



**UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**



PRESS COVERAGE

Third Round of Talks on Treaty on Persistent Organic Pollutants



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UNEP CHEMICALS

November 1999



Press Coverage

Third Round of Talks on Treaty on Persistent Organic Pollutants



Governments convened 6-11 September 1999 in Geneva for the third round of talks on a legally binding global treaty to reduce and/or eliminate persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and so protect public health and the environment. This compilation of press items from that period reflects the growing public interest in the need for safeguards from these toxic chemicals.

One hundred and fifteen countries took part in the Geneva session, working with 17 intergovernmental and 72 non-governmental organizations, for a total of more than 420 participants. The meeting is formally known as the Third Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for an International Legally Binding Instrument for Implementing International Action on Certain Persistent Organic Pollutants.

It built on the foundation for a treaty laid at the First Session in Montreal in 1998 and the Second Session in Nairobi in January 1999. These negotiations respond to the mandate from the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme to reach agreement on a global treaty on POPs in the year 2000.

Negotiators convene again 20-25 March 2000 in Bonn. The fifth and final meeting is scheduled for South Africa in autumn 2000. Additional information is available from UNEP Chemicals in Geneva and on the POPs homepage (www.chem.unep.ch/pops).

Geneva, November 1999

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Willis'.

James B. Willis
Director
UNEP Chemicals

ROMÂNIA LIBERĂ

BUCHAREST

August 24, 1999

Măsurile pentru eliminarea poluanților organici

Unul din programele PNUE se referă la eliminarea substanțelor poluante organice persistente folosite în agricultură. Printre cele 12 noxe ce fac obiectul Tratatului POP se află și hexaclorbenzenul. Introdus în 1945 pentru tratarea semințelor, HCB este folosit și azi contra ciupercilor ce afectează recoltele, găsindu-se în compoziția numeroaselor pesticide. Un studiu efectuat pe carnea din Spania a arătat că HCB a fost găsit în toate eșantioanele. În India, s-a constatat un consum zilnic de HCB de 0,13 micrograme pe kilogram la organismele umane. În 1999, Programul Națiunilor Unite pentru Mediu (PNUE) a avut numeroase discuții cu reprezentanții a peste o sută de guverne. Se preconizează ca în anul 2000 să se ajungă la o înțelegere pe plan mondial, astfel ca poluanții organici persistenți cu efecte asupra sănătății oamenilor să fie eliminați din agricultură. **(E. Ch.)**

August 28, 1999

DDT, Target of Global Ban, Has Defenders in Malaria Experts

Related Article

- [Study Inconclusive on Chemicals' Effects](#) (August 4, 1999)

Forum

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By SHERYL GAY STOLBERG

WASHINGTON -- It has been 27 years since the United States banned the pesticide DDT, and the payoff is undeniable. The peregrine falcon, once pushed to the brink of extinction, came off the endangered species list this month, and the bald eagle may soon follow. Brown pelicans are flourishing in Florida. On the shores of Long Island, the ospreys are back.

Now the United Nations is drafting a treaty that may lead to a worldwide ban on DDT. But the negotiations, set to resume in Geneva next month, are drawing opposition from an unlikely quarter: public health professionals, who say DDT is necessary to stop the spread of malaria, a disease that kills as many as 2.7 million people each year, mostly children in undeveloped countries.

"A child dies of malaria every 12 seconds," said Dyann F. Wirth, a malaria expert at the Harvard School of Public Health and president of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. "That could go up dramatically if we lose this important control tool."

Dr. Wirth is among more than 370 medical researchers in 57 countries who are urging that the treaty allow DDT to be sprayed in small quantities on the interior walls of homes, where it acts as a repellent to the disease-carrying insects. The scientists argue that if the pesticide, which is cheap and effective, must be eliminated, it should be phased out gradually, and only if Western countries conduct research on the more expensive alternatives and help pay for them.

Some type of public health exception is likely, said Jim Willis, director of chemicals for the United Nations Environmental

Program, which is sponsoring the talks. But the specifics are engendering intense acrimony between the public health experts and environmentalists, and have created some friction in the Federal Government, as it tries to formulate its policy for the negotiations.

"This poses an unusual dilemma," said a State Department official involved in the talks. "Usually the dynamic is protection versus economics. There, it is very easy for one side to paint the other as the black hat. But here there is a peculiar tradeoff between health and the environment."

Most countries no longer use **DDT** for agricultural purposes (or do not admit to it if they do), but experts estimate that 23 nations still use it for malaria control. The biggest users are China and India. Mexico has pledged to stop spraying **DDT** by 2007. And the World Bank has lent India \$200 million to help devise alternatives to **DDT**.

The **DDT** dilemma stems from a United Nations plan to eliminate, or greatly reduce, the use of 12 toxic chemicals classified as persistent organic pollutants. The group -- "the dirty dozen" to environmentalists -- consists of eight pesticides, including **DDT**, as well as chemical byproducts and industrial chemicals. All accumulate in the food chain and can travel thousands of miles through air, water and bird migration, causing lasting contamination.

In her 1962 book "Silent Spring," Rachel Carson, a marine biologist, chronicled **DDT**'s poisonous effects, showing, for example, how it killed the robins that ate the earthworms that dined on the leaves of Dutch elm trees that had been sprayed with the insecticide. The public outcry was tremendous; the book led to the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970 and the United States ban on **DDT** in 1972.

The treaty negotiations on the group of pollutants began in 1998 and are scheduled to conclude by the end of next year. The Geneva meeting, which runs from Sept. 6 to 11, is the third of five scheduled sessions, but the first to examine each chemical in detail.

Willis of the United Nations predicted "a rather thorough discussion of the **DDT** issue."

Among advocacy groups hoping to influence the talks, that discussion is already under way, and it is fraught with competing studies and statistics. Experts are arguing about everything from whether **DDT** is harmful to human health (the evidence is inconclusive) to whether the recent rise in malaria rates in Mexico results from cutbacks in spraying, or from last year's hurricanes, which provided fertile breeding grounds for mosquitoes. (The answer is probably both.)

"Positions have hardened," said Dr. Gerald T. Keusch, director of the Fogarty International Center, the branch of the National Institutes of Health devoted to promoting scientific research

overseas. "In the heat it has not been possible to step back and look at the light."

On one side is the nonprofit World Wildlife Fund and Physicians for Social Responsibility, a doctors' group concerned with environmental health. They argue that even small amounts of DDT sprayed inside homes are harmful to the environment and cite studies suggesting that the pesticide turns up in the breast milk of nursing mothers and has other "subtle effects on human health."

Taking its cue from Mexico, the wildlife fund is pressing for a ban on DDT by 2007. But the idea of a specific date is extremely contentious, and the State Department official said the United States would not ask for one.

On the other side are two scientists' groups, the tropical medicine society, and the Malaria Foundation International, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting research. Several months ago, at the behest, curiously enough, of a Vancouver environmental lawyer and cell biologist, Amir Attaran, the foundation posted a letter about the negotiations on its Web site, arguing that "setting a firm deadline to ban DDT places an unethical burden on the world's poorest countries."

As of Thursday, 371 scientists, including 3 Nobel laureates, had signed. As the group's founder, Dr. Mary Galinski, a molecular biologist at Emory University in Atlanta, explained: "We don't want a knee-jerk reaction to ban DDT."

The debate is occurring as malaria is making a deadly comeback, re-emerging in regions where it was once under control and killing many more people than it did decades ago, at least partly because of a reduction in DDT use. The World Health Organization estimates that there are 300 million to 500 million new cases of the disease each year, and last year started a project called Roll Back Malaria to combat it.

There are drugs to treat malaria, but some patients cannot afford them and drug resistance is an increasing problem. So the best means of prevention is to keep mosquitoes from biting people. At least one expert, Dr. Donald R. Roberts of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Md., argues that "DDT is the best insecticide we have today for controlling malaria."

In the late 1970's, Dr. Roberts, a medical zoologist, traveled to Brazil to conduct experiments in malaria control. He built two houses and sprayed the inside of one with DDT. Hundreds of mosquitoes entered the unsprayed house, he said. None entered the sprayed house. Since then, Dr. Roberts has become an ardent defender of DDT. "We have got to stop pressuring countries to stop using DDT," he said. "It is immoral."

Others, including Dr. Galinski, say they have no problem

eliminating the pesticide, so long as alternatives are in place. But that is a frightening thought to Dr. Wen Kilama, a Tanzanian entomologist who in June presided over an expert panel, convened by the World Health Organization, to debate the future of the pesticide in malaria prevention.

Because mosquitoes develop resistance to pesticides, Dr. Kilama says that getting rid of DDT would be a mistake. "The mosquitoes are very complex and one should not rely on one measure alone, particularly one type of insecticide," he said in a telephone interview last week.

"It's like when you fight, you have a pocketful of arrows and now you have only one arrow left."

Tanzania no longer uses DDT; the country cannot afford it, Dr. Kilama said. But with the economy improving, he added, "I can see a lot of hope coming up" that Government-sponsored spraying might resume. In the meantime, some Tanzanians sleep under nets soaked in pyrethroids, another chemical. But the nets cost \$4 to \$5 apiece, too high a sum for many villagers, and Dr. Kilama said they work only by "mass effect," which means entire neighborhoods must use them.

Further south, in Botswana, health officials have also abandoned DDT, but for a different reason. Only three countries -- China, India and Mexico -- still manufacture the pesticide, and Thandie Phindela, a malaria control officer in Botswana's Ministry of Health, said the country could not get a reliable supply this year. "The environmentalists are trying to put pressure on the use of DDT," she said. "We had to resort to pyrethroids."

But pyrethroids are more expensive. According to Kathleen Walker, an entomologist with the E.P.A., the cost of treating one house with DDT ranges from \$1.60 to \$8.50, compared with \$4.20 to \$24 for pyrethroids. In the end, she said, some countries may have to abandon house spraying altogether and begin research on other, cheaper alternatives.

That is the World Wildlife Fund's view: its contaminants expert, Richard Liroff, urges "more creative thinking about moving away from DDT." He points to an experiment in India, where gambusia -- a larvae-eating fish -- were deposited in bodies of water where mosquitoes breed. But Dr. Kilama, of Tanzania, said such steps are not practical in a country where a hippopotamus footprint after a heavy rain can create an instant breeding ground.

