

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING ON CHEMICAL SAFETY IN CENTRAL ASIA

A sub-regional skill share meeting of IPEN Participating Organizations (POs) took place in Almaty, Kazakhstan, June 19-20, 2015. The workshop was organized by Eco-Accord (IPEN Hub for the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) region) and IPEN PO Greenwomen from Kazakhstan. The goal of the meeting was to strengthen NGO capacity in Central Asia to actively participate in decision-making processes on chemical safety. The meeting was part of the EECCA regional project on Leveraging the New Mercury Treaty, to protect local communities from mercury pollution and promote national ratification of the Treaty in the EECCA region.

The meeting in Almaty was attended by more than 30 people representing IPEN Participating Organizations from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), business and consulting companies, and Kazakh governmental agencies (See Pic 1 below). The agenda of the meeting covered key issues of the global chemical safety agenda and effectively linked them to the national situation in the targeted countries.

The meeting was opened with a presentation on IPEN activities at the international, regional and local levels. IPEN goals and objectives were highlighted, including major achievements of IPEN POs on the ground and globally.

During the meeting the following key presentations were made:

Part I – Implementation of three global chemical treaties in Central Asia

- Priority issues of chemical and waste safety in Central Asia from a NGO point of view;
- Overview of key global chemical conventions, namely Stockholm, Basel and Rotterdam conventions;
- Legal and institutional aspects of chemical and waste management in Central Asia;
- Overview of the implementation of the three chemical conventions in Kazakhstan;
- Inventory of new POPs in Central Asia; and
- Kazakh National Concept on Green Economy: measures on hazardous chemicals and waste management.

Pic 1. IPEN sub-regional meeting in Almaty, Kazakhstan, June 19-20, 2015



Skill share opening

Situation in Kazakhstan

In their opening presentations, IPEN POs from Kazakhstan talked about their fight to stop plans for construction of a hazardous waste incinerator in Pavlodar, Kazakhstan. Public activists in Pavlodar achieved huge success by collecting 120,000 signatures in just 6 days opposing the construction of the incinerator. The plans for the incinerator are currently being reviewed.

Pic. 2

Public hearings in Pavlodar on the construction of hazardous waste incinerator



Pic. 3

Contaminated soil in Pavlodar city



Pic 4

Waste and chemical issues in Kazakhstan (credit: Grid Arendal Visual Synthesis report: <http://www.zoinet.org/web/sites/default/files/publications/Waste-Chemicals-CA-EN.pdf>)



Waste and chemical issues in Kazakhstan

Sites with significant amounts of industrial waste and chemicals

- Poorly maintained radioactive waste, historical pollution
- Radioactive waste in controlled conditions
- Notorious historical pollution from industrial development
- Other industrial waste and chemical issues raising public concern

Arms race and military legacy waste

- Former nuclear test sites: soil pollution, affected ecosystems
- Rocket launch sites and former military test ranges: soil pollution, scrap metal, toxic spills

Municipal waste

- Poorly managed waste collection or landfill practices

Sites with significant amounts of persistent organic pollutants

- Major stores and dumps of obsolete pesticides recognized as hotspots
- Other disposal sites for agricultural chemicals
- Highly PCB-contaminated sites and major PCB-containing equipment sites
- Other PCB-contaminated sites

Improvements in waste and chemical management

- New hazardous waste disposal facilities
- Ongoing and planned clean-up actions or waste reduction initiatives
- ASTANA Municipal waste management initiatives

It was also stated that NGOs should provide professional comments to the documents on environmental impact assessment and the feasibility study prepared by the contractors of the hazardous waste incinerator in Pavlodar. Sample analysis could play a significant role in attracting attention to environmental problems. NGOs expressed their appreciation to the work of IPEN that helped them collect and analyze samples of environmental media and provide data to the government together with the request to minimize and eliminate toxic exposure.

Situation in Tajikistan

IPEN PO Foundation in Support of Civil Initiatives (FSCI) from Tajikistan explained changes in the national legislation covering cooperation with NGOs. FSCI noted that from now on, all NGOs should register their grants in the state register of public organisations. To start project implementations, NGOs should receive permission from the relevant governmental authorities.

FSCI also highlighted the tendency for building new coal power stations (such as one recently built in Dushanbe by a Chinese company) and increasing the capacity of existing ones. NGOs highlighted serious problems of the coal power stations and raised the need for independent expertise. Nevertheless the construction was supported by the government and the plant was put into service.

FSCI also noted that the government has set a course for coal consumption. There are plans to construct 10 new cement production facilities based on coal consumption. Tajikistan is a mountainous country, thus these new plants will be built in valleys which will result in accumulation of toxic emissions in agricultural lands and in communities.

FSCI also highlighted the outcomes of the IPEN project on illegal pesticide trade in Tajikistan that was implemented a few years ago. At that time, illegal trade of DDT was revealed in Dushanbe and other Tajik communities. A workshop with participation of vendors that occurred when the project was underway showed the need to carry out awareness-raising on DDT's health effects and affordable, safer alternatives.

FSCI noted that Tajikistan is a Party to the Stockholm convention. Though the three other conventions (Basel, Rotterdam and Minamata) are also very much needed to strengthen national legislation on sound chemicals management and reduce toxic impact on people's health and the environment in Tajikistan, there is a lot of work to be done to achieve ratification of them.

