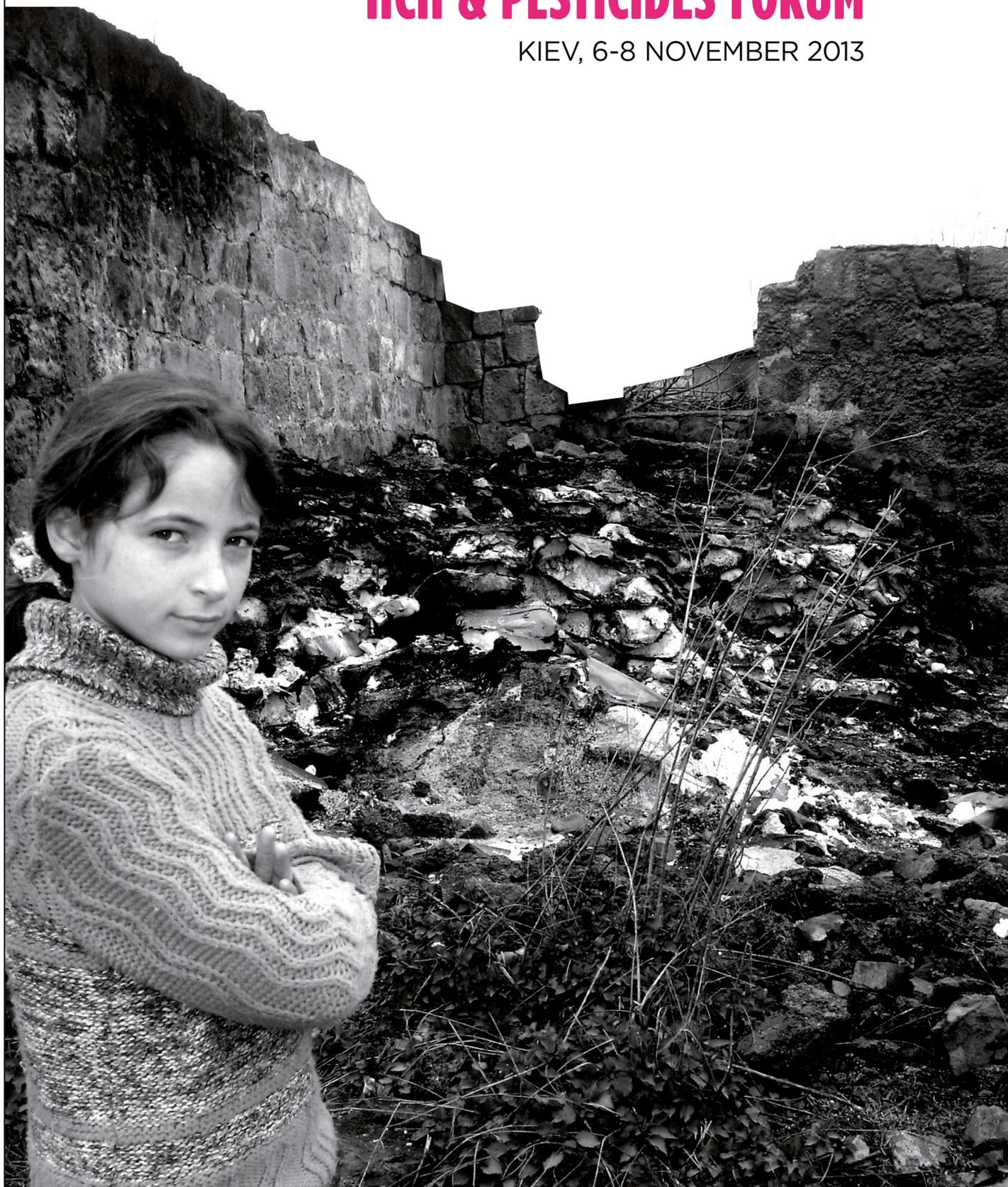


KEY MESSAGES 12TH INTERNATIONAL HCH & PESTICIDES FORUM

KIEV, 6-8 NOVEMBER 2013



Introduction

This booklet summarizes the outcomes of the 12th International HCH and Pesticides Forum held in Kiev, Ukraine, 6-8th November 2013.