As the debate continues, the World Health Organization is drafting its own plan to help countries cut back on DDT. But the organization has no idea how much the effort will cost; the price tag will vary from nation to nation. As to who will pay, said Jenny Pronczuk, a chemical safety expert, "Well, that's a problem."

Malaria Peril Derails Efforts To Ban DDT

By Sheryl Gay Stolberg
New York Times Service

WASHINGTON — It has been 27 years since the United States banned the pesticide DDT. The payoff is undeniable.

The peregrine falcon, pushed to the brink of extinction, came off the list of endangered species this month. The bald eagle may soon follow.

Brown pelicans are flourishing in Florida. On the shores of Long Island, the ospreys are back.

Now the United Nations is drafting a treaty that may lead to a worldwide ban, but the international negotiations set to resume in Geneva next month are drawing opposition from an unlikely quarter — public health professionals. DDT is necessary, they say, to stop the spread of malaria, a disease that kills as many as 2.7 million people yearly, mostly children in undeveloped countries.

"A child dies of malaria every 12 seconds," said Dyann Wirth of the Harvard School of Public Health, who is president of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. "That could go up dramatically if we lose this important control tool."

Ms. Wirth is among more than 370 medical researchers in 57 countries who are urging that the treaty allow DDT to be sprayed in small quantities on the interior walls of homes, where it acts as a repellent to disease-carrying insects. The scientists argue that if the cheap, effective pesticide must be eliminated, it should be phased out gradually and only if Western countries conduct research on the more expensive alternatives and help pay for them.

Some type of public health exception is likely, said Jim Willis, director of chemicals for the UN environmental program, which is sponsoring the talks. The specifics are engendering acrimony between public health experts and environmentalists and have even created some friction in the U.S. government, as it tries to formulate a policy for the negotiations.

"This poses an unusual dilemma," said a State Department official involved in the talks. "Usually the dynamic is protection versus economics. There, it is very easy for one side to paint the other as the black hat. But here there is a peculiar tradeoff between health and the environment, and those are both very important civil society objectives."

Most countries no longer permit use of DDT for agricultural purposes, but experts estimate that 23 nations still use it for malaria control. The biggest users are China and India. Mexico has pledged to stop spraying the pesticide by 2007. The World Bank has loaned India \$200 million to help devise alternatives to DDT.

The DDT dilemma stems from a UN plan to eliminate or greatly reduce the use of 12 toxic chemicals classified as persistent organic pollutants. The group — called the dirty dozen by environmentalists — consists of eight pesticides including DDT as well as chemical byproducts and industrial chemicals. All accumulate in the food chain and can travel vast distances through air, water and bird migrations, causing lasting contamination.

In her 1962 book "Silent Spring," Rachel Carson, a marine biologist, chronicled DDT's poisonous effects. She showed how it killed the robins that ate the earthworms that dined on the leaves of Dutch elm trees that had been sprayed.

Treaty negotiations on the group of pollutants began in 1998 and are scheduled to conclude by the end of next year.

Le DDT reste une arme dans la lutte contre le paludisme

Mis à jour le mardi 31 août 1999

DANS UN TEXTE adressé conjointement au *New-York Times*, au *Guardian* et au *Monde*, près de 400 spécialistes internationaux de la lutte contre le paludisme, réunis au sein du « Malaria Project » et travaillant dans 57 pays, s'élèvent avec force contre le projet émanant des milieux écologiques visant à faire interdire à court terme, et à l'échelon planétaire, l'usage du DDT. Ce pesticide efficace et bon marché demeure, selon eux, une arme essentielle dans la lutte contre cette maladie parasitaire véhiculée par certains moustiques. Plus de 500 millions de personnes contractent chaque année cette maladie qui tue 2,7 millions d'entre elles, particulièrement des femmes enceintes et des enfants âgés de moins de cinq ans.

Cet appel solennel précède de quelques jours les négociations de l'« United National Environment Program », organisées du 5 au 10 septembre à Genève, et qui ont pour but la rédaction d'un traité projetant l'élimination de l'ensemble des polluants organiques persistants (POPs), au premier rang desquels le DDT. Soutenus dans leur démarche par trois Prix Nobel de médecine, ces spécialistes entendent, après le lobbyng conduit par certaines organisations écologiques, faire pression sur les négociateurs de ce traité.

PAS DE PRÉCIPITATION

« Vous êtes sans doute au courant que l'une des substances dont ce traité vise à interdire l'utilisation future est le DDT et qu'une telle interdiction est soutenue par les pays occidentaux les plus riches et par plusieurs ONG écologiques. Il se pourrait, toutefois, que vous ne soyez pas tout à fait conscients que le DDT est un outil essentiel dans la lutte contre le paludisme qui reste un terrible fléau pour les pays en voie de développement, écrivent les scientifiques à chacun des négociateurs. Bien que nous soyons tout à fait d'accord pour que le DDT soit éliminé un jour à cause de ses effets sur l'environnement, nous pensons que des vies humaines ne doivent pas être mises en danger en précipitant les choses. (...) Il faudrait trouver des outils alternatifs au DDT et ceci demandera des moyens scientifiques et techniques considérables qui font défaut aux pays en voie de développement, mais que les pays occidentaux peuvent mettre en oeuvre. (...) Nous préconisons aux pays africains de rejeter tout calendrier pour l'interdiction du DDT, que ce soit pour

2007 ou plus tard, tant que ces pays n'auront pas la garantie absolue de ressources pour développer et implanter des solutions de remplacement. »

Conscients du poids des arguments écologiques, les scientifiques soulignent que ce sont les surutilisations massives dans le secteur de l'agriculture faites dans les années 50 et 60 qui, pour l'essentiel, sont condamnables, mais les signataires sont particulièrement critiques vis-à-vis de l'action conduite par le World Wildlife Fund (WWF) qu'ils accusent de « *tromperies* » et de « *manipulations* » dans son exposé des propriétés potentiellement cancérigènes du DDT.

Jean-Yves Nau

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Debating the Dilemma Of a Global DDT Ban

Tuesday, August 31, 1999

San Francisco Chronicle
CHRONICLE SECTIONS

IN A CLASSIC CLASH of good intentions, environmentalists and public health officials are facing off in a passionate debate over whether the pesticide, DDT, should be banned worldwide.

Environmentalists argue that DDT should be outlawed as a dangerous, long-lasting poison that is harmful to humans, lingers in the soil, accumulates in the food chain and disperses widely through water, air and in the flesh of fish and migrating birds.

While it is an extremely effective insecticide, DDT is so stubbornly toxic, especially to birds, that in 1972 it was banned in the United States.

Most other countries no longer use it for agriculture, but about two dozen -- including China, India and Mexico -- continue to spray DDT to control malaria.

On the other side, many health officials say malaria, which is transmitted by mosquitoes, is on the upswing, at least partly due to a decrease in the use of DDT.

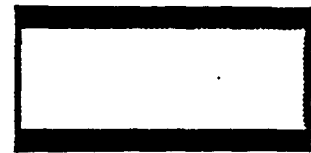
The World Health Organization estimates that 300 million to 500 million new cases of malaria are contracted every year. About 2.7 million malaria victims die annually, 90 percent of them pregnant women and children in poor, undeveloped countries.

"A child dies of malaria every 12 seconds," says Dr. Dyann F. Wirth, president of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene.

"That could go up dramatically if we lose this important control tool."

Wirth and 370 scientists and physicians from 57 countries urged the United Nations not to ban DDT before an alternative is found.

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"The relevant question is not whether DDT can pose health risks (it can), but whether these risks outweigh the tremendous public health benefits of DDT for malaria control (they do not)," they said in a letter to diplomats who will meet in Geneva next week to negotiate a treaty on 12 toxic pesticides and chemicals known as "the dirty dozen."

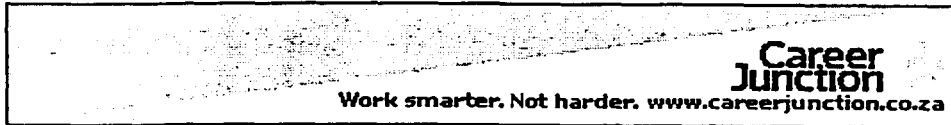
DDT is the most controversial of the chemicals to be discussed.

The scientists and doctors suggest a two-phase process that would guarantee poor countries the financial and technical help to obtain alternatives, and to phase out DDT only after the new mosquito-killing methods have been established for the long term.

U.N. negotiators must resolve this agonizing dilemma in favor of human health, but they should seek creative methods that eventually do away with DDT once and for all.

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Johannesburg, South Africa, September 1, 1999

Malaria fears over planned DDT ban

A proposal to outlaw the pesticide DDT by 2007 is being resisted by malaria experts, who say it is still the most effective way to keep mosquitoes at bay.

SARAH BOSELEY reports

MORE than 350 of the world's leading experts in malaria have signed an open letter of protest against plans for a global ban on the pesticide DDT, which they say will lead to millions more people dying in the developing world from malaria.

The 371 doctors, health economists and scientists, who include three Nobel laureates, warn of the consequences if the United Nations Environment Programme outlaws DDT along with a range of other pesticides known as persistent organic pollutants in a treaty to be negotiated next week.

Pushing for the ban are environmental groups, led by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), which argues that alternatives will be found to combat malaria before the ban becomes effective in 2007. It says the deadline will concentrate minds.

But specialists in the disease say cases and deaths have already risen since DDT was outlawed in the western world in the 70s, in turn putting pressure on developing countries not to use it.

DDT, sprayed on the interior of homes, is a cheap and effective deterrent to the mosquito, whose bite spreads the infection. Nothing yet developed works as well or is so easy to use, say the experts who signed the letter.

They lament the head-on clash between health experts and environmentalists, saying they too want rid of DDT but not until alternatives are in place.

The malaria experts accept DDT does environmental damage but accuse WWF of overstating the dangers to humans. While pesticide residues are found in breast milk, only one study - not two as WWF states on its website - has claimed DDT may be carcinogenic. The other six found no evidence DDT was implicated in breast cancer.