Situation in Uzbekistan

An IPEN PO from Uzbekistan noted that highly hazardous pesticides are a big problem that has to be addressed. Pesticides contaminate the Amudaria river, which is a major water source in the country. The following national priorities were identified by stakeholders in Uzbekistan:

- increase access to and exchange of information on chemicals and wastes throughout the whole lifecycle;
- improve monitoring of chemicals production and use;
- develop and use of new technologies on waste management;
- rehabilitation and clean up of contaminated sites;
- recultivation and conservation of existing toxic storage sites;
- develop pollutant release and transfer registers;
- develop and regularly renew a list of highly hazardous pesticides banned for import and use;
- strengthen national regulations on sound chemicals management; and
- integrate sound chemicals management into plans and development programs in Uzbekistan.

Accession to the Stockholm and the Rotterdam conventions is also on the list of Uzbekistan national priorities. In addition, development of national mechanisms and action plans on sound management of mercury (including mercury in wastes) and lead in paint (including strengthening control mechanisms) were included on the list of priority issues.

At the workshop it was noted that the number of NGOs in Uzbekistan is reducing. They are closed because of different causes, including financial constraints. It was also mentioned that about 1700 industrial facilities in Uzbekistan deal with toxic chemicals, but there is a minimum or no information about their work and possible toxic emissions and releases. Some NGOs noted that Uzbekistan legislation needs enforcement and monitoring of compliance. Even good laws will not improve the situation if they are not properly enforced.

Situation in Kyrgyzstan

IPEN PO Independent Ecological Expertise (IEE) from Kyrgyzstan highlighted major achievements in the development of the National Program on the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of

Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS). This Program was developed under IEE's coordination and supervision and adopted by the government of the Kyrgyz Republic. The process of implementation starts in June 2015. The Program will help to mainstream the GHS requirements into national legislation on chemicals, which is an important step forward in improving chemicals management in Kyrgyzstan.

IEE also highlighted the need for public environmental monitoring in Kyrgyzstan and elsewhere in Central Asia. Last year IEE, in cooperation with Ecopartner company, developed methodological recommendations on conducting environmental monitoring that includes monitoring of air, water and soil. The methodology has already been tested in an IPEN project on mercury contamination of environmental media around Khaidarkan mercury mine in Kyrgyzstan.

Outcome of Part I of the skill share workshop

The outcome of this part of the skill share workshop was the adoption of the NGO Statement addressed to the heads of governments and relevant ministries in countries of Central Asia. The statement highlights achievements and failures of the Triple Conference of Parties (Triple COPs) to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions held in Geneva in May 2015. NGOs congratulated countries of Central Asia for voting on the proposal for including pentachlorophenol (PCP) and its salts and esters to Annex A of the Stockholm Convention. That was the first vote in the history of the convention and it resulted in a global ban on PCP.

However, IPEN POs raised concern over the decision-making process that happened at the Triple COP when many of the decisions scheduled for adoption were blocked by a small number of countries. In some cases it was enough for one country to block the decision. As a result, three out of four substances recommended by the Rotterdam Convention's scientific advisory body were not added to Annex III of the Treaty. NGOs noted that addition to Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention does not constitute a ban, but instead triggers the need for countries to notify and consent to trade hazardous substances.

NGOs pointed out the need to agree to compliance mechanisms for the Stockholm and the Rotterdam Conventions as important tools for providing technical and financial support to countries in their efforts to implement the treaties.

Central Asian NGOs were particularly concerned about the waste disposal threshold levels for the brominated flame retardants included in the general POPs guidelines considered at the Triple COP. Lack of capacity will not allow countries of the region to deal with contaminated waste effectively. NGOs encouraged governments to strongly support lower waste content limits for persistent organic pollutants to avoid export of highly contaminated wastes and recycled products (including building insulation, upholstery and electronics) from developed countries to Central Asia.

In the Statement, NGOs also highlighted problems with the technical guidelines on electronic waste (e-waste), including the transboundary movement of e-waste and used electronic and electrical products on an "interim basis" adopted at the Triple COP. By noting the importance of the guidelines, NGOs however stressed that they open the way for uncontrolled amounts of e-waste entering developing countries and economies in transition. Countries of Central Asia do not have a proper legislation and infrastructure to effectively address this new problem. Urgent attention should be paid to the development of national legislation that will put a ban on e-waste import from other countries. NGOs also encouraged their governments to implement the polluter pays principle and take back policy that will allow return of e-waste back to producers for further recycling and disposal.

In the Statement, NGOs encourage governments of the Central Asia region to take more active part in the international negotiations on chemicals and waste management. So far countries of the region have been very passive and silent. It was a shame that the only active behavior was obvious when the decision on including chrysotile asbestos under the Rotterdam Convention was on the agenda. Acting under pressure of the industrial lobby, some countries of Central Asia joined a small pool of countries to bar the decision. NGOs noted that the industrial lobby at the Triple COP put pressure on some governments, which is inappropriate and should not be repeated at any future meetings.

Part II – Mercury contamination and the Minamata treaty

The following key presentations were made:

- Overview of the Minamata Convention and its early implementation by countries;
- IPEN activities on early implementation of the Minamata Convention;
- Mercury hotspots in Kazakhstan:
- Pavlodar as a known mercury hotspot;
- Projects aimed at addressing mercury contamination and mercury waste management in Central Asia: reports from IPEN POs:
 - Public monitoring of mercury hotspots in Kyrgyzstan;
 - Strengthening mercury waste management in Tajikistan; and
 - Raising public awareness on mercury threats in Kazakhstan.

