



Fourth meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 (IP4)

Bucharest, Romania, 29 August – 2 September 2022

Nairobi, Kenya, 27 February – 3 March 2023*

A Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides

Note by the secretariat

1. The annex to the present note contains the document entitled “*A Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides*”. The document presented in the annex was submitted by Africa Region. The annex has not been formally edited.

* The fourth meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 (IP4) was held from 29 August to 2 September 2022 in Bucharest, Romania. The meeting was adjourned on 2 September 2022 and will be resumed from 27 February to 3 March 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Annex*: A Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides

Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs) have been recognized as an issue of concern but progress has been slow and uneven. Low – and middle – income countries (LMICs) still face many challenges and need more support. Increased, concerted global action is urgently needed. A multi-stakeholder mechanism is required to scale up global action on HHPs.

It is proposed that a Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides be convened under the new SAICM/Beyond 2020 instrument to mobilise and coordinate the efforts of the range of stakeholders, to achieve a global phase-out of HHPs and the adoption of more sustainable alternatives. A draft resolution for adoption at the next International Conference on Chemical Management (ICCM5) is proposed in Annex 1. The concept of a coordinated Global Action Plan on HHPs is widely supported by governments, industry and civil society¹.

While all pesticides can be dangerous, Highly Hazardous Pesticides² are of particular concern due to the severe adverse effects they cause to human health and the environment. They constitute a relatively small share of all pesticides registered globally, and yet they cause the most harm. There is particular concern in low – and middle – income countries (LMICs) where they have the most impacts.³

Highly Hazardous Pesticides cause adverse social, environmental and economic effects that undermine the achievement of sustainable development. Exposure to HHPs is “a major public health concern”.⁴ About 385 million cases of non-fatal, unintentional pesticide poisoning and approximately 11,000 fatalities occur every year. Furthermore, 1 to 2 million cases of self-poisoning occur annually, resulting in approximately 168,000 deaths.⁵ The vast majority of cases are in LMICs.

Highly Hazardous Pesticides harm biodiversity and ecosystem services on which agricultural productivity depends.⁶ HHPs have been linked to significant declines in terrestrial insect and vertebrate species and adversely affect pollination and natural pest control.⁷

Highly Hazardous Pesticides have been recognised as “a global human rights concern”,⁸ and their use is linked to proven violations of a range of human rights including the right to life and the prohibition of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment⁹. They impact on the right to health, the right to food and the right to a

* The annex has not been formally edited.

¹ SAICM Community of Practice on HHPs discussion digest 21st October 2020, ‘Overview of the HHP Global Action Plan and way forward’ [SAICM UCT HHP CoP Digest of the Global Action Plan Discussion 21 10 2020 docx 2 AR_is.docx \(saicmknowledge.org\)](#)

² HHPs are defined by the [International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management](#) as pesticides that are acknowledged to present particularly high levels of acute or chronic hazards to health or environment according to internationally accepted hazard classification systems such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) or the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS), or their listing in relevant binding international agreements or conventions. In addition, pesticides that appear to cause severe or irreversible harm to health or the environment under conditions of use in a country may be considered to be and treated as highly hazardous.

³ FAO/WHO 2019, [Detoxifying agriculture and health from highly hazardous pesticides](#)

⁴ WHO 2019, [Exposure to highly hazardous pesticides: a major public health concern](#)

⁵ UNEP 2021, Environmental and health impacts of pesticides and fertilizers and ways of minimizing them, [Summary for policy maker](#)

⁶ FAO 2019, [The State of the World’s Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture](#)

⁷ UNEP 2021, Environmental and health impacts of pesticides and fertilizers and ways of minimizing them, [Summary for policy maker](#)

⁸ HCR 2017, [Pesticides are “global human rights concern”](#)

⁹ Human Rights Committee (2019) Views adopted by the Committee under article 5 (4) of the Optional Protocol, concerning communication No. 2751/2016

healthy environment and they put certain groups at elevated risk of rights abuses, including women and children.