WWF says it is more concerned about the possible effects on the immune system, based on evidence of what DDT does to wildlife and lactation in women.

"While it is true that we don't know every last risk of using DDT, we know very well what the risk of malaria is - and on balance malaria is far, far more deadly than the worst that one could imagine about DDT," said Amir Attaran, director of the Malaria Project in Washington. He and the Malaria Foundation International organised the open letter.

"We are not in love with DDT. But the reality is that if you try to get rid of DDT without guaranteeing that money will be available for alternatives, you will kill people.

"If western countries like the US or UK want the environmental benefit of a DDT ban, let them pay for it. Africa, Asia and South America have neither the technology nor money to research and implement alternatives to DDT. The rich countries do. For them to advocate a DDT ban while holding tight the purse-strings for those alternatives is obscene."

Among the eminent tropical medicine and public health specialists who have signed is Joshua Lederberg, a Nobel laureate in medicine who 30 years ago supported a ban on DDT but feels the threat of malaria today outweighs the evil of the pesticide. Two other Nobel laureates in medicine, Peter Doherty and Ferid Murad, and Wallace Peters, King Faisal International Prize laureate, a malariologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, have also signed.

Other signatories include Wen Kilama, director of the African Malaria Vaccine Testing Network, a past president of the World Federation of Public Health Associations and chair of the World Health Organisation's expert group on DDT and malaria; Jeffrey Sachs, professor of development economics at Harvard; and Mary Galinski, professor of parasitology at Emory university in Atlanta, Georgia, and president of the Malaria Foundation International.

In their letter, the doctors and scientists say that although they agree DDT must one day be phased out, "we also believe that human life must not be endangered in reaching that goal. In our view, setting a deadline for the elimination of DDT - whether that deadline is in 2007 or some other date - unacceptably endangers health in countries with malaria".

They propose an immediate ban on agricultural use, which would be extended to malaria control only when western countries have put effective, affordable alternatives in place.

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Prof Kilama, based in Tanzania, says that although DDT is cheap it is still not cheap enough for much of sub-Saharan Africa, where malaria is most deadly. The chances of the developed world investing more money to find other means of controlling malaria are slight, he feels.

Chris Curtis, a medical entomologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said: "DDT is the cheapest insecticide and what I feel will happen is - as has happened several times already - if they can't use DDT they won't feel they can afford to replace it, so they will simply cut down on the total area that gets vector [mosquito] control."

That has happened in India, which is reducing its use of DDT, he said, and in some Latin American countries.

WWF insists there is no risk of lives being lost if the global ban by 2007 is agreed. Clifton Curtis, director of its global toxic chemicals initiative, said: "We set an end-date as a motivational target. In our view, if you don't set a target you don't get decision-makers to focus on putting the money into the alternatives that are needed."

-- *The Guardian*, September 1, 1999.

The case for DDT

Still vital in the fight against malaria

The World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) is urging delegates to next week's United Nations Environment Programme to confirm a global ban on DDT. Who can blame them? It is now 37 years since Rachel Carson, an early eco-warrior, wrote her *Silent Spring*, which included a dire warning against the insecticide, particularly because of its devastating effect on bird life. She identified 40 species at risk from the chemical. Other environmentalists pointed to research which suggested the chemical was building up in the sub-soil because of its non biodegradable character, a growing emergent group of DDT-resistant strains of insects, and even a possible cancer threat to human life. It was banned in many developed states — including the UK and US — beginning in the early 1970s.

Yet now a group of 370 of the world's leading medical experts in malaria are appealing to the same UNEP delegates to hold off from banning the insecticide. And for good reason: the rise in the number of people catching malaria since DDT began to be abandoned in some developing states. Three decades ago it looked as though the insecticide — re-discovered by the Swiss in 1939 — was

on the road to triumph. One decade on from the launch of the 1955 eradication programme, malaria had been eliminated or dramatically reduced in 40 states. In Sri Lanka, the numbers dropped from 2.5m annual infections in 1948 to just 31 in 1962. But then spraying became more controversial and had to compete with other health programmes. Up to 500m cases a year are now being reported around the world. More than 2m are dying from the disease. Nine out of 10 deaths are in Africa, most of the victims being children.

WWF says a ban is needed to force cheaper alternatives to be generated. Yet all the existing alternatives are either too expensive or less effective. The WWF has exaggerated the threat which DDT poses to human health, while several earlier environmental studies have been shown to be too alarmist. No one is suggesting DDT should be liberally sprayed across ponds and fields as it once was, but the medics are right to insist that the insecticide should still be permitted as a house spray until an equally cheap and effective alternative is found. For the moment, DDT remains the most effective way of dealing with mosquitoes which transmit the disease.

**The Associated Press State & Local Wire
September 1, 1999, PM cycle**

HEADLINE: Mossville delegation hopes to speak to UN negotiators

BYLINE: By The Associated Press

David Prince moved to Louisiana 18 years ago so his wife could take care of her dying mother. In the past few years, the Princes and their four children all have developed major ailments. They blame dioxin pollution from the vinyl plant across the street.

Environmental activists are taking Prince to Geneva to try to tell his story, and that of the Mossville community, to United Nations negotiators working toward a treaty to control long-lasting organic pollutants such as dioxins.

"We're certainly going to attempt to have the people we bring with us speak to the U.S. negotiators," said Greenpeace spokeswoman Deborah Rephan.

She said the State Department wants to keep the treaty from including any agreement to reduce or eliminate pollution from dioxin, which is created whenever vinyl is made or burned.

That isn't so, said a State Department official who would not let his name be used. He said negotiators want the treaty to include an agreement to find out how much dioxin pollution each country has and where it is coming from, and then to find ways to prevent, control or reduce the pollution.

The treaty will have to be broad and general because it must cover developing as well as developed countries, he said.

"Outside of the United States and Western Europe, very few countries have done anything to look at their dioxin problem, much less do a strategy," he said.

Prince said he wants to know why the pollution in his neighborhood hasn't been stopped. He was one of 28 people tested for dioxin, and about double the average level was found in his blood. Eleven others had up to triple the average level.

Prince said his wife is the only person in her large family who has cancer. It's ovarian cancer. Their older daughter suffers from endometriosis. Dioxins can cause both, he said.

Prince's 29-year-old son recently had surgery for a deviated septum. The doctor said it appeared to be caused by chemicals, he said. Their younger son almost died from a bleeding ulcer; their younger daughter recently was diagnosed with a bleeding kidney; he himself has abdominal cysts and a hernia.

Dioxins can cause soft-tissue cancer and chloracne, severe acne-like eruptions on the face and upper body.

Some researchers have linked other problems to dioxins, but other studies did not find any connection, said George Pettigrew, senior

regional representative for the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

"There's a wide range of things out there associated with dioxin, from all the way back to Agent Orange and Vietnam days. It's been difficult to get a real handle on," Pettigrew said.

Dioxins from the Condea-Vista plant in Mossville and other factories in the Lake Charles area also are blamed for cancers that have killed many of Prince's neighbors in Mossville, a predominantly black community about seven miles from Lake Charles.

"I have a board up in my back yard of the number of people that have died form cancer," Prince said. "You're talking about an area of less than 2,000 people. In the last 15 years, at least 60, 70 people have died of cancer in the area. If that's not alarming enough, nothing is."

The numbers are in line with statewide cancer death rates. Between 1990 and 1995, cancer killed more than 237 out of every 100,000 blacks in Louisiana per year, according to the Louisiana Tumor Registry. That would be about 4.5 a year for a population of 1,900 or 4.7 a year for a population of 2,000; 70 deaths over 15 years works out to 4.6 a year.

Cancer rates are given per 100,000 because, in a small community, "one death more or less would send the rate skyrocketing or plummeting unrealistically. Which is why cancer registries cannot give you a rate for something that small," said tumor registry liaison Patty Andrews.

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THE BALTIMORE SUN
September 2, 1999

SECTION: EDITORIAL

HEADLINE: Debating the dilemma of a global DDT ban

In a classic clash of good intentions, environmentalists and public health officials are facing off in a passionate debate over whether the pesticide DDT should be banned worldwide. Environmentalists argue that DDT should be outlawed as a dangerous, long-lasting poison that is harmful to humans, lingers in the soil, accumulates in the food chain and disperses widely through water, air and in the flesh of fish and migrating birds. While it is an extremely effective insecticide, DDT is so stubbornly toxic, especially to birds, that in 1972 it was banned in the United States.

To fight malaria:

Most other countries no longer use it for agriculture, but about two dozen—including China, India and Mexico — continue to spray DDT to control malaria. On the other side, many health officials say malaria, which is transmitted by mosquitoes, is on the upswing, at least partly due to a decrease in the use of DDT.

The World Health Organization estimates that 300 million to 500 million new cases of malaria are contracted every year. About 2.7 million malaria victims die annually, 90 percent of them pregnant women and children in poor, undeveloped countries. "A child dies of malaria every 12 seconds," says Dr. Dyann F. Wirth, president of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. "That could go up dramatically if we lose this important control tool." Dr. Wirth and 370 scientists and physicians from 57 countries urged the United Nations not to ban DDT before an alternative is found.

"The relevant question is not whether DDT can pose health risks it can, but whether these risks outweigh the tremendous public health benefits of DDT for malaria control they do not," they said in a letter to diplomats who will meet in Geneva next week to negotiate a treaty on 12 toxic pesticides and chemicals known as "the dirty dozen."

Helping poor countries:

DDT is the most controversial of the chemicals to be discussed. The scientists and doctors suggest a two-phase process that would guarantee poor countries the financial and technical help to obtain alternatives, and to phase out DDT only after the new mosquito-killing methods have been established for the long term.

U.N. negotiators must resolve this agonizing dilemma in favor of human health, but they should seek creative methods that eventually do away with DDT once and for all.