Mercury hotspots in Kazakhstan

IPEN PO Centre in Support of Sustainable Development (CSSD) highlighted existing problems of mercury contamination in Kazakhstan, including lack of monitoring data on mercury in the environment and lack or no monitoring data on the amounts of produced, used and disposed mercury-containing equipment. They stated also that there aren't any legal requirements to register mercury users; low effective management of mercury-containing waste; low public awareness on mercury threats; and broad use of mercury-containing energy efficient bulbs.

A CSSD representative also noted that there are zones in Kazakhstan with high levels of mercury contamination that happened during the Soviet period. Decommission of the mercury based chlor-alkali facility in Pavlodar resulted in the release of 900 tons of mercury into the environment, which ended up in soil and underground waters. Another mercury hotspot that was noted in the presentation is located in Temirtay city, where acetaldehyde production in the period of 1950-1997 resulted in the release of 1500 tons into Nura river. A map identifying mercury contaminated zones in Kazakhstan is presented below, Pic. 5.

Pic 5
Historical zones of mercury contamination in Kazakhstan

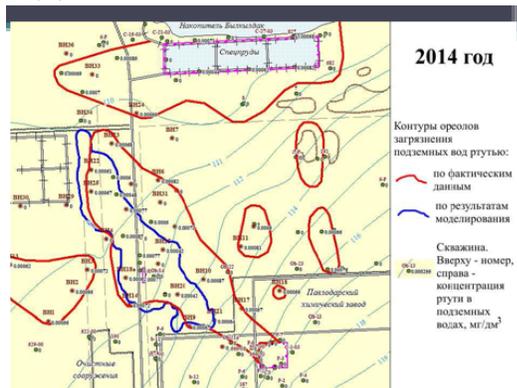


NGOs play a significant role in providing comments and suggestions to the national legislation on mercury-containing waste to make it more efficient. They stand for full implementation of broad producer responsibility principles with major attention focused on electronic and electrical waste (including mercury-containing lamps). It was noted that NGOs worked in cooperation with UNDP Kazakhstan on a mercury-related project collecting data on sources of mercury emission and releases, and develop recommendations on control of mercury use and on the ratification of the Minamata Treaty.

Pavlodar as a known mercury hotspot in Kazakhstan

The IPEN PO ECOM in Pavlodar demonstrated a map that shows mercury contamination of the underground water resources in the city (see Pic 6). In the period between 1972 and 1993, 1200 tons of mercury were lost in the environment as a result of poor waste management at the Khimprom facility in the northern industrial part of Pavlodar. Monitoring of the levels of mercury contamination of the environment shows the increase of water pollution zones in the city. New mercury hotspots appear and mercury concentration in the underground waters is elevating.

Pic 6

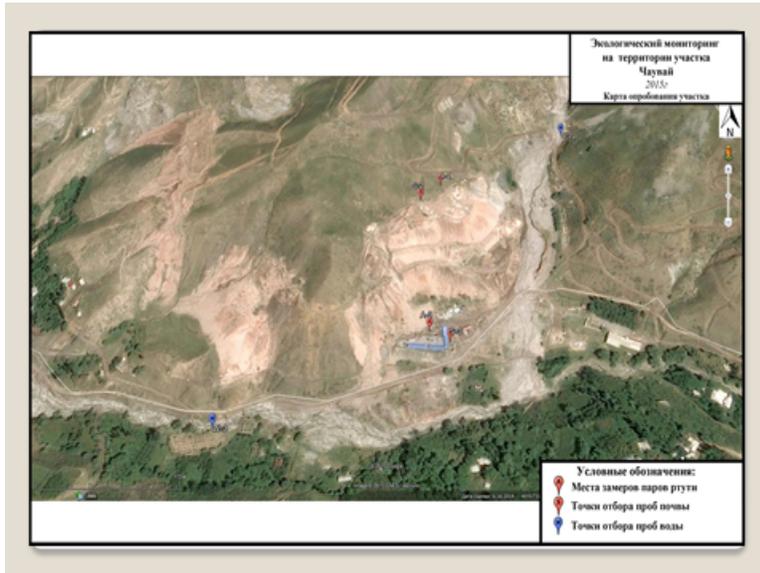


Short summaries of NGO projects on mercury

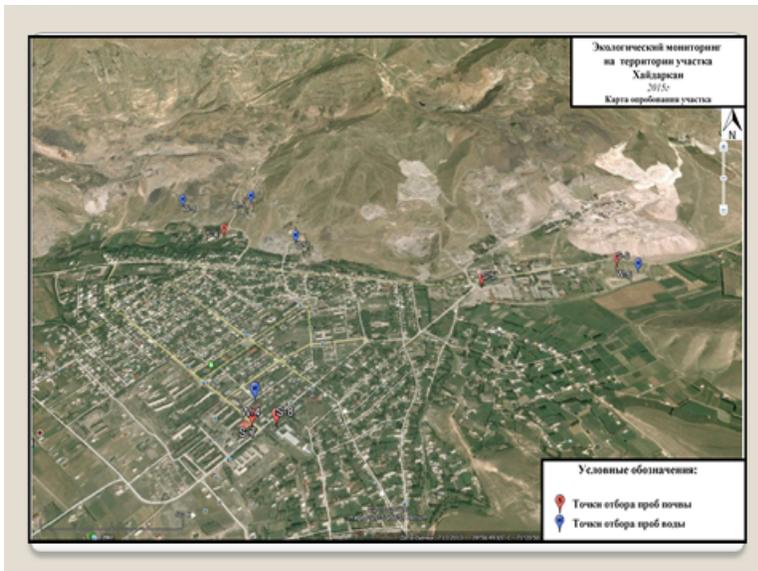
Public monitoring of mercury hotspots in Kyrgyzstan

IPEN PO Independent Ecological Expertise conducted this project. Samples of water, soil and air were collected in the vicinity of Khaidarkan and Chauvai mercury mines with the aim to analyse the levels of mercury in the environment. Photos below (Pic 7, Pic 8) show spots in Chauvai and Khaidarkan areas respectively where samples of air, water and soil were collected as part of project activities.