It presents the background for the Forum and the Forum Declaration, which was read out and fully endorsed by all participants.

Furthermore, the booklet contains important statements from the Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Ukraine, Mr. **Oleg Proskuryakov**, the Minister of Environment of the Republic of Moldova Mr. **Gheorghe Şalaru**, the European Commissioner to the Environment Mr. **Janez Potočnik**, and the State Secretary on Health Protection of Slovenia, Ms. **Brigita Čokl**, who all addressed the Forum and emphasised the urgency of finding proper solutions to the elimination of obsolete pesticides in the region.

We trust that this report can contribute to the efforts of the authorities to develop better policies and strategies to the obsolete pesticides issues, their impacts on public health, the ecosystem and the National Economies and to promote continued and accelerated action.

For more information on the subject, please visit our website on www.ihpa.info.

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission, Food and Agriculture Organisation, the Global Environment Facility and United Nations Environment Programme.

Forum Sponsors

The International HCH and Pesticides Forum in Kiev was sponsored by:

the European Union through the project “Improving capacities to eliminate and prevent recurrence of obsolete pesticides as a model for tackling unused hazardous chemicals in the former Soviet Union”, FAO, the GEF-UNEP-WHO Project “Demonstrating and Scaling-up of Sustainable Alternatives to DDT in Vector Management Global Programme”, GreenTox, Switzerland, SI Group Consort Ltd., Israel

EDL, New Zealand, Federal Environment Agency of Germany (UBA), Free University of Berlin, Germany, POLYECO S.A., Greece, PortService, Poland, SAVA, Germany, TREDI, France, Veolia, United Kingdom.

IHPA is grateful for the support given from all companies and organisations. Your support facilitated the 12th Forum in Kiev. This enabled easy access for Regional experts to travel to Kiev and to participate in the discussions. Thank you all.

The 12th International HCH and Pesticides Forum

The 12th International HCH and Pesticides Forum created a platform for discussing the national and regional strategies, action plans and financial resources for elimination of obsolete pesticides with a special focus on the need for accelerated action. Valuable scientific results and best practices were exchanged; and the progress in the Ukraine was showcased, emphasizing the importance of Government determination and focus.

On November 6 – 8th the 12th Forum on HCH and Pesticides Forum was held in Kiev, Ukraine with participation of more than 220 experts from more than 40 countries.

The 12th Forum brought together governments, international financing institutions, UN agencies, representatives from EU institutions, IGOs, NGOs, academia and the private sector for further exchange of information and possible cooperation among countries, experts, institutions and donors. The Forum was initiated and enabled by the International HCH and Pesticides Association (IHPA) in order to follow up on the progress since the 11th Forum in Gabala, Republic of Azerbaijan in 2011.

The Forum was hosted by the Ministry of Ecology & Natural Resources of the Ukraine, and the participants expressed their gratitude to the Ministry for its hospitality and generous contribution in organizing this Forum.

The sessions during the Forum were launched by high-level discussions on framework conditions and followed by various thematic technical sessions. At the high level session three panel discussions were organised; a political panel discussion, a panel discussion with industry and private investors representatives; and a panel discussion with representatives of the most important International Financing Institutions (IFIs).

High-level discussions

The political session included a statement by the Minister of Environment of the Republic of Moldova, Mr. Gheorghe Şalaru, as well as positions from the EU Delegation in Ukraine, Mr. Jean-Francois Moret and the Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety of the European Parliament, Mr. Dan Jørgensen. They all expressed their political commitment and stated their support for further action.

In the industrial session, the representatives included Mr. Ilya Marchewsky from SI Group Israel, Chairman, Mr. Thomas Vandenbrouque from Tredi International, Mr. Jean-Francois Nogrette, Veolia and CEO of SARP Industries group. The participants discussed barriers and potentials. They expressed their willingness for investment in regional facilities and clean up technologies and stressed the need for a clear legal framework and political will to ensure a regulated and transparent market for obsolete pesticides (and other hazardous waste) treatment and elimination.

