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Swiss Agency for
the Environment,
Forests and
Landscape SAEFL

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 South Africa

Earthlife Africa

**South Africa
April 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>

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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.

IPEN GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION (GDA) ON 22 APRIL 2005

Activities of the Global Day of Action (GDA)

- Awareness-raising on Zero Waste Campaign,
- Campaigners, members, students, family and friends got together to build a 5 metre tall sculpture from plastic waste, in an effort to raise awareness around the toxicity of plastics, and the health and environmental hazards of burning wastes and plastics in particular,
- Flyers and newsletters prepared and handed out to passers-by,
- Interviews held with National Radio (SA FM) as well as regional radio (Ukhozi FM).
- Media event for reporters and photographers (The Mercury and Berea Mail – full colour pictures and articles)

Status of the Stockholm Convention in South Africa

South Africa is a Party to the Convention. It ratified the Convention on 4th September 2002. Being a party, SA is bound to reduce and phase out the production and use of POPs, which also includes many agricultural chemicals, PCB's, and pollutants given off when many types of plastic are burnt namely dioxins and furans.

The National implementation Plan (NIP)

South Africa is preparing the National Implementation Plan (NIP) and civil society organizations are among the stakeholders of the process, including Earthlife Africa.

Objectives of the GDA

The objectives of the GDA were to raise awareness around the toxicity of plastics, and the health and environmental hazards of burning wastes and plastics as a POPs by products are released.

The campaign

There were key messages given by participants as follows:

"South Africans must become aware of the stupidity and danger attached to burning waste, whether in fires or incinerators – to burn resources in a resource poor country is silly," said Lakhani. "It has been decided that a long term low- level campaign should continue, possibly called "Don't Burn, Sister!" as it is our womenfolk who mostly burn plastic to start cooking fires, and women tend to be more sensitive to that which causes harm."

Vanessa Black added "We hope that this action served its purpose, by informing many about Persistent Organic Pollutants and the dangers posed by burning plastic waste in particular. We hope that people will find more creative solutions to dispose of waste." Many people were astonished at this tall sculpture and came from around the park to see what it was all about.

Materials produced and disseminated

- Flyer – 2000 copies
- Media Release - electronic
- Branch Newsletter – 500 copies

Participants

Marc Kress, Harald and Liane, Des, Louise, Tammy, together with Vanessa and Muna, were the core sculpting team, with new members Pranya and Zahraa, all members or supporters of Earthlife Africa.

Campaign co-coordinators:

Muna Lakhani muna@iafrica.com – 0834-71-72-76

Vanessa Black black@ispace.co.za – 0824-72-88-44

Media

- Lylie Musgrave – Kibao Communications
- Terry Haywood and Akhona Cira – Mercury – Daily newspaper
- Lauren Boyle – Berea Mail
- SA FM Radio – Friday – 15 April 2005 - Radio interview on SAFM (National radio) – 10h41 with Bruce Miller approx 4 minutes
- Ukhozi FM Radio - telephonically during action – name not captured