Pic 7



Pic 8.



Photos below (Pic.9, Pic 10) show the process of soil and water sample collection by IEE representatives near Khaidarkan mercury facility.

Pic. 9 Soil sample collection in Kyrgyzstan



Pic. 10 Water sample collection in Kyrgyzstan



For sample collection the IEE group was provided with local maps, necessary equipment and protective gloves to collect samples using the methodology developed in the frame of the project.

Based on laboratory testing, mercury concentration in soil in Chauvai area increased the maximum allowable concentration (MAC) by 1,1 – 247.95 fold. Areas with high levels of mercury concentration in soil were revealed (520,7 mg/kg and 203,4 mg/kg). Mercury concentration in water samples were also higher than MAC (MAC in water 0,0003 mg/l) :

W-2 in Chatmazar-Sai river (0,0008 mg/l);

W-3 in Chauvai-Sai river higher than Chauvai community (0,0006 mg/l.)

IEE faced major difficulties trying to make the laboratory data public and communicate it to the workers and administration of Chauvai and Khaidarkan mercury mining facilities. The administration of the facilities strongly opposed any attempts to analyze environmental media in the nearby communities. To oppose any attempts to communicate data to the public, the administration of the mercury mining facilities gained support from criminal structures as well as local municipal administration. Local laboratories are scared of taking samples from the area for analysis.

Nevertheless, data collected in the frame of the project was presented to the Kyrgyz Ministry of Economy, at the meeting of the working group set up to make a proposal to the government regarding the ratification of the Minamata Convention.

Strengthening mercury waste management in Tajikistan

In the frame of the project in Tajikistan, IPEN PO Foundation in Support of Civil Initiatives (FSCI) conducted an assessment of mercury emission sources from health care facilities and mining industries. The assessment of local health and environmental impacts of mercury emission sources (results of analytical measurements of soil samples, ores and water samples, surveys of local residents in rural areas and in Dushanbe, statistical data) was conducted. Pic. 11,12 and 13 below demonstrate the process of sample collections of environmental media in Tajikistan.

Pic. 11



Pic. 12



Pic. 13



Information materials and brochures on mercury sources in Tajikistan, their health and environmental impacts, accessible methods to mitigate mercury pollution and safe alternatives were produced and disseminated among stakeholders.

In the frame of the project FSCI purchased mercury-free thermometers, blood pressure devices, and containers for hazardous mercury waste which were further delivered to targeted public hospitals and municipalities. A special site for collecting mercury-containing household waste such as mercury-containing light bulbs, thermometers, and other devices was built in Dushanbe, at the municipal waste dump for collection of mercury-containing waste. Four outlets for collection of burnt CFBs were equipped and renovated in Dushanbe (see Pic 14 below showing two outlets before and after renovation carried out during project project implementation).

Pic. 14

Район Фирдавси



Район Сино



Raising public awareness on mercury threat in Kazakhstan

This project was implemented by IPEN PO Greenwomen from Kazakhstan. An information strategy aimed at raising awareness of governmental officials and different governmental institutions working on mercury pollution was developed. The strategy highlights mercury health effects, mercury pollution sources, mercury hot spots and mercury in products. The Strategy was implemented in Pavlodar and Temirtay cities for representatives of the regional governmental departments on the environment, local and regional departments on health, chemical industries, NGOs and media. Greenwomen finalized collection and analysis of information materials focusing on mercury contamination in Kazakhstan. This data was used as part of educational module on mercury and its health effects prepared as part of project activities.

At the workshop NGOs expressed gratitude to IPEN, Eco-Accord and Geenwomen for producing and disseminating information on mercury. These materials help a lot in NGO advocacy work towards the ratification of the Minamata Convention on mercury.

Outcome of Part II of the skill share workshop

The outcome of this part of the skill share workshop was the adoption of the NGO Appeal towards the governments of Central Asia on early ratification and effective implementation of the Minamata Treaty.

The Appeal clearly explains the benefits of the ratification and entering into force of the Treaty. In the Appeal it is emphasized that using BAT and BEP under the Minamata Convention will result in energy efficiency and mercury emission reduction from industrial sources, including coal power plants which is a big issue for Central Asia. Entering into force of the Minamata Convention will also facilitate investments and technology transfer that will help to reduce mercury emissions.

NGOs stressed that the ratification of the Mercury treaty should become a priority for Central Asia. By ratifying the Convention, governments of the region will prove their decision to ensure that the Minamata tragedy will not happen again anywhere in the world and that human constitutional rights to health and safe environment will be duly met.

The Appeal will be sent to the governments of the Central Asian countries, parliaments and relevant ministries. The workshop participants are very enthusiastic in doing their best to deliver the document to key decision-making people in their countries.

Part III of the skill share workshop

Overview of the issues on the agenda of ICCM4

Part III of the skill share was devoted to the implementation of the Strategic Approach to international Chemicals Management in Central Asia. Eco-Accord gave an overview of the issues planned for consideration at the coming fourth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM4) that will take place in Geneva in September 2015. Major attention was focused on highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs), lead in paint, chemicals in products and hazardous chemicals in electronics.

Highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs)

Presentations that followed were focused on HHPs use in Central Asia as it is a big issue for the region, causing health and environmental problems. Outcomes of research from 2014 were presented. NGOs from the EECCA region had compared their national lists of pesticides that are being used with the list of highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs list 2013) that was prepared in August 2013 by IPEN and Pesticide Action Network using the criteria of the FAO/WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticide Management (JMPM) of 2008. HHPs were found in each EECCA country, including Central Asia countries involved in the survey. The number varies from 32 in Ukraine to 9 in Tajikistan.

A representative of the Independent Ecological Expertise emphasized the need for safer alternatives to HHPs in Kyrgyzstan. The Kyrgyz Ministry of Agriculture raised this issue while comparing the national list of allowed pesticides with the HHPs list 2013. The workshop participants agreed to the need of requesting FAO to prepare an information paper on replacing HHPs with safer alternatives.

Foundation in Support of Civil Initiatives noted that some experts who helped Tajikistan develop a national catalogue of allowed pesticides promoted the use of HHPs. After making the comparative analysis with the HHPs list 2013, Tajik organizations revealed 9 HHPs that were recommended and approved by Tajikistan for agricultural needs. It was also noted that Tajikistan still uses two pesticides (Teodan 35% and Teodan 50%) that contain endosulfan, a POP pesticide banned by the Stockholm Convention (to which Tajikistan is a Party).

The importance of agroecology and ecosystem-based approaches were highlighted as an important step forward to improve agricultural productivity and food security and substitute HHPs. This idea was

broadly supported by the workshop participants. Some of them represented organisations dealing with organic agriculture and were happy to hear ideas that can be shared with their constituencies.

Greenwomen NGO described Kazakhstan's plans to increase national production and import of pesticides for the period in 2015. Currently Kazakhstan has 506 registered pesticides with 15 to 20 new formulations added annually. As compared to 2005, in 2010 the import of pesticides increased by 2.2 times. Similar to other EECCA countries, Kazakhstan has various 2,4,D formulations under different brand names.

Workshop participants raised an issue of new obsolete pesticide stockpiles that could be accumulated in the region as a result of increasing pesticide production and use. Currently the Central Asian countries struggle to solve the serious problem of the obsolete and banned pesticide stockpiles that remained in the countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union. With the overall tendency to increase the production and use of pesticides, Central Asia may soon face a problem with new stockpiles of pesticides, including HHPs.

In the presentations it was noted that Central Asian countries have not finalized obsolete pesticide inventories yet. Many obsolete pesticide stockpiles are open to the public and cattle. Pic 15-17 show some obsolete pesticide stockpiles in Kazakhstan. Cattle footprints are easily observed on Pic 15.

Pic. 15 Pesticide burial site in Kazakhstan with about 30 dumping spots containing unknown pesticides buried under different conditions.



- На территории могильника Акжол (п. Калкаман) расположены более 30 курганов различной высоты и состояния.

Pic. 16 Some dumping sites are already open



Отмечаются места вскрытий.

Pic. 17 Cattle footprints observed near open pesticide dumping site



Рядом обнаружены следы крупного рогатого скота.

The outcome of the discussion on highly hazardous pesticides was the adoption of the NGO Statement that calls on governments of Central Asia to take concrete steps towards a progressive ban of HHPs and their substitution with safe alternatives, non-chemical alternatives and ecosystem-based approaches. It was decided to deliver the Statement to the relevant governmental ministries and agencies in Central Asia that are responsible for import, use and disposal of pesticides in the countries of the region. It was also decided to request to upload the Statement on the ministerial websites and make it accessible to all stakeholders, including farmers and industries producing pesticides.

Lead in paint

As a SAICM emerging policy issue, the problem of lead in paint attracts a lot of attention in developing countries and transition economies. A presentation on lead's health effects and IPEN activities in different

countries and regions was made by Eco-Accord and Greenwomen, Kazakhstan. The work of the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead in Paint (GAELP) was highlighted. IPEN POs from Central Asia took part in the GAELP week of action against lead in paint and expressed their willingness to start a regional project on this issue.

Eco-Accord presented the results of a global study initiated by IPEN in 37 countries including Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Data from Russia showed that the vast majority of paints sampled in Russia contain dangerously high levels of lead even though Russia, as a member of the Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, has agreed to Kazakhstan's national technical regulations on the safety of paints, which state that paints used for residential and/or inhabited premises must not contain lead or lead compounds. The draft technical regulations of the Custom Union on the safety of paints based on the one from Kazakhstan is under final consideration.

Key findings from the study in Russia include:

- 14 of the 21 paint samples analyzed from 7 brands of paint marketed for residential use by Russian paint manufacturers contained lead levels above 600 ppm (parts per million) total lead content. This indicates lead compounds were used as ingredients in the manufacture of these paints (as pigments and/or as drying catalysts).
- At least one paint sample from 6 of the 7 brands analyzed had very high lead levels
 - TEKS – Blue: 52,900 ppm; Green: 1,690 ppm; White: 1,680 ppm;
 - LAKRA –Red: 35,4000 ppm; Yellow: 24,000 ppm; White: 3,400 ppm;
 - Rastsvet: Yellow: 27,200 ppm; Red: 8,010 ppm;
 - Kvil – Red: 3,230 ppm;
 - Profilux – Blue: 1,940 ppm; White; 1,840 ppm; and
 - Olivesta – Green: 7,190 ppm; Red: 3,600 ppm; White: 2,340 ppm;
- Two of three brands with greatest Russian market share – TEKS and LAKRA – had the highest lead concentrations.