The last panel discussion focussed on the role of the major IFIs. Their representatives included Mr. Ibrahima Sow from the GEF, Dr. Kevin Helps from FAO and Dr. David Piper from UNEP. All representatives ensured the availability of support to well-prepared and Government supported projects.

The High-level discussion was followed by thematic technical sessions including all key issues related to Persistent Organic Pollutants and their impact on human health, the ecosystem and economy, including the consequences of non-action. Among others, IHPA launched a new approach to quantifying the socio-economic damages and losses, and will with this approach work for a more comprehensive assessment of the impacts from obsolete pesticides. It is expected that the

outcomes of this approach will also make the international community better aware of the huge economic effects and will lead to both acceleration and a higher level of ambition to eradicate obsolete pesticides.

It is time to accelerate action

By John Vijgen, Director IHPA

For decades obsolete pesticides have contaminated the soil and water destroying natural resources with large consequences for human health, ecosystems and national economies.

The adoption of the Stockholm Convention in 2001 was an important step in the direction towards a pesticide free future.

However, after more than ten years with the Stockholm convention, initiatives to eliminate stocks in EECCA-region have turned out to develop slowly, amongst other due to lack of technical capacity and funding.

Non-action is too expensive

Our collective effort has proven to be too slim and too uncoordinated to mitigate the growing pollution caused by obsolete pesticides.

Today we still see persistent organic pollutants migrating into the environment, and that problems we thought were contained, have grown 20-30 times or more of the original extent. Economic losses of an export ban caused by pesticide residuals in food are measured in billions of euros. It is obvious that clean up is more cost-effective.

Signs of improvements in EECCA-region

However, important initiatives in obsolete pesticides elimination have been taken.

When looking at the region, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova stand out in their determination to advance. But also other countries make progress. Russia has recently ratified the Stockholm Convention, technical capacities

have been built in Azerbaijan and collection and long-term storage of obsolete pesticides have taken place in Turkmenistan. Moldova and Azerbaijan have started to conduct detailed mapping of obsolete pesticides in soil and water in areas where pesticides previously have been stored.

Much more should be done to combat further spreading of persistent organic pollutants into the environment.

Damages and Losses

To support national governments, IHPA proposes a new approach that combines identification of damages and quantification of the economic losses of non-action.

The 'damages and losses' methodology assesses the cost of different types of damages, including increased illness, loss of life, failing ecosystem services and polluted agricultural products.

This new approach ensures transparency in decision-making, and will enable benchmarking and accelerate private sector investment in the required environmental infrastructure.

Outlook - upcoming tasks

Building on the 12th Forum declaration there is a crucial need in the years to come for all EECCA-governments to prioritize obsolete pesticides at national level and to prepare clear plans for obsolete pesticides elimination, including appropriate policies and legal enforcement.

The ongoing EU financed FAO project on 'Improving capacities to eliminate and prevent recurrence of obsolete pesticides as a model for tackling unused hazardous chemicals in the former Soviet Union' is a new milestone as it addresses as well management of obsolete pesticides as sustainable agriculture production practices. This project is a beacon and its implementation should be ensured and followed up in all countries.

Only by building destruction capacities in the Region, the countries will be able to manage the elimination of obsolete pesticides themselves. This is therefore an important priority – a MUST!

The European Union, international agencies and financing institutions therefore also play a pivotal role in supporting, assisting and accelerating clean up initiatives planned and taken by national governments.

And continuation of awareness raising and capacity building is a pre-condition for success.

The next Forum is planned to take place in Aragon (Spain) in 2015.

I am looking forward to seeing you there.

It is simply time to accelerate action!

