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International POPs Elimination Project

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

Health public awareness campaign on the Stockholm convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs): A vision to a better Egyptian clean environment Technical Report

Dreamers of Tomorrow

Egypt

September 2005



Dreamers of Tomorrow

“We positively impact youth to lead Egypt’s future.”

مديرية الشؤون الاجتماعية
إدارة غرب القاهرة الاجتماعية
جمعية شباب الحالمون بالغد
المشهرة برقم 4558 لسنة 1998

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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Celebrating the Global Day of Awareness of POPs

In the context of the international celebration of the Global Day of Awareness and aiming at raising the awareness about the harm effect of POPs, taking into consideration that Egypt is one of the countries that signed Stockholm convention on POPs, Dreamers of Tomorrow association has organized a seminar about this issue on Saturday September 24th, 2005 at the Cairo University conference center. A number of activists and academics in the field of environment and health in addition to NGOs concerned with these issues and university students attended the seminar.

After registration, Dr. Mousa Ibrahim Mousa, Director of the Technical Bureau of the Minister on Environmental Affairs and moderator of the seminar, welcomed the speakers and the attendees and gave a general overview about the objective of the seminar and about POPs. The seminar was divided into 3 sessions as follows:

First session: sources of POPs and their alternatives

In the first session, Professor Mohamed Helmy Belal, professor on the faculty of the Department of Agriculture, Cairo University, spoke about the sources of persistent organic pollutants, their types and harmful effects on both human beings and animals as they negatively affect the food chain. Prof. Mohamed explained that there are 12 sources of persistent organic pollutants were mentioned in research studies that are related to the Stockholm Convention. He divided them into industrial chemicals, chemical products and unknown products. Prof. Belal spoke also about the different ways to get rid of these pollutants and the advantages and disadvantages of each way. He expressed also the important role of NGOs and civil society in general in raising the awareness of people regarding the harm of these pollutants and the danger of what most people do to get rid of these pollutants such as burning. He added that we are in very bad need of giving new alternatives to these pollutants.

Prof. Belal spoke also about the economic circumstances of some countries and their poor knowledge and experience that lead to getting rid of these pollutants in a totally wrong harmful way.

Coffee break

Second session: POP effect on environment and health

In the second session, Professor Shehab Raed Hashim, professor at the British University and an expert in organic technology, spoke about the effect of these pollutants on environment and health and the continued danger to human being. He explained the importance of cooperation between specialists, civil society organizations and people as part of human rights in defending a safe life to human being from these dangerous pollutants. He added also that there should be a kind of supervision and penalty to the industrial and agricultural institutions that cause this kind of pollution. He described funding – as one of the effective tools in this situation- as an easy matter as there is no problem in saving money for this purpose as the state saves money for people's health, in addition to the donations that can be raised from concerned organizations and from people as well. He stressed the important role that NGOs and government play in raising awareness.

Third session: Stockholm convention: Egypt's position and future steps:

In the third and last session, Ahmed Kamal, a chemical researcher at the State Ministry on Environmental Affairs, spoke about Stockholm Convention and Egypt's role in enhancing its membership. One hundred fifty one countries signed the Convention in Stockholm in May 2001 and over 110 have ratified the Convention. The Convention aims at protecting the public health and environment by controlling the well known production of persistent organic pollutants by forbiddance and prevention and controlling the unknown production by continuous decrease and prevention- if possible – of the quantitative revivals of these pollutants.

Egypt has prepared a work plan to implement this convention. The plan is divided into five phases and started in February 2004 and will be prepared by mid-September 2005. The plan starts with forming an institutional administrative structure and defining coordination and organizational mechanisms. The plan will also assemble a list of persistent organic pollutants and evaluate both the basic structures and the national capabilities for dealing with them, defining the priorities and objectives such as determining the locations of these pollutants and establishing national centers for getting rid of it, in addition to building a database and applying good practices in the field of environment and technology as well as raising the awareness of those affected by the pollutants especially women. In another phase, there is a national implementation strategy and a work plan on POPs.

The problem of POPs is an international problem so there should be an international coordination and that's what the Stockholm Convention tried to do but there should be also cooperation between all governments, industrial institutions, NGOs and consumers to prevent using these harmful products.

Attendees discussed the three previous issues with the speakers during the sessions. At the concluding session a number of recommendations were raised as follows:

Continuous awareness about the danger of POPs is important to maintain between people. This could be implemented by NGOs and different types of media. Cooperation with the country should occur at all levels; between governmental and personal efforts and civil society efforts as well to implement various awareness campaigns.

Cooperation between the countries that signed and ratified the Convention is very important to get rid of these pollutants using the right ways.

Continued availability of funding will be important for work to protect the public from these pollutants.