All analyzed paints were manufactured and purchased in Russia.

Two countries of Central Asia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, also participated in the study. 81% of samples collected in Kazakhstan contained lead in concentrations greater than 90ppm. In Kyrgyzstan, 67% of samples contained lead concentration higher than 90ppm.

The workshop participants expressed great interest in the research and willingness to start a new regional project aimed at strengthening national legislation on lead in paint and its enforcement. The situation in Russia and Kazakhstan, where lack of enforcement resulted in high levels of lead in paints, proved the need to work further with the governments and paint producers to finally eliminate lead from decorative paints in the region. It was also noted that awareness-raising on the threat of lead in paint is needed to inform consumers and producers about the impact of lead on people's health (especially on the health of children) and available lead-free paints.

Chemicals in products

This section started with an IPEN presentation on the UNEP Chemicals in Products Programme that will be presented for approval at ICCM4 in September 2015. It was highlighted that IPEN priorities under this programme include:

- 1) Health and safety information should not be regarded as confidential;
- 2) There should be a unified approach to substantive CiP information release in all countries; and

3) There should be a unified list of hazardous chemicals based on the most stringent regulatory list to be used in all countries with a possibility to go beyond regulatory requirements.

IPEN highlighted the strong and weak points of the Programme and noted that if adopted, it will be a starting point for disclosing information on toxic chemicals in products. To achieve effective implementation of the Programme, NGOs should play a significant role in collecting data and communicating with the industry, governments and consumers.

It was noted that IPEN's project on chemicals in children's products that was implemented in 7 countries of EECCA (including in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) contributed a lot to raising awareness of all stakeholders (including governments, industry and the general public) on toxic metals in products for children. Contaminated items were found among schoolbags, balls, dolls, cosmetics for children, construction kits, sports equipment, toy vehicles, and others. It is necessary to emphasise that such items were sold by major supermarkets, small retail sales outlets and by petty traders at marketplaces or elsewhere. By biting, licking, sucking, chewing, hugging and squeezing toxic toys (and then putting their hands in their mouth or rubbing their eyes), children may become exposed to hazardous toxic metals. Young children are more susceptible to the effects of toxic metals exposure because they absorb several times over the percent ingested by adults and because their brains and other systems and organs are not fully developed. Even brief exposures may influence developmental processes.

The workshop participants noted that consumers in Central Asia receive very little or no information about chemicals in products, thus they are unaware of the toxic threats they are permanently exposed to. Labels on consumer products, including products for children and toys, lack important information such as data on chemical ingredients, contacts of manufacturers, and recommendations for safe handling and disposal. It is obvious that No data – No market should become a key principle for children's products. Additionally, in many cases health safety certificates on the labels do not guarantee the chemical safety of products, including products for children. There is no regular practice in Central Asia to recall consumer products that do not meet state health and safety standards; nor is there any information about products recalled in other countries (including the EU) available to consumers. Thus one can easily buy recalled products in stores and market places in countries of Central Asia. Publicly available information about toxic chemicals in consumer products and a list of available toxic-free alternatives is urgently needed to guide consumers in this region through a variety of products on the market.

Part IV: Project information exchange and brainstorming

The last part of the workshop was aimed at sharing information and experience among NGOs on different project activities they have implemented since 2012. NGOs noted that their projects were focused on the implementation of SAICM's Global Plan of Action, with the intention to come closer to the 2020 goal so that, by 2020, chemicals are produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on human health and the environment. The following projects were presented.

Development of the national GHS Implementation Strategy

Foundation in Support of Civil Initiatives (FSCI) and Independent Ecological Expertise (IEE) recently successfully completed Quick Start Programme-funded projects related to supporting SAICM and GHS (Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals) implementation in their respective countries. The final workshops were held in June in Dushanbe and Bishkek, and were attended by representatives from various ministries such as the Ministries of Health, Economic Development and Trade, Agriculture, Energy, Industry and Transport, as well as state agencies on Environment Protection and Forestry, other related agencies, scientific and research institutes, consulting companies and more.

In Tajikistan, FSCI, in partnership with the Tajik Ministry of Health and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), led the work on the development of a National GHS Implementation Strategy and Action Plan. The Coordination Committee formed in the frame of the project conducted many trainings and awareness-raising meetings where GHS requirements, pictograms, classification and labeling were presented and discussed in detail with stakeholders. FSCI initiated the development of recommendations on the GHS implementation for the inclusion into the National Sustainable Development Strategy of Tajikistan (NSDS). NSDS will be approved in November 2015 for the period until 2030.

In Kyrgyzstan, the Ministry on Economy and Antimonopoly Policy and IEE led the process to develop a GHS Implementation Programme and Action Plan, and IEE presented the Plan at the workshop in Bishkek and answered questions related to the implementation of the GHS requirements in different economic sectors. Tremendous success was achieved when a Kyrgyzstan governmental decree was adopted that confirms the approval of the Plan. The Ministry on Economy and Antimonopoly Policy and IEE will continue monitoring the implementation of the Program requirements as well as to assist relevant ministries and other stakeholders in GHS implementation in different sectors.

E-waste management in Kazakhstan

IPEN PO in Kazakhstan, Social Fund “Promotion of Sustainable Development,” presented the outcomes of a project entitled “Analysis of electronic and electric waste disposal system in the Republic of Kazakhstan”. It was a pilot project on e-waste implemented in Central Asia aimed at analysis of the existing electric and electronic equipment (EEE) waste disposal system in the Republic of Kazakhstan, taking Almaty City as an example, and drafting of recommendations on system improvement.