FORUM DECLARATION

8 November 2013

12th International HCH and Pesticides Forum Kiev, Ukraine 6-8 November 2013

The International HCH and Pesticides Forum having met at Kiev from 6-8 November 2013, has taken note of the overall slow progress of elimination of obsolete pesticides, its negative impact on countries socio-economic performance, its severe adverse effects on health and quality of life, as well as its far-reaching consequences to neighbours and shared water resources.

The 12th Forum gathered more than 220 experts, who shared their knowledge and experience and expressed their continuous commitment to awareness raising and cleanup of obsolete pesticides in the EECCA-region.

Accordingly, the 12th Forum decided to call upon Governments in the region, the European Union, the international organizations, financial institutions, the local NGO's and the civil society to recognize the existence of approx. 240.000 tonnes of obsolete pesticides in the region, and the need to accelerate action and create the required policies and infrastructure to support the objectives of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

The following is drawn up based on the discussion and recommendations from the Forum participants.

Call upon all *National Governments* to

1. Establish an open and transparent dialogue on all levels of society, i.e. political, scientific and public level in order to recognise the damages and required actions needed for elimination of obsolete pesticides wastes.
2. Based on the above, develop and implement the required policies and legal enforcement including action plans to eliminate obsolete pesticides wastes in a sustainable manner.
3. Understand the increasing negative socio-economic and human health impacts of non-action and the associated damages and losses, and explain the urgency of the issues in international fora and in bilateral negotiation.
4. Allocate funds for awareness raising through media and education as well as to advance sustainable technologies for elimination of obsolete pesticides wastes in an environmental sound manner (SBC guideline).
5. Work with FAO to ensure the adoption of sustainable agriculture production practices in order to avoid accumulation of obsolete pesticides in the future and to ensure that natural resources such as soil and water are preserved for future generations

6. Strengthen the national environmental institutions, build capacity through training programs and ensure that existing capacities are maintained.

Calls upon the *European Union* to recognise that non-action has immediate and long-term negative consequences to the European Community and the European economy, and specifically call upon

7. The European Parliament to assist the Parliamentarians in the EECCA region in developing and implementing policies to eliminate obsolete pesticides wastes in an environmental sound manner, and to request the European Commission to make the necessary funding available.
8. The European Commission to build on the project 'Improving capacities to eliminate and prevent recurrence of obsolete pesticides as a model for tackling unused hazardous chemicals in the former Soviet Union (FAO/GCP /RER/040/EC)' and lead a regional action plan for elimination of obsolete pesticides wastes in partnership with the EU member states and the private sector; and to prevent new obsolete pesticides wastes.
9. To allocate funds for building awareness in support of NGOs, other citizens organisations and related institutions.

Call upon the *International Organisations and Financial Institutions* to

10. Enhance the capacities of the countries through coordinated technical assistance
11. Facilitate the Governments action planning especially within harmonisation for a regional approach and cooperation
12. Assist countries in assessing the damages and losses in economic terms base on an agreed methodology and in financing urgent projects
13. Allocate funds for implementation of action plans and related projects, and to question countries that are not implementing their approved national implementation plans (NIP)

Specifically call upon,

14. The GEF to continue support the elimination of Obsolete and POPs pesticides by co-funding a regional facility for the treatment of Obsolete and POPs pesticides

Call upon local NGOs and the civil society to

15. Continue their large effort in creating political pressure and raise awareness of the importance to eliminate obsolete pesticides in the environment, food cycle and human bodies and to follow-up on Government policies and assist in their implementation.

The 12th Forum recognised the effort of IHPA as an important contributor in building awareness at governments and civil society in the EECCA region, and urged the organisation to continue working towards the fulfilment of the objectives of Stockholm Convention and in bringing together scientists, industry and policy-makers of the Region.

After this declaration had been read out, the Forum participants spontaneously confirmed their dedication to the eradication of obsolete pesticides and requested IHPA to ask the addressees of this declaration to join their acts of commitment.