Highly Hazardous Pesticides undermine farmers' and agricultural workers' health and safety at work, which the International Labour Conference recognised as a fundamental principle and right in June 2022.¹⁰ It is estimated that one worker dies at least every 30 seconds from exposure to hazardous pesticides and other toxic chemicals.¹¹

With adequate investment in scaling up alternatives, especially ecological options for pest management, Highly Hazardous Pesticides can be phased out from agriculture.¹² HHPs have been successfully phased out from agriculture in a number of countries without affecting agricultural productivity.¹³ National bans on HHPs are a cost-effective and affordable intervention for reducing deaths and harm from pesticide poisoning.¹⁴

In 2015, SAICM's Fourth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM4) adopted a resolution that recognised Highly Hazardous Pesticides as an issue of concern.¹⁵ The Conference recognised that HHPs "cause adverse human health and environmental effects in many countries, particularly in low-income and middle-income countries", and called for "concerted action to address Highly Hazardous Pesticides in the context of the Strategic Approach".

Countries have taken action and phased out or restricted many Highly Hazardous Pesticides at national level.¹⁶ International organisations have implemented joint activities and developed different instruments to support countries to address HHPs, including conventions, and codes of conduct, roadmaps and guidelines produced under the joint leadership of FAO and WHO.¹⁷ The International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management recognises the shared responsibility of many sectors and the need for a cooperative effort.¹⁸ Civil society stakeholders¹⁹ and the pesticide industry²⁰ have taken action to address HHPs.

Yet progress on Highly Hazardous Pesticides has been far too slow and LMICs face many urgent challenges.²¹ Legislation in many countries still lacks special provisions for HHPs, for example to prohibit or restrict their use. Many countries also lack the necessary human and financial resources to effectively implement national pesticide legislation or health and safety legislation, and they face high levels of illegal trafficking of illicit pesticides. Furthermore, other issues around HHPs, including disposal of stockpiles and used pesticide containers as well as availability and accessibility of alternatives to HHPs pose significant challenges.²²

Concerted international action is urgently needed, including through partnerships among governments, intergovernmental organisations, civil society organisations, pesticide manufacturers, farmers' organisations and agricultural workers' trade unions, to address these challenges and provide support for LMICs.²³ This is necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including substantially

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/126/D/2751/2016&Lang=en

¹⁰ ILO 2022, [A safe and healthy working environment is a fundamental principle and right at work](#)

¹¹ HRC 2019, [Principles on human rights and the protection of workers from exposure to toxic substances](#)

¹² FAO/WHO 2019, [Detoxifying agriculture and health from highly hazardous pesticides](#)

¹³ FAO/WHO 2019, [Detoxifying agriculture and health from highly hazardous pesticides](#)

¹⁴ WHO/FAO 2020, [Preventing suicide: a resource for pesticide registrars and regulators](#)

¹⁵ SAICM 2015, [Report of the International Conference on Chemicals Management on the work of its fourth session](#)

¹⁶ PAN International 2022, [Consolidated List of Banned Pesticides](#)

¹⁷ UNEP 2020, [An Assessment Report on Issues of Concern](#)

¹⁸ WHO/FAO 2014, [International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management](#)

¹⁹ UNEP 2019, [Global Chemicals Outlook II Part II – From Legacies to Innovative Solutions: Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

²⁰ CropLife, [A Responsible Approach to Highly Hazardous Pesticides](#)

²¹ UNEP 2020, [An Assessment Report on Issues of Concern](#)

²² UNEP 2020, [An Assessment Report on Issues of Concern](#)

²³ UNEP 2020, [An Assessment Report on Issues of Concern](#)

reducing the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination by 2030 (SDG 3.9).

A Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides should be established by the next International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) to promote a global phase out of HHPs and the adoption of safer and more sustainable alternatives. It should be convened as a voluntary, collaborative and multi-stakeholder initiative under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The Global Alliance should be open to all interested stakeholders, including governments, intergovernmental organisations, non-governmental organisations, farmers' organisations, trade unions, indigenous people's organisations, private sector and sustainability standards. Stakeholders willing to become members of the Global Alliance should commit to its overall goal and objectives, and provide information on the specific experience, capabilities and activities that may be offered in support of the Global Alliance.