The following tasks were set in order to achieve the Project objective:

- 1) to analyze the regulatory framework of the Republic of Kazakhstan in regards to EEE waste management;
- 2) to assess the existing EEE waste disposal practices in Almaty City; and
- 3) to prepare recommendations on EEE waste disposal system improvement.

Presently there are not any specific requirements set for the EEE waste disposal in Kazakhstan. These wastes are collected together with domestic waste and disposed at landfills. According to some data, the servicing centers and marts hide generated waste, break it into components and throw it in domestic waste containers.

The global practice of EEE waste handling incorporates the following approaches:

- 1) the cost of waste recycling is added to the production value;
- 2) the waste collection facilities are located in marts and at special-purpose sites within cities;
- 4) municipal services are involved in waste transportation;
- 5) the legal entities are obligated to maintain contracts with recycling companies;
- 6) the principle of extended producer responsibility;
- 7) involvement of servicing centers to waste collection and pre-sorting;
- 8) gathering of out-of-date equipment to the benefit of lower-income populations.

There are companies in Kazakhstan that collect and recycle EEE waste by sorting EEE components into single pieces and further disposal of such pieces. However, as activities of specialized companies in the area of waste handling are not controlled in Kazakhstan, there are facts that expose dishonest attitudes towards waste disposal. Such companies accept EEE waste for recycling and submit a record on recycling, however actually they send EEE waste to domestic waste landfills that are not intended for components with hazardous substances.

It was interesting to learn about a social interview conducted in the frame of this project when 133 people, including 125 adults, 8 students and 2 retired persons, were asked questions regarding EEE handling.

Figure 18 represents a scheme with data that describe the frequency of EEE replacement (computers, refrigerators, TV-sets, cell phones) by people.

Figure 18 – the chart replies to the question: “How frequently do you replace your EEE?”

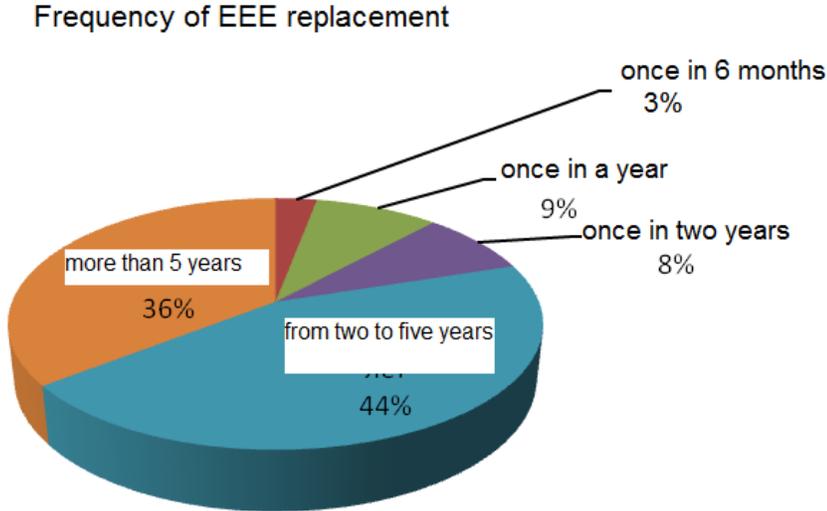


Figure 19 represents a chart indicating what people do with EEE waste.