Kiev, 8th November 2013

Message from the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine O.A. Proskuryakov

SPEECH OF THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF UKRAINE O.A. Proskuryakov

AT THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE 12th CONFERENCE
OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR PESTICIDES AND CHLORINATED ORGANICS

On behalf of the Government of Ukraine I welcome all the participants and guests of the 12th Forum of International Association for Pesticides and Chlorinated Organics in Kyiv!

Waste management is one of the most pressing environmental challenges. This issue is also under special control of the Government of Ukraine. Therefore, finding ways of solving the problem of accumulation of obsolete pesticides and other persistent organic pollutants in Central and Eastern Europe, and other countries, is now extremely urgent for the international community and nation states.

The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine considers cooperation with international organizations, institutions and other partners in this area to be one of the preferred directions in its activity. Our absolute priority is fulfilling obligations under:

- Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal;
- Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent on Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

Given the urgency of solving the problems in this area, the Ministry developed a draft National Waste Management Programme for the years of 2013-2020, which will soon be introduced by the Government to the Parliament of Ukraine.

The Ministry also actively works towards practical measures aimed at clearing the state territory off the places of hazardous wastes storage. The main attention is paid to the most resonant and environmentally dangerous places.

Let's see some examples and figures. Over the past three years the following was removed from Ukraine:

- mixture «Premix», which was illegally imported to the territory of Zakarpattya Region, – 1300 tons;
- obsolete pesticides – over 26 thousand tons;
- hexachlorobenzene wastes from the landfill of toxic industrial wastes in Kalush District of Ivano-Frankivsk Region – over 21 thousand tons;

- mononitrochlorobenzene wastes from the territory of the State Enterprise "Gorlovskij Chemical Plant" – over 2700 tons.
- Beryllium containing wastes from the territory of the State Scientific and Production Enterprise "Zahid" (Kyiv) – 320 tons.

Implementation of these measures significantly improved the ecological status of the territories and allowed to relieve social tension among the population.

Ministry will subsequently continue carrying out these important works with wide involvement of private business.

For proper legal regulation and creation of conditions for the application of best practices in this field, we now carry out a series of activities under National Programme of Adaptation of Ukraine's Legislation to EU Laws.

Several draft resolutions of the Government on the implementation of the relevant European directives concerning the treatment of various types of wastes were prepared.

We also welcome the initiatives of enterprises, which impact the environment in their activity, on reducing emissions, waste generation.

The national system of governance in the field of chemical safety is based on the principles of preventive response and "polluter pays full price." This will prevent environmental degradation and reduce the negative impact of hazardous chemical contaminants on the health of the citizens of our country.

Dear Colleagues!

I am strongly convinced that only by working together and with the widest participation of representatives of academia, business and the public we can minimize the impact of modern technological civilization upon the environment and preserve our planet for future generations.

Once again I want to emphasize that our Ministry is open for new initiatives and ready to give every assistance possible.

Thank you for your attention and wish you fruitful work!

Message from the Minister of Environment of the Republic of Moldova, Gheorghe Șalaru

**12th International HCH and Pesticides Forum
6-8 November 2013, Kiev, Ukraine**

**Gheorghe Șalaru
Minister of Environment
Republic of Moldova**

Opening speech

Dear Colleagues,

Let me greet you, participants in the 12th International HCH and Pesticides Forum and wish you success in your noble mission to reduce and eliminate the danger faced by our countries in the last decades, due to the accumulated stocks of obsolete pesticides and other hazardous chemicals and wastes.

The 12th Forum is remarkable also for the fact that after 10 years he again is held in Kiev, and this is another important point to summarize what has been done during this time in this area and outline the prospects for the coming years.

The problem of obsolete pesticides in Moldova started to manifest itself, as in other former soviet republics, in the 70-80s of last century, in the period of intense chemicalization of agriculture. In our country, with a predominantly agricultural industry, a relatively small area and high population density (34 thousand square km and about 4 million people), this problem has taken a very large proportion. At that time Moldova imported annually up to 40 thousand tons of pesticides, unutilized balances of which were accumulating from year to year. The first attempt to solve this problem was made in the 70s, when in the south of Moldova was built a special landfill for pesticides wastes. During 12 years, until 1987, there had been buried about 4,000 tons of pesticides, including DDT and HCH. Currently, this object is guarded and under constant monitoring.