**Copyright 1999 Xinhua News Agency
September 2, 1999**

HEADLINE: UN agency urges to protect environment in use of DDT

Klaus Toepfer, executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Thursday urged to protect public health in the use of pesticide DDT and reduce its pollution to the environment. The director said that his organization believes the DDT is an effective tool against malaria, which is a mosquito-borne disease and one of the top killers on the African continent. However, he also encouraged the search of non-chemical alternatives for DDT and eliminate its pollution and damage to human health caused in its phaseout.

The UN senior official expressed his belief that the human being will find the way to control malaria while safeguarding both public health and the environment. About 110 countries will participate in the third round of talks in Geneva to be held next week to establish an international legally binding treaty to reduce and eliminate persistent organic pollutants (POPs) including DDT.

High on the agenda of the intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) are the control measures and deadlines for action on the 12 pops listed in the mandate from the UNEP governing council.

in addition to DDT are the pesticides-aldrin, chlordane, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mirex, and toxaphene; the industrial chemicals-polychlorinated biphenyls (pcbs) and hexachlorobenzene, which is also a pesticide; and the unintended by-products of combustion and industrial processes-dioxins and furans. "Now is the time to develop a framework for clear control measures on pops-the so-called dirty dozen," said Toepfer.

POPs pose a serious risk to public health and the environment. they last for a long time, traveling long distances from the source. they accumulate in living species, becoming increasingly concentrated and magnified in fatty tissue as they move up the food chain. the unep mandate, which sets a year 2000 deadline for reaching agreement on a POPs convention, also calls for scientific criteria and a procedure for identifying additional pollutants as candidates for international action.

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Canada NewsWire
September 2, 1999**

HEADLINE: Attention News Editors/Environmental Reporters: Dioxins Must Go; Greenpeace tells UN delegates New report shows no safe level of exposure to dangerous pollutant

DATELINE: TORONTO/VANCOUVER, September 2

Greenpeace offices around the world are today urging their government delegates to the United Nations negotiations on toxic chemicals to press for elimination of dioxins at their sources. Some countries, pressured by the powerful chemical industry lobby, are currently concentrating on expensive schemes to reduce dioxin emissions into the environment, which, the environmental group said, will simply prolong the consequences of exposure.

The UN negotiations, which began in Montreal in June 1998, will resume next week in Geneva, Switzerland. From September 6-11, delegates will continue talks on a treaty to control a group of toxic chemicals known as Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). POPs, which include the notorious dioxin family of dioxins, furans and PCBs, can travel far from their source to contaminate people and the environment around the world and have been found in pristine areas as remote as the Arctic and lakes in the Canadian Rocky Mountains.

Because POPs can settle thousands of miles from their point of origin, the outcome of these talks is particularly crucial to Canada, which is a 'net recipient' of a disproportionate volume of these pollutants. Canada's north and its inhabitants are amongst the most contaminated people and places in the world.

The dire consequences intrinsic in continued creation and discharge of dioxins in particular are detailed in a new Greenpeace report, Dioxin Elimination: A Global Imperative, which was released today. The report also presents strategies for dioxin elimination, rather than reduction. "Given the global dispersal of dioxin, and the dangers to human health and future generations, we are urging the treaty negotiators to agree that elimination of all POPs, including dioxins, is imperative," said Morag Simpson, Greenpeace Canada toxics campaigner and a delegate at the POPs negotiations in Geneva next week. "A decision to merely attempt to reduce these unbelievably toxic substances is a decision which will allow the chemical industry a free hand in polluting the environment and endangering human health."

Dioxins are extremely toxic and persistent chemicals - very small amounts may lead to toxic effects. Dioxins are associated with health hazards ranging from reproductive problems to cancer, and other illnesses.

Once released in the environment, they persist for a very long time. Because dioxins are cancerous and can disrupt the hormone system, there

is no safe level of exposure.

Dioxin, furan and PCB contamination can be found in many areas ranging from Love Canal and Times Beach in the US to Seveso in Italy, and stretching to such prominent places as Homebush Bay, part of the Olympic site in Sydney, Australia.

In addition to global POPs which have settled in Canada's once pristine wilderness, numerous domestic burdens have been added as a result of industrial processes, including pulp and paper production, and accidental discharges, including the PVC fire in Hamilton, Ontario.

Simpson is concerned that the Canadian delegation at the POPs treaty negotiation will mirror the position of the US and focus on reduction strategies and risk assessments, despite the volumes of scientific evidence linking dioxin with myriad developmental and reproductive problems in humans and wildlife which are detailed in the new Greenpeace report.

"It's clear from the research that no amount of dioxin exposure is safe," she said.

"Dioxins can cross the placenta and begin to harm a developing foetus. Nursing infants are exposed to larger amounts of dioxins through breast feeding than in any other stage of life. The only way to stop this is to eliminate all sources of dioxins from our environment and bodies."

Last year the World Health Organization lowered its assessed tolerable daily intake of dioxins from 10 picograms (quadrillionth of a gram) per kilogram of body weight per day to 1-4 picograms, emphasizing that the lower figure was preferable. Health Canada has so far refused to follow suit, maintaining, against all contradictory evidence, that 10 picograms is still an acceptable level.

NOTE: Both dioxins and furans are produced as unintentional by-products of many manufacturing and combustion processes, especially processes that use, produce or dispose of chlorine or chlorine-derived chemicals.

A DDT Ban Would Be Deadly

By LORRAINE MOONEY

Yesterday brought reports that two 11-year-old Boy Scouts in Long Island, N.Y., had been stricken with malaria at a scouting camp. Malaria, once close to eradication, is rare enough in the developed world to make news when it strikes. But in developing Southern nations, this parasitic blood disease has returned with a vengeance. Every year it kills some 2.7 million people and leaves another 500 million chronically ill.

Malaria is carried by mosquitoes, and the most cost-effective weapon against the disease is the pesticide DDT. Yet next week U.N. Environment Program delegates meet in Geneva to vote on whether to ban DDT world-wide. In its haste to save the world from a much-exaggerated threat, the U.N. could exacerbate a real health crisis that already affects the lives of millions of people.

Environmentalists have already had much success in thwarting the use of DDT. In Africa they have hounded chemical manufacturers so that they have been reluctant to make or sell DDT. The result is that the pesticide is unavailable in developing countries such as Tanzania and Botswana. Most South American countries, under continuous pressure from lobby groups such as the International Pesticide Action Network, have also stopped using the pesticide.

The exception is Ecuador. It has increased DDT use since 1993 and has seen a 60% decline in new malaria cases. By contrast, Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru, which stopped DDT spraying altogether in 1993, have seen new cases rise more than 90%.

Environmentalists fear that DDT used in the Southern Hemisphere will some-

how drift north and harm wildlife. But malaria control requires only that the insides of houses be sprayed with a small amount of DDT. The amount of DDT a U.S. cotton farmer would have used on a 100-acre crop in 1968 is enough to protect every high-risk house in Guyana for a year or more.

The Malaria Foundation International, a group of more than 350 physicians and scientists who have spent their lives fighting malaria, this week published an open letter to the U.N. delegates urging them not to ban DDT until an alternative is available. It is essential that such a replacement be inexpensive, because many of the afflicted countries are extremely poor.

The World Health Organization's experts and statistical committees have consistently endorsed house-spray methods and recommended DDT as the insecticide of choice. But WHO's leaders have decided to turn their backs on preventive measures. The organization's high-profile "Roll Back Malaria" campaign does not even mention house spraying, preferring to promote the development of new drugs and a vaccine.

Such efforts are embryonic and underfunded. No suitable drug is available, and no commercial company is developing one. The Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, which invented three of the four malaria drugs developed since World War II, now receives only \$5 million a year from the U.S. government for malaria-drug work. An effective vaccine is years away. The U.S. Army and Navy, which have the leading vaccine laboratories in the world,

together spend another \$5 million a year on malaria vaccine research. Even if a successful vaccine were found tomorrow, a vaccination program for the Third World would probably be costly and unrealistic in the short term.

Malaria is an economic disaster, too. For every person who dies of malaria some 200 survivors are burdened by the disease. They cannot work productively, and often need expensive hospitalization. According to a report by South African economist Richard Tren for the Institute of Economic Affairs,

malaria may cost Southern African countries more than \$1 billion a year—4% of their combined total economy. In South Africa, where malaria rates are up 500% in recent years, the disease kills far more people than AIDS. But South Africans are reluctant to defend chemical pesticides for fear of losing foreign aid, trade deals and political goodwill from First World politicians.

The DDT-malaria issue is a stark illustration of the conflict between the developed and developing world. For the sake of a possible environmental threat to birds of prey in the "civilized" world, millions of people in developing countries are dying. This must stop. The U.N. delegates in Geneva should vote against banning DDT.

Ms. Mooney is medical demographer for the European Science and Environment Forum, based in Cambridge, England. She is co-editor of "Environmental Health: Third World Problems; First World Preoccupations" (Butterworth-Heinemann, 1999).



Let us spray:
Malaria carrier

The New York Times

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1999

EDITORIALS/LETTERS

Don't Set a Date

To the Editor:

An Aug. 29 front-page article reports that Physicians for Social Responsibility and the World Wildlife Fund are concerned about the health effects of the pesticide DDT and that the wildlife fund is "pressing for a ban on DDT by 2007."

As your article notes, setting a specific date for such a ban is "extremely contentious." Indeed, countries must balance the risks of DDT with the need to control malaria. Thus, Physicians for Social Responsibility has never endorsed a particular date for elimination of DDT. Rather, we advocate phasing out the use of DDT based on the needs of individual countries, with exceptions for any country with a public health emergency.

There are proven and cost-effective alternatives to the use of DDT, and we urge countries to move quickly toward these solutions. However, we do not presume to know how quickly this can be done or to suggest that countries adopt our time lines for compliance.

ROBERT K. MUSIL
Executive Director

Physicians for Social Responsibility
Washington, Aug. 31, 1999

THE NEW YORK TIMES

September 2, 1999

EDITORIALS/LETTERS

Victims of Poverty

To the Editor:

While a potential worldwide ban on the pesticide DDT may appear superficially to pit environmental protection against public health, economics lies at the root of this conflict (front page, Aug. 29).

Malaria is now a disease primarily of the tropics, especially Africa. Because most of its victims are poor, many drug companies conclude that there is no market for an anti-malarial vaccine, so they don't make the needed investment.

