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International POPs Elimination Project

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

EMPOWERING THE ARMENIAN PUBLIC TO TAKE ACTIONS TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND WASTE MANAGEMENT

Elena Manvelyan

Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment

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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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International POPs Elimination Project – IPEP

Website- www.ipen.org

Introduction

Armenia today pays attention to waste management but unfortunately the strategies tend to focus only on waste incineration and construction of waste incinerators that represent sources of POPs. An alternative path would be working on the zero-waste approach which focuses on waste minimization, reuse, and recycling thereby avoiding the generation of POPs. In the regional Action Plans on waste management which are under development in many areas of Armenia waste incineration is considered to be the main approach to waste management. This is a result of poor information and awareness of issues of sustainable waste management, POPs sources and adverse POPs impacts on human health and the environment. The problem is getting worse because of the high poverty level in the country. People have to use solid waste including plastics for heating. Solid waste incineration for local needs results in emission of toxic substances including dioxins. In addition there are 999 landfills in Armenia. Many of them became sources of POPs emissions and other toxic substances because of waste burning. It is necessary to continue informing governmental authorities and raising the awareness of decision makers and the general public on issues of sustainable waste management, alternatives to incineration and the zero-waste approach.

Project aims:

The Project is aimed at raising the awareness of residents of Armenia on POPs, including risks associated with waste incineration, alternatives to incineration and zero-waste approach. This aim fully meets the main IPEP priorities in the sphere of public information campaigns for raising public awareness and awareness of decision makers on POPs hot-spots, including alternatives to incineration and the zero-waste approach.

Project Objectives:

- Enhancement of public roles in addressing problems of elimination of POPs sources including waste incineration;
- Strengthening partnerships between the general public, the academic community and authorities in the course of decision-making on elimination of POPs sources, reduction of POPs adverse health and environmental impacts, sustainable waste management, including alternatives to incineration and the zero-waste approach.

Implemented activities:

In the framework of the project presentations to decision makers on issues related to solid waste management in Armenia were carried out. The second part of the project was devoted to awareness-raising of the target groups. We organised a seminar and a round table with the participation of representatives of governmental authorities, local residents, non-governmental organisations on issues related to solid waste management including alternatives to incineration. Special attention was paid to elimination of dioxin sources in Armenia and employing a zero-waste approach. The third part of the project was focused on preparation and distribution of informational materials including booklets, posters, newsletters on POPs sources in Armenia and their impact on human health and the environment, including working with media, meetings with governmental authorities and community members, applications to authorities on matters of

addressing the problem of solid waste management, alternatives to incineration and the zero-waste approach. A video film covering the problem of waste incineration will be prepared and shown on Armenian national TV.

Booklets, posters, newsletters on were published and disseminated via Armenian NGOs, responsible regulators, local authorities and communities. Newspaper articles, press-releases, radio/TV interviews and TV film were prepared to make project outcomes public.

Informing governmental officials on issues of sustainable waste management including alternatives to incineration and zero-waste approach

For the purpose of choosing safe technologies with respect to hard domestic waste in Armenia appeals to different ministries, the municipality and other organizations were made.

Simultaneously meetings with the representatives of the National Assembly and ministers (Mkheyan, A. Aleksandryan, Gevorkyan, Srapyan, Kosemyan) were organized for the purpose of informing them about the ecological approaches to waste management and banning the use of dirty technologies.

The Ministry of Urban Development by the support of OSCE on 30.11- 01.12.2005 organized a conference to discuss problems on waste collection and disposal and financial resources. At the conference the report of Elena Manvelyan, Head of AWHHE, was presented.

One of the main tasks of the program carried out with the support of IPEP and UNDP is the increase of awareness among Armenian citizens on an efficient management of hard domestic waste (HDW), taking into account the precautionary principle, i.e. not to harm human health and the environment.



In the framework of the project a coalition of ecological non-governmental organizations was formed that includes 10 NGOs from Yerevan. With the help of these organizations information materials were disseminated among local citizens and NGOs.

AWHHE became a member of the association “SOS Yerevan” that organized parliamentary hearings on environment protection and human health. During the hearings Lilik Simonyan, the executive director of AWHHE, made a speech about the impact of poor waste management on human health.

AWHHE actively participates in the elaboration of Armenian national concept on waste management. To discuss the draft concept several meetings with experts and NGOs were held.



Organisation of a seminar and a round table

AWHHE held a Round Table (Yerevan, March 30, 2006) on sustainable management of hard domestic waste with the participation of 25 NGO experts, scientists and representatives of the ministries of Urban Development, Nature Protection, Industry and Trade, Yerevan municipality, international experts, and businessmen.



Five reports were made including a report of AWHHE made by Emma Anakhasyan. The reporter from the municipality Mr. Eghiazaryan underlined the outmoded technical base and lack of financing necessary to solve the problem of HDW. He also presented the intended program based on the foreign investments.

Professor from Teheran University Edwin Safary told the workshop participants about the experience on HDW management in several foreign countries. He made concrete suggestions on sustainable waste management in Armenia.





Mr. Poghosyan, a businessman, underlined the need to form joint ventures responsible for waste management. He also added that these private companies will have to share risks with the government. Privileges should be granted for small business.

All workshop reporters and participants emphasized the need of raising awareness of citizens using TV and other media outlets as the main tool.

Preparation and publication of information materials

In the frame of the program 1000 leaflets, 50 posters and 500 booklets of two kinds are made, multiplied and distributed.

Documentary on waste incineration in Armenia

In the frame of the project documentary on waste incineration was prepared by Mushegh Minasyan, movie director and Gayane Sargsyan, script writer. The length of the documentary is 3 minutes.

Media activities

During the implementation of the project four articles were published in central national newspapers: “Golos Armeni”, “Delovoy Express”, “Noyan Tapan”, “Azg”. On March 11 the second radiobroadcast on HDW was held by FM -104 via program “Radio-Hay”. Lilik Simonyan made an on-camera speech during the telecast “The fifth wheel”. L. Simonyan and K. Grigoryan from AWHHE participated in eco-tours with the goal to prepare a documentary about the impact of HDW on the environment and human health (Journalist Inga Zarafyan – “EcoLur”). On March 2006 a telecast was organized by “Kentron” channel, where L. Simonyan and E. Manvelyan made an on-camera speech on the link between women’s health and the environment.