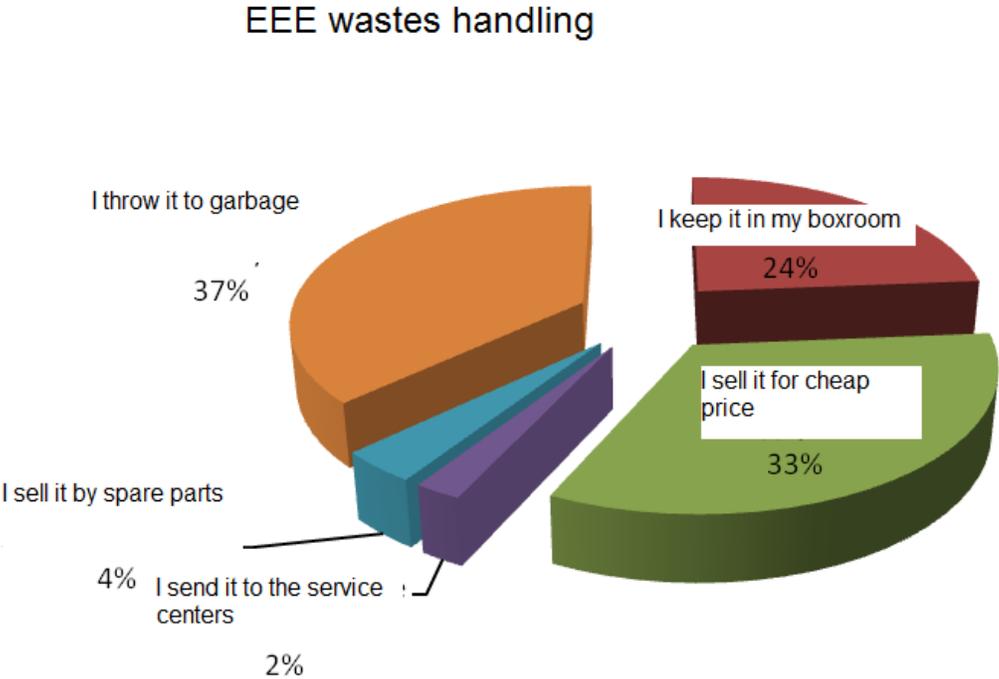
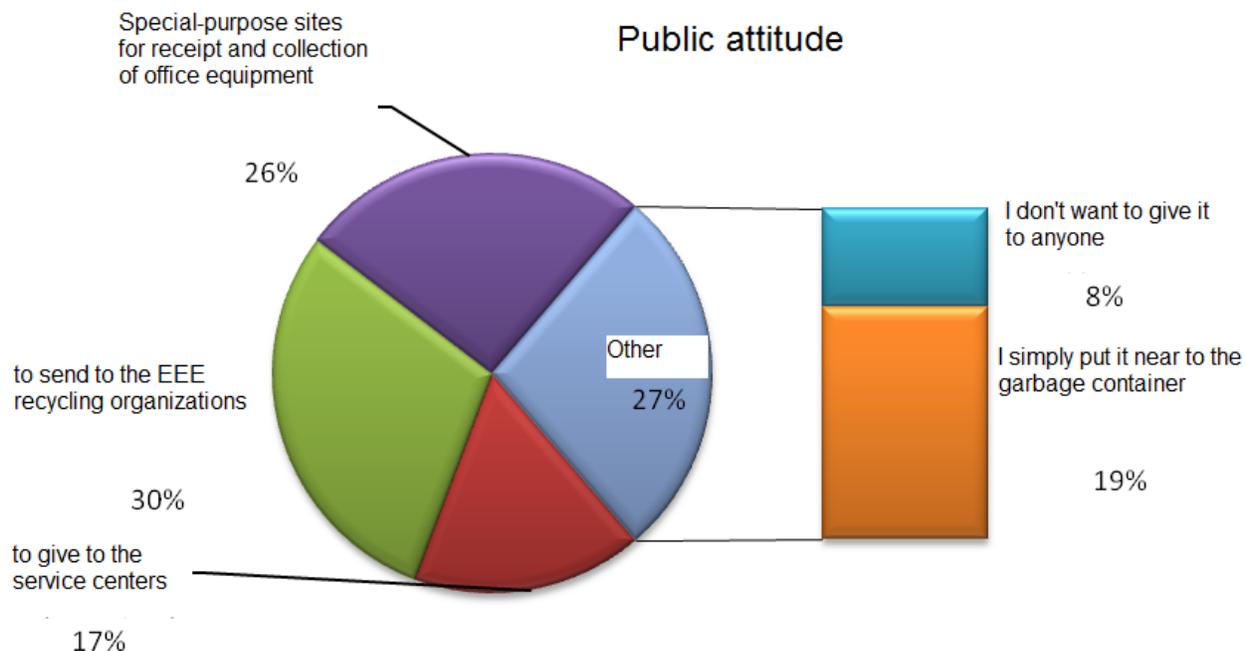


Figure 20 represents data reflecting how people feel about the EEE wastes handling issue.



Outcomes of the skill share workshop in Almay, Kazakhstan

The workshop participants approved three statements focused on the following key issues of chemicals management:

- achievements and failures of the Triple Conference of Parties (Triple COPs) to the UN Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions held in Geneva in May 2015;
- importance of the ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury; and
- activities towards elimination of highly hazardous pesticides.

All three statements will be disseminated to the governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, relevant national agencies, and organisations dealing with toxic chemicals production, use and import. It is envisaged that all three NGO statements will attract the attention of the authorities to the role that NGO's play in addressing problems and gaps of chemicals management in the region.

The workshop participants expressed great interest in developing a new regional project on lead in paint with the intention to strengthen national legislation and ensure its enforcement in Central Asia. Information on lead in paint activities (including data collection in countries of the region) was highly appreciated. It was noted that more data needs to be collected in all countries of Central Asia as the basis for further work under the project. NGOs noted that there is no governmental monitoring of lead in paint, thus data to collect under the regional project will be important to both public and private sectors.

The workshop participants highlighted the importance of the IPEN sub-regional skill share meeting in Almaty and appreciated the work that had been presented at the national and regional levels. It was noted that the Information News Service coordinated by Eco-Accord as the IPEN Hub for Eastern Europe,

Caucasus and Central Asia is the leading information resource on chemicals and waste issue in the region. It was highlighted that information prepared and disseminated by Eco-Accord via the News Service on Chemical Safety is used by health and environmental groups, as well as governments and local authorities, as their reports back from different regional and international meetings, and is a valuable resource for decision-making processes in Central Asia.

The following priority issues were raised by the workshop participants as the key topics they want to work on in the future:

- mercury health and environmental monitoring to identify and address mercury pollution sources and hotspots;
- lead in paint to achieve internationally approved standards on lead in paint with the goal to achieve lead elimination from decorative paint;
- chemicals in consumer products, including endocrine disrupting chemicals, with the goal to achieve full information disclosure on hazardous chemicals in products and available safe alternatives;
- highly hazardous pesticides, including endocrine disrupting pesticides: development of national and regional lists of HHPs and awareness-raising on available safe alternatives and ecosystem based approaches; and
- e-waste: new emerging policy issue for Central Asia: awareness-raising on hazardous chemicals in electronics; implementation of producer responsibility principle, strengthening national legislation to minimize e-waste transfer to Central Asia.

It was noted that NGOs from Central Asia need to raise funds to address the above listed and other chemical issues in the region. Regional projects with a possibility to cooperate with intergovernmental organisations and international NGOs should become a priority for fundraising activities in the region.