This forces malaria-ridden countries to use a second-class malaria control program based on DDT that both harms the environment and threatens other aspects of human health.

Were malaria still endemic in the United States, Europe or Japan, there would have been a huge push to develop a vaccine long ago.

JOHN PETERSON MYERS
Director, W. Alton Jones Foundation
Charlottesville, Va., Aug 30, 1999

TERRAVIVA

The Inter Press Service Daily Journal
September 3, 1999

U.S. URGED TO ELIMINATE DIOXINS

by Danielle Knight

WASHINGTON, Sep. 2 (IPS) - Eighteen years ago David Prince had no thoughts of leaving his home in Louisiana to travel to the UN's European headquarters to lend his voice to demands for the phasing-out of toxic chemicals worldwide. But that was before government officials discovered that the blood levels of Prince and other residents of the mainly African American area of Mossville, Louisiana, were contaminated with a pollutant called dioxin - two to three times higher than the national average. He and others now wanted the worldwide elimination of these chemicals that have the ability to travel thousands of miles. "We want chemical plants to stop producing these toxins and we want them to stop it immediately," Prince says. He told reporters here that his wife has cancer and his daughter has endometriosis, a reproductive disease some researchers believe may be linked to exposure to dioxins. Next week Prince will join the environmental group Greenpeace at the United Nations in Geneva, where about 100 nations will resume formal negotiations on a treaty to control a group of toxic chemicals known as Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), which include dioxins. Along with other POP chemicals like DDT and PCBs, dioxins break down extremely slowly in the

environment and are linked to reproductive abnormalities, neurological defects and cancer.

Unlike the pesticide DDT, dioxins have not been produced intentionally; but they are generated as wastes and by-products when municipal and hazardous waste is burned or in the manufacture of chemicals containing chlorine, such as pesticides, PVC (vinyl) plastics, and paper products. The

pollutants can affect other communities that need not be similar to those in Mossville - who live close to paper mills and vinyl plants that produce dioxins, scientists warn. Like other POPs, dioxins are labelled "persistent" because they travel worldwide and accumulate in the fatty tissue of animals and humans. Dioxin-contaminated food made headlines recently in Europe but non-governmental organisations (NGOs) say the US position on the POPs treaty in relation to dioxin has been substantially weakened by pressure from the chemical industry. Environmental groups are worried that the US State Department, which has not formally released its official stance on dioxins at the Geneva negotiations, will not support any tough action to eliminate the substances. "The key to solving the problem of dioxin contamination should be reduction with the aim to eliminate the substances from use and production," says Jack Weinberg, a Greenpeace specialist on POPs.

He says that without calling for outright elimination, the chemical companies will be able to still produce dioxins through "loopholes" and the lack of capacity for enforcement of dioxin reduction programmes in developing nations. "There is great pressure by chemical manufacturers to push these materials and technologies like PVC plastics in developing countries," says Weinberg, who founded the International POPs Eliminations Network (IPEN), a coalition of NGOs. As promoted by the United States, the proposed Geneva treaty will not provide the framework and tools for developing countries to avoid dioxin contamination by enforcing the reduction of the chemicals, he says. "Many developing countries do not have the infrastructure to do this," Weinberg adds. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) subtle health effects already may be occurring in the general population in industrialised nations at current background levels of dioxin in the environment. Many indigenous communities in North America that have been heavily contaminated by dioxins are closely watching the talks in Geneva. "Because dioxins build up in the food chain only working towards the aim of total elimination of these chemicals will have an impact," says Jackie Warledo of the Indigenous Environmental Network.

Warledo says that, while dioxins and other POP chemicals can migrate anywhere in the world, they have a disproportionate impact on indigenous communities - especially tribes that still maintain subsistence culture. "High levels of dioxin poisoning have been found in fish populations in the traditional territories of the Yakama located in the Northwest, in Penobscots in the state of Maine and also among many tribes within the Great Lakes water basin region and villages in Alaska," says Warledo, who will travel to Geneva next week. Low-income Black communities, like Mossville and other populations along the Mississippi River in between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, dubbed "cancer alley" by environmental activists - have also borne the brunt of dioxin pollution. More than 50 paper and PVC plants and other factories are located around Mossville, says Peter Orris, a US physician who directs a project on POPs at the Washington-based World Federation of Public Health Associations. "There is no question that there is a problem of dioxin contamination in Mossville," says Orris who worked

with the US Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry on the health study conducted in the town. As the study found high levels of dioxins and in the blood of long-time residents of Mossville it advised public health officials to take action to minimize further exposure. The final word comes from David Prince: "The US government needs to stop its rhetoric and start listening to the people and get these plants to stop producing dioxins."

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Financial Times (London)
September 3, 1999
USA EDITION 2

HEADLINE: US role in chemical treaty questioned

BYLINE: By Nancy Dunne in Washington

DATELINE: Washington

US environmental negotiators arrived in Geneva this week trailed by charges that the US has caved in to pressure from lobbyists and will support only a weakened version of a treaty designed to phase out 12 of world's most dangerous chemicals.

Efforts to negotiate an international convention on "persistent organic pollutants" such as dioxin and DDT have been under way for more than a year under a United Nations mandate, which calls for agreement by next year.

Representatives of more than 100 countries nations will resume negotiations next week in Geneva.

Non-governmental organisations this week said that briefings by the US State Department indicated that the US would propose a change in language that would weaken the requirement to phase out chemicals produced as a byproduct of other processes, such as dioxin.

A spokesman for Physicians for Social Responsibility said that the US proposal for byproducts accidentally produced "doesn't require anyone to do any-thing".

Rick Hind of Greenpeace, the environmental group, said language that would require the phase-out has been replaced with wording calling for a plan to reduce or eliminate them. "We wouldn't oppose a plan, but the plan has to have teeth," he said.

A State Department spokesman denied that the US was weakening its position on byproducts. The US wants a treaty that will be broadly accepted by all interests in the global community, he said.

Persistent organic pollutants - or Pops - are the result of industrial processes, chemical manufacturing and the waste they produce. They remain in the environment for years and travel great distances.

Ecosystems and food supplies in most of the world are contaminated by Pops. Research has linked Pops to reproductive abnormalities, neurological defects and cancer.

THE ECONOMIST

September 4, 1999

LEADERS

Silent sting



Banning DDT is a great idea whose time has not yet come

ALMOST four decades have passed since Rachel Carson, in "Silent Spring", exposed the dangers of DDT. She horrified Americans by showing that some pesticides are transmitted through the food chain until they can destroy the reproductive systems of such birds as the robin and the bald eagle. Her book proved a clarion call for the modern environmental movement in America. It also seemed to sound the death-knell for DDT: in the years since, every country in the developed world has banned the stuff.

Not all pesticides are equally harmful; and there is even evidence that some birds know how to avoid them (see page 85). However, there is little doubt about the nasty effects, on humans as well as on wildlife, of such persistent organic pollutants as DDT and dioxins. These accumulate in the body over time, and have been linked to cancer, endocrine disruption and other ills. Worse, they can travel thousands of miles: polar bears have been found with them.

Now, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is co-ordinating negotiations for a new international treaty to curb the use of 12 of the worst pollutants. But even before officials meet next week in Geneva to work on a first draft of such an accord, a bitter row has broken out over, guess what: DDT. For it so happens that this notorious pesticide is used by two dozen poor countries to fight malaria.

The green lobbies argue that because the harmful effects of DDT are so clear, it should be banned worldwide by 2007. Public-health officials retort that this would condemn millions to misery or death from a preventable disease. The health argument is the stronger. The greens' impulse to ban this thoroughly nasty pesticide is well-intentioned, but malaria still plagues hundreds of millions of the world's poorest people; and worse, it is on the rise. Malaria exacts a heavy economic price, in lost productivity, and it means sure death for several million children every year. And the only effective defence many have against it is to spray DDT inside their homes.

There are alternatives, such as bed nets and prophylactic drugs, but limitations of cost, user acceptance and infrastructure mean that they offer no easy fix.

There are, however, three useful steps against DDT that the treaty negotiators could agree on. For a start, rich countries should concede that they will not push for a complete ban, even if it is dressed up with "exceptions" for emergencies, unless and until malaria is no longer a menace. Achieving that could take many years, for it will require technological advances in drugs and pesticides, as well as a development of public-health infrastructure in poor countries. Such a move would help win over poorer countries, whose co-operation is essential for the second step: a complete ban on the use of DDT outside the home, notably in farming. Although many countries already have such a ban in theory, poor enforcement means that it often leaks into agriculture. UNEP reckons that as much as half of the DDT used today is for purposes other than fighting malaria inside homes.

Pay and play

The third and hardest step is for rich countries to put some cash on the table. Some should be used to boost incentives for firms in the rich world to look for malaria vaccines, therapeutic drugs or alternative pesticides to DDT. That will take time. Meanwhile, though, more money would help agencies such as the World Health Organisation to expand the use of non-chemical measures against malaria, such as draining swamps or biological control, that would reduce DDT use.

These three measures will not satisfy all those who lie awake at night worrying about bald eagles. But they would tilt the scales toward compassion for the avoidable suffering of the world's poorest people. And they could produce something that will benefit both the world's haves and its have-nots: a widely observed treaty to phase out some of the worst pollutants that man has ever invented.

**The Associated Press State & Local Wire
World ban sought on 12 chemicals**

GENEVA - Measures to control 12 toxic chemicals known as "the dirty dozen" are at the top of the agenda as negotiators from 110 countries gather today for talks on the first global treaty to limit or ban the substances.

A key issue facing delegates is how far and fast to go toward banning the chemicals, which include pesticides and industrial chemicals linked to cancer, birth defects and other abnormalities.

The 12 persistent organic pollutants, including DDT, dioxin and PCBs, are highly toxic chemicals that break down extremely slowly and are taken up in the food chain.

The United Nations Environment Program hopes to conclude a treaty next year.

The San Diego Union-Tribune

HEADLINE: Toxic chemicals on treaty agenda

SOURCE: Associated Press

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The five-day session, involving some 400 participants from 110 countries, is the third in a planned series of five. The United Nations Environment Program hopes to conclude a treaty next year.

