

## **STOCKHOLM CONVENTION ON PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS (POPs)**

The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has signed the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants on 23 May 2001, after actively taking part in the negotiation process leading to the final Convention.

Bangladesh has cancelled the registration of all POPs pesticides, in fact all authorizations for chlorinated hydrocarbons for pesticide use have been withdrawn. In addition to this, the government has listed fifteen pesticides as being banned, namely: BHC, Chlordane, DDT, Dieldrin, Dicrotophos, Disulfoton, Endrin, Ethyl Parathion, Isobenzene, Methyl Parathion, Methyl Bromide, Mercury Compound, Methoxychlor, Posmet, Phospamidin, Monocrotophos, Kalthane. The last POPs pesticide in use, Heptachlor, was banned in 1996.

The production of DDT was discontinued in the 1991. It is believed that the stockpiles and any additional imports from this time have been consumed although there are some reports of illegal import and use of DDT in the northern border areas. Also the use of DDT as a dried fish preservative in Chittagong has been reported. There are indications that some DDT might have been used in public health (spraying of hospitals) until fairly recently.

There is no data on possible stockpiles of POPs. No major stockpiles of the pesticide POPs are expected to be in the countryside, as the pesticide legislation requires importers, manufacturers and distributors to take back outdated pesticides. However stockpiles might exist among the farmers, industrial users (heptachlor in sugar mills) and dumps without clear ownership.

No assessment of the extent of PCB use has been conducted. PCBs are banned under the Pesticide Rules of 1985, which is the main legal instrument for restricting hazardous chemicals. The ban covers all uses of PCBs including electric transformers and other equipment. There is still a large quantity of transformers and capacitors containing PCBs oils in use. There are some oils stored in the maintenance facilities of power distributors waiting to be re-used. There are reports of contamination of cooking oil by PCBs oils.

There exists no legislation on dioxins and furans in Bangladesh. The main legal vehicle, which would be relevant for releases of dioxins and furans, is The Environment Conservation Act of 1995 and its Amendment of 2000. This legislation gives a mandate to the overall quality of air and water, but does not explicitly mention dioxins and furans.

To date no attempts have been made for assessing the main sources of dioxins and furan emissions or indeed the quantity of these emissions. Open pit burning of waste is a common practice as well as using of high chlorine fuel, such as old rubber tires, in combustion processes like brick making and alike. Some industries with potentially substantial releases of dioxins and furans, like smelters, paper and cement industry, exist in Bangladesh.

No concerted efforts have been made to identify contaminated sites in the country be they POPs or other hazardous substances. The municipal corporations and community-based organizations would have in some cases knowledge of potentially contaminated sites.

The Environmental Conservation Act of 1995 gives the broad responsibility on chemical safety and releases to Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF). The Department therefore has to regulate hazardous waste and contaminated sites according to the framework of the Environmental Conservation Act. In the past Bangladesh's environmental policy including its strategy towards phasing out persistent toxic substances had made large strides initially in 1971 and then again 1985. The Ministry of Agriculture and the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) are the relevant authorities dealing with authorisation and enforcement of The Pesticide Ordinance 1971 and Pesticide Rules 1985.

As a signatory of the Stockholm Convention on POPs, Bangladesh is supposed to prepare its National Implementation Plan for Phase-out of POPs. GEF has come forward to help Bangladesh to do the job through the project titled "Preparation of the POPs National Implementation Plan under the Stockholm Convention". The overall objective of the project is to prepare the National Implementation Plan for phase-out of the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and development of POPs management options as an effective response measures to achieve Stockholm Convention objectives. The Department of Environment (DOE) will be the Lead Implementing Agency in the project and the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and Power Development Board will be the co-implementing agencies.