Annex 1: Draft resolution on Highly Hazardous Pesticides

The Conference,

Mindful of the overarching goal of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, as set out in its paragraph 23, of aiming to achieve, by 2020, that chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimisation of significant adverse impacts on human health and the environment, and of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015,

Recalling the resolution adopted at the Fourth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM4) that recognised Highly Hazardous Pesticides as an Issue of Concern and called for “concerted action to address Highly Hazardous Pesticides in the context of the Strategic Approach”,

Building on the proposal presented by FAO at the Third Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the International Conference on Chemicals Management to scale up efforts to address highly hazardous pesticides globally, in collaboration with UNDP, UNEP, WHO and others ²⁴

Recognizing that highly hazardous pesticides cause adverse human health and environmental effects in many countries, particularly in low-income and middle-income countries

Welcoming the UN Human Rights Council resolution encouraging States, businesses and other actors to implement the Principles on human rights and the protection of workers from exposure to toxic substances (A/HRC/RES/42/21), the ILO’s recognition of a safe and healthy work environment as one of its fundamental principles and rights at work (ILC.110/Resolution I) and the recognition of the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment by the UN General Assembly (A/76/L.75),

Taking note of the paragraphs 84 and 86 of the 131st Session of the Council of the Food and Agricultural Organisation which recognised FAO’s role in SAICM implementation through activities on risk reduction, including the progressive ban of Highly Hazardous Pesticides,

Affirming the importance of SAICM contributions to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal #2 Target 2.4 on sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices that help maintain ecosystems and Goal #3 Target 3.9 to substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination,

Recognising with appreciation the significant work being done by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and others to raise awareness, inform and guide pesticide regulators, industry, civil society and other stakeholders on the identification and elimination of unacceptable risks from Highly Hazardous Pesticides,

Concerned that, while action has been taken at all levels to address Highly Hazardous Pesticides, progress has been slow and uneven and increased concerted international action is urgently needed,

Emphasising that with adequate investment in scaling up alternatives, especially ecological options for pest management, Highly Hazardous Pesticides can be phased out from agriculture,

1. *Endorses* the formation of a Global Alliance to promote a global phase out of Highly Hazardous Pesticides and the adoption of safer and more sustainable alternatives, as a voluntary multi-stakeholder initiative under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO);

²⁴ http://www.saicm.org/Portals/12/Documents/meetings/OEWG3/doc/OEWG3-6-Progress-on-EPIs_e.pdf

2. *Invites* all interested stakeholders to become members of the Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides and commit to its overall goal and, where appropriate, to contribute financial or in-kind resources or expertise towards the development and implementation of its activities;
3. *Requests* the Global Alliance to develop and implement a global action plan with clear targets and milestones for progress in achieving a global phase out of Highly Hazardous Pesticides in the following areas:
 - a. Raising awareness about the human health, environmental and human rights impacts of Highly Hazardous Pesticides
 - b. Identifying and promoting safer alternatives, including ecosystem approaches to pest management and agroecology;
 - c. Sharing examples of countries having successfully phased out Highly Hazardous Pesticides;
 - d. Supporting low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to strengthen national regulatory frameworks and phase out Highly Hazardous Pesticides;
 - e. Encouraging industry to voluntarily stop the manufacture of Highly Hazardous Pesticides and countries to prohibit the export of pesticides that are banned on their own territories;
 - f. Mobilising support for farmers and agricultural workers in their transition away from the use of Highly Hazardous Pesticides and towards less hazardous alternatives;
 - g. Supporting retailers and sustainability standards to eliminate Highly Hazardous Pesticides from the agrifood supply chains;
4. *Invites* the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) within their respective mandates and available resources to serve as the secretariat of the Global Alliance, with FAO taking the lead role;
5. *Invites* the Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides to report on progress to any future meeting of the Open-ended Working Group and SAICM regional meetings as well as the International Conferences on Chemicals Management.