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WIRE:09/05/1999 13:11:00 ET

Negotiators resume efforts toward toxic chemical control treaty

RAW NEWS

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"This is the first time they're actually going to start talking about what control measures, for instance, to deal with PCBs and aging transformers, what to do about dioxins and furans," said Linda Durkee of UNEP's chemicals office.

This meeting and the next, in Bonn, Germany next April, "will form the meat of the treaty," said Clifton Curtis, director of the World Wide Fund for Nature's Global Toxic Initiative.

The WWF has called for a global ban on DDT which,

RAW NEWS



- U.S./CANADA
- LATIN AMERICA
- AFRICA
- EUROPE
- ASIA-PACIFIC
- MIDDLE EAST
- WORLD AT A GLANCE

although banned in 34 countries and severely restricted in 34 others, is still endorsed by the World Health Organization for use in the control of malaria-carrying mosquitoes.

UNEP has "a clear and paramount interest in saving human lives" from malaria and other diseases, Klaus Toepfer, the head of UNEP, said ahead of this week's session.

UNEP "believes DDT is and will be a tool against these serious illnesses for some time as countries build the capacity to use an array of alternatives."

Other issues at stake include a process for implementing a treaty, including technical and financial assistance to help countries shift to environmentally safe alternatives. Criteria for adding other toxic chemicals also are envisaged.

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September 05, 1999; Sunday 13:12 Eastern Time

SECTION: International news

LENGTH: 330 words

HEADLINE: Toxic Chemical Control Treaty Eyed

DATELINE: GENEVA

BODY:

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Associated Press.
September 5, 1999, Sunday, AM cycle

HEADLINE: Negotiators resume efforts toward toxic chemical control treaty

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UNEP "believes DDT is and will be a tool against these serious illnesses for some time as countries build the capacity to use an array of alternatives."

Other issues at stake include a process for implementing a treaty, including technical and financial assistance to help countries shift to environmentally safe alternatives. Criteria for adding other toxic chemicals also are envisaged.

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The Times-Picayune
September 5, 1999
ORLEANS**

***** Mossville residents go to Geneva *****

As negotiators from more than 100 nations convene in Geneva this week to hash out the details of an international agreement on pollution, two residents of the Mossville community outside Lake Charles will be there to complain about Louisiana's record. Under the auspices of the United Nations, countries are negotiating a global agreement to set limits on persistent organic pollutants: chemicals released into the environment by manufacturing, in pesticides and by other means. The Mossville residents are traveling courtesy of the environmental group Greenpeace, which has targeted the state's chemical industry and government for an ongoing series of protests. At a Washington news conference last week, Edgar Mouton and David Prince said they were going to raise Mossville's profile and alert international organizations about its problems. Mossville is a small, predominantly African-American neighborhood with several chemical plants.

Federal health investigators have tested residents and found abnormally high levels of dioxins in their blood. Dioxins are highly toxic, cancer-causing chemicals produced in trace amounts by various chemical manufacturing processes, including the production of polyvinyl chloride. Gov. Foster has appointed a task force to study the problem.



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 **Environment**



UN Meetings Work Towards Global Waste, POPs Pacts

GENEVA, Switzerland, September 6, 1999 (ENS) - Delegates from 87 countries meeting here last week made progress towards a Protocol on Liability and Compensation for Damage Resulting from Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal. The draft text will now be forwarded to the Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Basel Convention (COP-5) for further negotiation.

COP-5 will take place in Basel, Switzerland, from December 6-10 and will mark the Convention's tenth anniversary. The Basel Convention was adopted in March 1989 and entered into force in May 1992. It has 130 Parties.

If adopted and then ratified, the new Protocol will for the first time establish a rigorous system for assigning liability in the event of an accident involving hazardous wastes. This liability is to be strict, regardless of fault. However, the Protocol is also expected to place a cap on financial liability. The exact amount of this cap will still need to be agreed.

**September 1998
North Eyiokos Gulf,
Greece. Greenpeace
activists try to stop
illegal dumping of
industrial waste by
Ferronkkel Industry
Larco SA (Photo (c)
courtesy GP/ Nikolaidis)**



In addition, there is to be a legal requirement to take insurance for all hazardous waste shipments. Because this requirement would be combined with a liability cap the insurance industry should be able to provide effective coverage.

While good progress has been made on liability, the question of whether or not to establish an Emergency and Compensatory Fund

for assisting developing countries faced with unwanted wastes has proved more difficult.

The scope of the Protocol remains to be resolved. The question is - should it cover only the wastes characterized as hazardous under the Basel Convention, or should it also address wastes defined as hazardous in national legislation?

Other critical issues to be addressed include the need for environmentally sound management of wastes, the prevention of illegal traffic, and the need to minimize the generation of hazardous wastes at source.

PERSISTANT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS

Opening today, another high level meeting will try to agree on international limitations on a group of the most hazardous persistent organic pollutants (POPs).

The third session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for an International Legally Binding Instrument for Implementing International Action on Certain Persistent Organic Pollutants (INC-3), will meet from September 6 to 11 in Geneva.

Greenpeace today released a catalogue of 50 toxic hotspots around the world, identifying highly contaminated areas stretching from the Arctic in the North to Homebush Bay, part of the Olympic site in Sydney, Australia.

Hotspots were identified in: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Japan, Lebanon, Mozambique, Nepal, The Netherlands, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, USA and Vietnam.

The environmental group called on delegates to agree to eliminate the most dangerous and long lasting chemicals on the planet. More than a dozen activists and children welcomed delegates with pictures of children who suffer from dioxin and other chemical poisoning.



Speaking at the last POPs negotiating session in January 1999, UN Environment Programme executive director Dr. Klaus Töpfer said the 12 POPs listed for action are truly the "dirty dozen." He said a global solution must be reached by the year 2000. (Photo courtesy Earth Negotiations Bulletin)

The second session of the Criteria Expert Group for POPs met from June 14 to 18 at the Vienna International Center. About 140 participants representing 60 countries developed scientific criteria and a procedural process for adding other POPs to the initial list of 12 identified for global action.

The 12 POPs now addressed by this agreement in formation are: the pesticides aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mirex and toxaphene; the industrial chemicals polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and hexachlorobenzene which is also a pesticide; and the combustion byproducts dioxins and furans.

POPs are chemical substances that persist, bioaccumulate, travel long distances and build up through the food chain. As evidence builds of the long range transport of these substances to regions where they have never been used or produced and the threats they now pose to the environment worldwide, the international community has called for urgent global action to reduce and eliminate their release into the environment.

The need to integrate science into the broader procedural and policy considerations of a legally binding convention lured delegates in the Criteria Expert Group for POPs beyond their mandate into political hazards during the June meeting.

Concepts such as the precautionary principle, socioeconomic concerns or capacity building within the screening process and procedure need to be addressed but were beyond the scope of the expert scientists.

Lengthy debates over definitions such as long-range environmental transport led to questions of how to address regions and what the scope of the eventual convention will be.

These questions will be on the minds of delegates to the POPs negotiations gathering in Geneva today.

{Earth Negotiations Bulletin contributed to this report.}

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Negotiators meet to move toward toxic chemical treaty

GEIR MOULSON, Associated Press Writer

(09-06) 11:51 PDT GENEVA (AP) — Talks on a global treaty to control or ban 12 toxic chemicals known as "the dirty dozen" got down to details Monday, with officials hopeful that the outline of an agreement will take shape this week.

The 12 pesticides and industrial chemicals, which include DDT, dioxin and PCBs, break down extremely slowly and are taken up in the food chain. Environmental groups are insisting that negotiators move quickly toward banning the chemicals, which have been linked to cancer, birth defects and other abnormalities.

Concentrations of the chemicals are highest in the Arctic regions of Alaska, Canada, Scandinavia and Russia as pollution is carried northward by winds and ocean currents from industrial countries.

"Now is the time to begin developing the specific control measures and deadlines," Klaus Toepfer, head of the United Nations Environment Program, told some 400 delegates from 110 countries as he opened the five-day session.

This year's dioxin food contamination scandal in Belgium was a "wake-up call," Toepfer said. In May, the Belgian government said it found high levels of the toxic chemical in eggs, meat and dairy products.

This week's talks are the third in a planned series of five. Toepfer told reporters he is confident that they will produce a legally binding agreement on target, by the end of next year.

A key issue is financial and technological aid to developing countries from industrialized countries to help them phase out use of the "dirty dozen." But officials declined to estimate the cost of controlling or banning the substances.

DDT, which environmental campaigners want banned globally, is expected to cause the most controversy. Although prohibited in 34 countries and severely restricted in 34 others, it is still

Monday, September 6, 1999
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09/05/1999 - Negotiators resume efforts toward toxic chemical control treaty .

01/20/1999 - Nations to start negotiating toxic chemical treaty .

06/29/1998 - Negotiations open on treaty to ban chemicals like DDT, PCBs .

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endorsed by the World Health Organization for use in the control of malaria-carrying mosquitoes.

"We have to listen very carefully to the scientists (and) to those fighting malaria in the field," Toepfer said, pointing out that alternatives might be more expensive than DDT.

Romeo Quijano, of the Philippines' Pesticide Action Network, asserted that "the barriers to implementing alternatives to DDT are financial and political, not scientific."

Outside the conference center, Greenpeace activists dressed in laboratory coats stood with placards urging negotiators to take the 12 chemicals "down to zero."

But in some cases banning a chemical isn't so simple. Banning dioxin, for example, is difficult "because you cannot ban all the different industrial processes," Toepfer said.

A signing conference has been planned for Stockholm in 2001.

September 6, 1999

LENGTH: 542 words

HEADLINE: ONU-MEDIO AMBIENTE
CONCLUYE TERCERA RONDA PARA ELIMINACION DE QUIMICOS PELIGROSOS

BODY:

Ginebra, 6 sep (EFE).- La tercera ronda negociadora para la eliminacion de una docena de productos quimicos, considerados como los mas nocivos jamas inventados por el hombre, concluyo en Ginebra con la participacion de mas de 400 expertos de 110 paises.