Especially acute the problem of obsolete pesticides has become in the 1990s, when as a result of changes in property relationship that have occurred in society, including in agriculture, most pesticides warehouses ownerless and began to decay. In many of them obsolete pesticides were stored. By 2000, these objects left about 350 and the quantities of pesticide waste kept in them were estimated at 1,770 tons.

To solve this problem, since 1997 several attempts have been made by the Government of Moldova, but only after special decision (№ 1543), adopted in November 2002, actions began. Several ministries (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Defense, Emergency Situations Service) and all regional and local authorities have been involved in this work. Funds for repackaging and centralized storage of obsolete pesticides have been allocated from the state budget and from the National Environmental Fund.

At the same time, the Republic of Moldova acceded to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, committing themselves to reduce and remove the risks associated with POPs. This fact opened up opportunities for support in addressing these issues by the international funds. Thus, all subsequent steps in this direction have been carried out on the basis of funds allocated by the government and with significant support from abroad (World Bank and the Global Environment

Fund, NATO, UNEP, OSCE, the Governments of Canada, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic etc.).

By 2008, all known stocks of obsolete pesticides were repackaged and temporarily stored in secure conditions. In 37 warehouses were stored about 3,350 tons of pesticides waste.

Simultaneously began the process of their export abroad and destruction. From 2007 to 2013, in the framework of two projects implemented by the Ministry of Environment about 1,500 tons of pesticides have been eliminated. This process continues within the five projects started this year, funded by the Czech Government, NATO, OSCE, FAO and the National Environmental Fund. As estimated, by the end of 2015 all stocks of obsolete pesticides stored in warehouses will have been removed.

These results have been made possible thanks to the constant attention drawn by the Government to address these problems, continuing support of the international organizations and governments of some developed countries, as well as to active participation in this process of involved ministries, local authorities and civil society.

At the same time, despite significant progress in addressing issues related to obsolete pesticides, there are still a lot of problems both in the region as a whole and in each country separately. Some of them require immediate actions, the other can be resolved gradually, spreading efforts and resources depending on the seriousness of the problems and priorities of each country.

For Moldova it is, first of all, the removal of stocks of pesticides stored in warehouses, and we have all the chances to complete this process by the end of 2015. After that the removal of 4,000 tons of pesticides buried in the south of the country, near the borders with Ukraine and Romania should be followed. Here we intend to work closely with our neighbors.

In parallel an extensive work on updating, development and implementation of national legislation in the field of chemical products and bring it in line with European and international standards are being conducted.

We should develop and implement a series of national programs to clean up areas contaminated by pesticides, including POP pesticides. These are mostly the former warehouses of chemicals and other objects used in the past in agriculture. Their number is about 1,600.

There are still many problems associated with other hazardous chemicals and wastes, particularly PCBs, chemical waste in scientific and university laboratories, industrial plants, etc. All these issues also need to be assessed and solved in a single package of measures on reducing the negative impact of chemicals on the environment and human health.

In this sense, the Government of the Republic of Moldova, and in particular the Ministry of Environment, will continue to make substantial efforts to achieve the goals set out in this area, and are counting on the continued support of the international community and on enhancing the regional cooperation. Also, we consider the continuation of cooperation with our partners in the country, and primarily with the central executive authorities concerned and involved in these processes – the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Economy, as well as with district and local authorities, and civil society.

Message from the State Secretary of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Slovenia
Mrs. Brigita Čokl



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Štefanova ulica 5, 1000 Ljubljana

T: +386 1 478 60 01

F: +386 1 478 60 58

E: gp.mz@gov.si

www.mz.gov.si

John Vijgen
Elmevej 14
DK-2840 Holte
Denmark

Number: 510-94/2013/33

Date: 25. 10. 2013

Subject: **STATE SECRETARY'S SPEECH AT THE 12TH MEETING OF THE HCH FORUM, 6 - 8 NOVEMBER 2013**

Dear participants of the 12th meeting of the HCH Forum,

I regret not being able to be with you in person, but I ensure you that my colleagues and I follow all your activities in this very important field of work.

