. 4

To remove stored substances and old equipment containing POPs.

Aim No. 5

To work together for a future free from POPs.

The Convention launches a call for the provision of international aid to developing countries so that they can face the problem of POPs. This is vital for the success of the convention. International agreements cannot be useful without international cooperation. Problems resulting from POPs are not restricted by international boundaries. They affect every area of the world. Therefore, dealing with them means that all parties have to monitor all parties. To deal with POPs, all world countries have to work as a team. This will be useful for putting an end to the use of these hazardous chemical substances. If such cooperation is transformed to a habit, this will also be useful for fighting numerous world problems.

Dr. Sofian stressed the importance of cooperation between government and non-government organizations to raise awareness among young people in social and cultural clubs. He also emphasized the importance of helping young people to acquire new values and sound information that may contribute to raising the environmental and health awareness.

At the end of the celebration, discussions began. They dealt with the properties of POPs and how to avoid them. Lecturers answered all the questions raised by the audience