El proceso negociador del tratado sobre la eliminacion de los llamados contaminantes organicos persistentes (COP), texto que debera estar acabado el ano proximo, se inicio en junio de 1998 en Montreal, continuo en Nairobi en enero pasado y esta previsto que se realicen otras dos reuniones el ano proximo.

El director del Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente (PNUMA), Klaus Toepfer, que organizo la reunion, dijo hoy, lunes, en una rueda de prensa, que los COP son "las sustancias mas toxicas que hayan sido inventadas por el hombre".

Toepfer desea que establezcan medidas claras de control sobre estas sustancias quimicas y un calendario preciso para su eliminacion, para lo que se esta negociando el citado tratado.

La conclusion de un acuerdo de estas características y su entrada en vigor debe contemplar tambien que los paises en desarrollo tendran necesidad de ayuda financiera para aplicar las medidas de reconversion necesaria que les haga prescindir de los COP.

La solucion preconizada por el PNUMA es promover el uso de sustancias que reemplacen a los COP, los cuales se emplean como pesticidas pero tambien aparecen como subproductos de procesos industriales.

El tratado debe contemplar la prohibicion de doce sustancias quimicas especialmente peligrosas, entre ellas pesticidas como la aldrina, la toxafena o la heptaclorina; productos quimicos como el hexaclorobenceno y subproductos de procesos industriales, entre ellos, las dioxinas.

Numerosas organizaciones gubernamentales y no gubernamentales, como Greenpeace, estan implicadas en campanas para la prohibicion y eliminacion del uso de estos productos.

Se considera, que solo pesticidas como el DDT deberian ser autorizados para su uso en algunas regiones del mundo, pues es indispensable en la lucha contra la malaria.

Los contaminantes organicos persistentes se llaman asi porque permanecen durante largos periodos de tiempo en el medio ambiente antes de descomponerse y pueden desplazarse a miles de kilometros del lugar donde han sido emitidos a la atmosfera.

Estas sustancias, con multiples efectos nocivos, se acumulan en los tejidos de la mayor parte de los seres vivos, que los absorben al mismo tiempo que el alimento, el agua o el aire.

Los COP suelen acumularse en los tejidos adiposos del hombre y los animales, donde se han llegado a encontrar concentraciones hasta 70.000 veces superiores a los niveles normales detectados en el medio ambiente.

La exposicion a los COP entre los humanos hace aumentar el peligro de sufrir cancer,

malformaciones y esterilidad, siendo los mas vulnerables los bebes, que los absorben por la leche materna, y los fetos, a los que se les transmiten por la placenta.

En los animales, estas sustancias provocan malformaciones congenitas, cancer y disfunciones en el sistema inmunitario y aparato reproductor.

Los animales mas expuestos a estos peligros son los marinos, en especial las focas, marsopas y delfines, explico Toepfer. EFE

**United Press International
September 6, 1999, BC cycle**

HEADLINE: UPI Focus: (UPI Science News) Ecology groups call for ban of DDT

BYLINE: BY JOHN ZAROCOSTAS

DATELINE: GENEVA, Switzerland, Sept. 6

Ecology groups from more than 40 rich and poor countries called for a global ban of the toxic chemical DDT on the opening of the third round of talks on reaching a treaty to reduce or eliminate the most persistent organic pollutants. The call for the ban was made by the International POPs Elimination Network, an umbrella group of 180 non-governmental organizations, as more than 400 delegates from more than 110 countries began a 6-day meeting on crafting a global accord to cover 12 of the most toxic pollutants. Activists from the ecology group Greenpeace held a banner outside the entrance to the conference venue that stated: "No time to waste, stop killer chemicals." "No country is immune from the risk posed by persistent organic pollutants, and no country acting alone can solve this global problem," said Klaus Topler, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Program. Topler told reporters securing a legally binding convention on the "dirty dozen" of POPs that pose a major risk to human health will be a challenge. "We know solutions are not easy to negotiate," he said. The 12 POPs, besides DDT, are the pesticides Aldrin, Chlordane, dieldrin, Heptachlor, mirex, and toxaphene, the industrial chemicals polychlorinated biphenyls and hexachlorobenzene, and the by-products of industrial products of combustion and industrial processes dioxins and furans. Topler said that DDT, while abolished in most industrialized countries, is still used in more than 20 countries in fighting malaria. Safer alternatives to DDT are still too costly for many poor countries.

The UNEP chief said there is strong interest in taking action against POPs and pointed out that over 90 countries are pursuing this task. The Canadian chairman of the talks John Buccini said that DDT is a great and complex issue to address and "could stand alone in the negotiations." The current round, the third of five, will tackle which of the 12 POPs could be scheduled for complete elimination or control and also examine criteria for identifying future toxic pollutants. Buccini said the objective is to reach a successful accord by the end of 2000. Greenpeace also released a 69-page report titled: "Opening Pandora's Box: A catalogue of 50 POPs Hotspots World-wide." which provides details on contaminated sites in 19 countries ranging from industrial sites to stockpiled materials and obsolete pesticides. The cases, selected at random, includes contaminated sites in the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, the

Philippines, Thailand, Mozambique, Pakistan, and Turkey, among others. In the United States, Greenpeace sites dioxin contaminated fish and seafood was found in Penobscot River, Maine; Columbia River, Ore.; PCB contamination in St. Lawrence River, N.Y.; and Dioxin and PCB contamination of the Calcasieu Estuary in Lake Charles, La. The Greenpeace report estimates the contaminants in Lake Charles at 120,000 tons and says a complete removal of the wastes is needed. ---

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September 06, 1999; Monday 11:09 Eastern Time

SECTION: International news

LENGTH: 519 words

HEADLINE: AP Photos GEV104-5

BYLINE: GEIR MOULSON

DATELINE: GENEVA

BODY:

Talks on a global treaty to control or ban 12 toxic chemicals known as "the dirty dozen" were getting down to details Monday, with officials hopeful that the basic outline of the accord will start to take shape this week.

The persistent organic pollutants, including DDT, dioxin and PCBs, are highly toxic chemicals that break down extremely slowly and are taken up in the food chain. Concentrations are highest in the world's most northerly regions.

Environmental groups are insisting that negotiators move quickly toward banning the chemicals, which include pesticides and industrial chemicals linked to cancer, birth defects and other abnormalities.

"Now is the time to begin developing the specific control measures and deadlines," Klaus Toepfer, head of the United Nations Environment Program, told some 400 delegates from 110 countries as he opened the five-day session.

This week's talks are the third in a planned series of five. Toepfer told reporters he is confident that they will produce a legally binding agreement on target, by the end of next year.

John Buccini of Canada, chairman of the session, said he hoped by the end of this week, "we would have shaped the basic obligations and have had a very meaningful discussion on what it will mean to implement those obligations."

A key issue is financial and technological aid to developing countries from industrialized countries to help them phase out use of the "dirty dozen." But officials declined to estimate the cost of controlling or banning the substances.

DDT, which environmental campaigners want banned globally, is expected to cause the most controversy as negotiators examine each chemical.

Although prohibited in 34 countries and severely restricted in 34 others, it is still endorsed by the World Health Organization for use in the control of malaria-carrying mosquitoes.

"We have to listen very carefully to the scientists (and) to those fighting malaria in the field," Toepfer said.

"We have to stimulate the alternatives and we have to be aware that alternatives might be, at least in the beginning, more expensive than DDT."

Romeo Quijano, of the Philippines' Pesticide Action Network, asserted that "the barriers to implementing alternatives to DDT are financial and political, not scientific."

Outside the conference center, Greenpeace activists dressed in laboratory coats stood with placards urging negotiators to take the chemicals "down to zero."

But in some cases dioxin, for example "you cannot simply ban it because you cannot ban all the different industrial processes," Toepfer said. "You can have a clear momentum to decrease and phase out wherever possible."

This year's dioxin food contamination scandal in Belgium was a "wake-up call," he said.

"We are not only discussing these 12 substances," Toepfer added, noting that the planned convention also would include criteria for adding other toxic chemicals.

A signing conference has been planned for Stockholm in 2001. Buccini said the treaty likely will take effect two years after that.

September 6, 1999

SECTION: No. 10, Vol. 256; Pg. 7 ; ISSN: 1092-0110

IAC-ACC-NO: 55705255

LENGTH: 418 words

HEADLINE: Dioxins Should Be Eliminated at the Source.

BODY:

This week's UN meeting will resume talks on ways to control POPs.

GREENPEACE IS urging delegates to the United Nations negotiations on toxic chemicals to agree to eliminate dioxins at their sources, rather than concentrating on expensive schemes to reduce dioxin emissions to the environment.

Delegates from approximately 110 nations are meeting this week (September 6-11) in Geneva, Switzerland, to resume talks on a legally binding global treaty to control a group of chemicals known as **persistent organic pollutants (POPs)**.

POPs are substances that are persistent, bioaccumulative, and can cause adverse effects to humans and the environment. Because these substances can travel far from their sources to regions where they have never been used or produced, an international treaty is now considered the only way to properly address the problem.

Under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Program, negotiators are initially focusing on a dozen chemicals: the pesticides aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mirex and toxaphene; the industrial chemicals hexachlorobenzene and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs); and dioxins and furans, which are unintended byproducts of certain manufacturing and combustion processes.

"Given the global dispersal of dioxin, and the dangers to human health and future generations, we are urging the treaty negotiators to agree that elimination of all POPs, including dioxin, is imperative," says Juan Lopez de Uralde, Greenpeace International Toxics Campaign Coordinator.

"A decision to merely reduce these super toxics is a decision to accept the risks posed by these chemicals and allows the chemical industry a free hand to continue to pollute the environment and endanger human health," Mr. Lopez de Uralde asserts.

Jack Weinberg, a Greenpeace toxics campaigner, says this third round of talks is likely to focus on whether participating nations will develop language to eliminate or reduce dioxin exposure. If the treaty is aimed at reducing exposure, he says the language will have to describe how those reductions should be achieved.

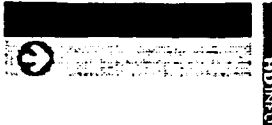
Another issue of debate will be control measures for identifiable products that release POPs, such as DDT. Although the toxic pesticide has long been banned in the US, Mr. Weinberg says it is still used in some areas of the world to control malaria.