Slovenia has been supporting the disposal of obsolete pesticides since the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety. Among its other tasks, the Forum, established in Stockholm in 1994, also strove for the disposal of obsolete chemicals and reduction of pesticide risks¹. In the years thereafter, Slovenia followed and actively participated in activities in this field. Thus in 2000, we participated at the OECD and partners' Workshop on Obsolete Pesticides in Alexandria, Virginia². The workshop discussed obsolete pesticides and other obsolete chemicals on the global level. At the workshop, Slovenia presented its efforts to manage the problem of obsolete pesticides at the national level and also established contacts with the International HCH and Pesticides Association (IHPA) and its director John Vijgen. The work of this non-governmental organization is very important, and I thus sincerely congratulate the IHPA on its persistence and current achievements.

Slovenia actively cooperates with the HCH Forum, and we also contributed two ambassadors to promote the issue of obsolete pesticides and other obsolete chemicals.

Although Slovenia succeeded in eliminating obsolete pesticides, we are aware that the problem will not be resolved merely with their disposal. On the contrary, we must strive to prevent the accumulation of such stock in the future. We are also aware that the issue has not yet been resolved in our region or globally.

¹ http://www.iisd.ca/process/chemical_management-ifcsintro.html

² <http://www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety/pesticides-biocides/2076941.pdf>

At a time when we are witnessing climate change and are faced with its consequences, such as extensive flooding, and fires due to drought, and when floods and droughts are becoming more frequent, the danger of these old burdens is even greater. Hazardous substances and their metabolites are spread over greater areas during floods and fires. These also include substances which are known to have dreadful consequences for human health and also for future generations. The endocrine disrupting chemicals to which I am referring may already be poisonous in extreme small quantities.

And what can be done? Our task is to recognize these threats, acknowledge them and speedily address their resolution. Slovenia welcomes the role of the European Commission, FAO, UNEP and others who have approached the great project in this field.

I would also like to say that Slovenia participated at the first briefing related to this issue in the European Parliament on 29 June 2010, when we presented the then new Resolution on improvement of health through sound management of obsolete pesticides and other obsolete chemicals. At a Slovenian initiative, the Resolution was adopted at the 63rd meeting of the General Assembly of the World Health Organization, on 10 May 2010 in Geneva. This Resolution serves as the foundation for the active cooperation of all relevant stakeholders, such as governments, the European Commission, WHO, UNEP and others. The Resolution also realized one of the main recommendations adopted at the aforementioned OECD-FAO-UNEP Workshop in 2000, i.e. "more active participation of the medical community and the World Health Organization".

Furthermore, the issue of obsolete pesticides and particularly hazardous chemicals was included in the EU Danube Strategy (Chapters IV and VI) at a Slovenian initiative.

Dear ladies and gentlemen, esteemed participants of the HCH Forum,

it is our responsibility to suitably define the issue of obsolete pesticides and other obsolete chemicals and to ensure the implementation of all the documents already adopted.

To conclude, I wish to stress again that the issue of obsolete pesticides and other obsolete chemicals is extremely important to Slovenia, although the country is not affected by these issues at the moment.

We are nevertheless aware that this problem affects us all, and we will do our best to further support measures in order to eliminate this problem permanently.

We were planning to hold the meeting now being held in Kiev, in Slovenia, but this unfortunately was not possible.

Therefore, I sincerely thank Ukraine, the host of the meeting, and wish much inspiration for the participants and the best possible outcome of the meeting.

With Regards,



Brigita ČOKL
State Secretary

Message from the Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik

JANEZ POTOČNIK

Member of the European Commission

Brussels, 18. 10. 2013
Ref. Ares(2013)

Message from Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik to participants at the 12th International HCH and Pesticides Forum, 6-8 November 2013, Kyiv

Dear participants,

I regret that I am not able to attend this gathering to discuss and reflect on the major problem of obsolete pesticides due to institutional obligations that require my participation. That does not mean that I do not put attention to this issue.

Dealing with dangers posed to the health of people and the environment by obsolete pesticides is an enormous challenge for many countries, especially in Eastern parts of Europe and Central Asia.

Many activities have been launched to better understand the problem, to address the causes and to engage the relevant parties in cleaning up sites where obsolete pesticides and other dangerous chemicals are stored. But much remains to be done. This requires co-operation between governments, who are responsible for the well-being of their citizens; the agricultural sector, which is the main user of pesticides, and thirdly the pesticides industry, which has the knowledge and means to promote better alternatives.

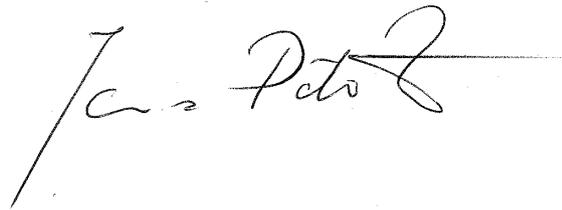
I would particularly like to express my appreciation to the International HCH and Pesticides Association for their persistent efforts to solve the problem. Together with FAO, UNEP, UNDP, UNIDO, World Bank and many other organisations, the Association has managed to make people aware of the dangers posed by obsolete pesticides, initiating actions that have brought tangible results. I encourage you to continue your work.

The European Commission is in regular dialogue with partner countries to promote solutions to this problem. We are encouraging legislative reforms to address issues related to the management of obsolete pesticides stocks – the causes that have led to their accumulation – and preventing the problem from recurring in the future. In this context, we are supporting an international project in Eastern Europe and Central Asia to enhance the countries' capacity to eliminate obsolete pesticides stocks. We hope that this project, by bringing together donors and stimulating investment to phase out stocks of obsolete pesticides, will have a snowball effect in the future.

As the title of this project reminds us, "prevention" and "elimination" are both equally important. Preventing waste, including hazardous waste, is the first principle of any sound waste policy, and it applies to pesticides production and usage as well. Adopting legislation and policies that aim at achieving sustainable management practices covering the entire pesticide life-cycle is therefore crucial.

I hope you have a fruitful discussion and that your deliberations over the coming days will pave the way for successful measures to phase out obsolete pesticides right across Europe and Central Asia.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jan Peter", with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

About the International HCH and Pesticides Forum

The International HCH and Pesticides Forum represents a platform for discussion between stakeholders of all kinds, working on implementation of projects related to POPs, obsolete pesticides and hazardous chemical waste. It acts as a catalyst in the exchange of information for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention and other chemicals-related multilateral environmental agreements, and the environmentally sound management of pesticides, pesticide waste and other chemicals, and has today developed into an important event for national as well as international decision-makers and stakeholders

History of the International HCH and Pesticides Forum

The first International HCH and Pesticides Forum took place in 1992 in Provincie Overijssel - Zwolle in The Netherlands. Since 1992 the Forum has been organised 12 times and creates a platform for discussing the national and regional strategies, action plans and financial resources for elimination of obsolete pesticides with a special focus on the need for action.

Forum Mission Statement

Obsolete pesticides are not only an environmental problem. Much more it stands in the way of socio-economic development, impacts both the quality of life resulting in human health problems and economic losses. The vision of the International HCH and Pesticides Forum is a world free of obsolete pesticides.

The Forum mission is therefore continuously to ensure that the elimination of obsolete pesticides is on the global agenda by having bi-annual meetings for exchange of information and review of results.

About IHPA

The International HCH & Pesticides Association (IHPA) is an independent and non-political network of committed individuals that wants to draw international attention to the worldwide problems stemming from the production and use of HCH and other obsolete pesticides and its dangers for human health and the environment.

Visit our website www.ihpa.info or contact IHPA, director John Vijgen john.vijgen@ihpa.info for more information