A key issue for the chemical industry is how the criteria for adding more substances to the treaty will be outlined.

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The Ottawa Citizen
September 6, 1999**

**HEADLINE: News of the World
Europe: Toxic Chemical Treaty Tops Agenda**

Measures to control 12 toxic chemicals known as "the dirty dozen" are at the top of the agenda as negotiators gather today in Geneva for talks on the first global treaty to limit or ban the substances. The chemicals include pesticides and chemicals linked to cancer, birth defects and other abnormalities.



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Negotiations resuming on global treaty to control toxic chemicals

September 6, 1999
Web posted at: 1:34 AM EDT (0534 GMT)

GENEVA (AP) -- Measures to control 12 toxic chemicals known as "the dirty dozen" are at the top of the agenda as negotiators gather Monday for talks on the first global treaty to limit or ban the substances.

A key issue facing delegates is how far and fast to go toward banning the chemicals, which include pesticides and industrial chemicals linked to cancer, birth defects and other abnormalities.

The 12 persistent organic pollutants, including DDT, dioxin and PCBs, are highly toxic chemicals that break down extremely slowly and are taken up in the food chain.

The five-day session, involving some 400 participants from 110 countries, is the third in a planned series of five. The U.N. Environment Program hopes to conclude a treaty next year.

"This is the first time they're actually going to start talking about what control measures, for instance, to deal with PCBs and aging transformers, what to do about dioxins and furans," said Linda Durkee of UNEP's chemicals office.

This meeting and the next, in Bonn, Germany next April, "will form the meat of the treaty," said Clifton Curtis, director of the World Wide Fund for Nature's Global Toxic Initiative.

The WWF has called for a global ban on DDT which, although banned in 34 countries and severely restricted in 34 others, is still endorsed by the World Health Organization for use in the control of malaria-carrying mosquitoes.

UNEP has "a clear and paramount interest in saving human lives" from malaria and other diseases, Klaus Toepfer, the head of U.N group said ahead of this week's session.

UNEP "believes DDT is and will be a tool against these serious illnesses for some time as countries build the capacity to use an array

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of alternatives."

Other issues at stake include a process for implementing a treaty, including technical and financial assistance to help countries shift to environmentally safe alternatives. Criteria for adding other toxic chemicals also are envisaged.

Dayton Daily News

September 6, 1999

CITY EDITION

HEADLINE: NEWS DIGEST

Talks begin on limiting 'dirty dozen' chemicals

GENEVA - Measures to control 12 toxic chemicals known as "the dirty dozen" are at the top of the agenda as negotiators gather today for talks on the first global treaty to limit or ban the substances. A key issue facing delegates is how far and fast to go toward banning the chemicals, which include pesticides and industrial chemicals linked to cancer, birth defects and other abnormalities. The 12 persistent organic pollutants, including DDT, dioxin and PCBs, are highly toxic chemicals that break down extremely slowly and are taken up in the food chain.

Financial Times (London)
September 6, 1999
London Edition 1

HEADLINE: Geneva pesticide talks

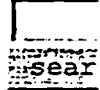
United Nations talks on a treaty to curb persistent organic Pollutants (pops) resume in Geneva (to Sept 11). About 110 governments are taking part in the talks which aim to ban or restrict 12 long-lasting toxic pesticides, industrial chemicals and dioxins that pose a serious risk to public health and to the environment. However, health experts have expressed concern about plans to phase out DDT, banned in the west but still used in developing countries against the malaria-carrying mosquito. The UN environment programme hopes to complete the treaty next year.

STOP POPS BEFORE WE DROP

Talks began yesterday in Geneva on a global treaty to control or ban 12 toxic chemicals known as "the dirty dozen," including DDT, dioxin, and PCBs. Enviro's are pressing negotiators to move quickly to ban the persistent organic pollutants (POPs), which break down extremely slowly, are absorbed into the food chain, and have been linked to cancer, birth defects, and other grave health problems. This week's talks are the third in a planned series of five, and Klaus Toepfer, head of the U.N. Environment Program said he is confident that negotiators will produce a legally binding agreement on POPs by the end of next year. A key issue is financial and technological aid that developing countries need to help them phase out the toxic chemicals. Controversy is expected over DDT, which the World Health Organization says is still needed to control malaria-carrying mosquitoes.

**straight to the source: San Francisco Chronicle/Examiner, Associated Press, Geir Moulson, 09.07.99
<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/news/archive/1999/09/06/international1451EDT0567.DTL>**

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<http://cnn.com/NATURE/9909/06/environment.pollutants.reut/index.html>**



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WIRE:09/06/1999 12:06:00 ET

UN Environment Chief Sees Pollutant Pact Next Year

RAW NEWS

GENEVA (Reuters) - A global pact phasing out use of chemical products that pollute air and soil and affect human health could be ready by the end of next year, the chief of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) said Monday.

Former German environment minister Klaus Toepfer told reporters that a conference on the issue this week in Geneva should mark a major step to an accord on so-called persistent organic pollutants or POPs, which include DDT and dioxin.

"I am convinced that we can come to a final conclusion in the year 2000," he said.

But environmental groups attending the conference criticized government delegates from some 110 countries for not moving fast enough to ban some POPs.

The Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF -- World Wildlife Fund) called for stronger official commitment to restricting dangerous chemicals and ensuring effective financial and technical support to do this for developing countries, where they are still used widely.

And the British-based Greenpeace International issued a list of what it called 50 "toxic hotspots" around the world -- from the Arctic to part of the site of next year's Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia -- which it said were contaminated by POPs.

"Governments have to ensure that this treaty is about elimination and not just about the reduction of these

poisons in order to ensure the safety of present and future generations," Greenpeace expert Juan Lopez de Uralde said.

Negotiations on a global treaty began last year in Montreal and a second conference followed in Nairobi, UNEP's headquarters, in January. Another is set for Bonn early in the New Year with a wrapup gathering eventually in Stockholm.

But Toepfer said at best it could only be by 2003 that a pact went into effect, as it would take at least two years for enough countries to ratify it.

On the initial list for action under the treaty are 12 POPs, often termed the "dirty dozen," which can travel great distances, stay in the environment for many years, and are, according to the WWF, "extremely toxic to human and wildlife."

Many experts link them to anomalies in the reproductive system, neurological defects and cancers in humans and animals.

Attention has been focused on them recently by the discovery of dioxin in chickens exported from Belgium. The chemical, together with another POP furan, is an unintended by-product of combustion and industrial processes.

But much attention at this week's gathering will be on DDT, a pesticide widely used in Africa and the Middle East to control malaria and similar diseases but which some specialists say can be replaced by largely non-chemical control programs.

Toepfer argued that DDT "will be a tool against these serious illnesses for some time, as countries build the capacity to use an array of alternatives..."

He said UNEP shared with the U.N.'s World Health Organization (WHO) the conviction that there was a "clear and paramount interest in safeguarding human lives from malaria and other vector-borne diseases."

But non-governmental groups and developing countries argue that the rich powers -- many of whom have already stopped domestic production and use of POPs -- must make clear commitments to finance switch-over programs in poorer states.

**Agence France Presse
September 06, 1999**

**HEADLINE: Effective alternatives to DDT in fight against malaria: WWF
SECTION: International news**

Alternative anti-malaria measures are effective and should replace DDT, a long-lasting toxic chemical now recognised as a major health risk, The Worldwide Fund for Nature said in a report Tuesday.

The WWF, which is pushing for DDT to be phased out by 2007, said a series of safer methods had been tested and proved effective against malaria, which in poor countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia still kills hundreds of thousands of people every year.

"If DDT was the only weapon we had in the fight against malaria, of course we wouldn't dream of trying to eliminate it," said Cliff Curtis, director of WWF's global toxics initiative.

The new methods tested by the WWF include: pesticide-laced mosquito nets, to reduce spraying pesticides into the environment; less-toxic pesticides used in rotation to prevent mosquitoes from developing resistance; destruction of mosquito breeding areas; and the introduction of predators and sterile mosquitoes.

"The results of our tests show that these alternatives allowed us to protect 34 million people in West Africa from malaria and river blindness," the WWF reported.

"In some villages in Tanzania, the incidence of malaria fell by 50 percent. In the Philippines, the financial costs of the war against this terrible illness were brought down by 40 percent," it said.

The WWF issued its report on the sidelines of a UN-sponsored conference here which is working on a treaty to eliminate 12 so-called Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), of which DDT is one.

POPs, mainly pesticides, also include industrial byproducts, like dioxin, and industrial chemicals, like polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

In recent years POPs have been found to have toxic, even deadly side-effects, such as foetal malformations, nervous disorders and certain forms of cancer.

Agence France Presse
September 6, 1999

HEADLINE: Delegates meet to prepare treaty ban on organic pollutants.

Feeling the pressure from a growing international campaign, delegates from more than 100 countries met on Monday to elaborate a treaty that reduce or ban the use of a range of toxic chemicals by the end of the year 2000.

Four hundred experts from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and associated Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) will spend the week discussing ways of eliminating 12 chemicals, such as DDT and dioxin, known collectively as "Persistent Organic Pollutants" (POPs).

As delegates gathered, a small demonstration outside by the environmental group Greenpeace displayed photographs of child victims of dioxin and others of the substances under debate.

"POPS can be found in the most unlikely places-from Belgian chickens to the remote lakes of the Austrian and Italian Alps," a Greenpeace statement said, drawing up a list of 50 danger-spots in 18 countries. Earlier this year, tonnes of Belgian poultry, and subsequently other livestock, had to be removed from the market and destroyed after dioxin- which can cause cancer-was found to have entered the food chain. POPs are in the main chemicals introduced in the early part of this century to combat disease or increase food production, but which have in recent years been found to have noxious and even deadly side-effects.

"We must shut the Pandora's box," the Greenpeace statement said. "Once produced, POPs will find their way into the environment - even many years after production may have ceased."

Factories making PVC, contaminated industrial sites and stocks of obsolete pesticides are cited by Greenpeace as classic sources of POPs, in countries as various as Nepal, the US, Bangladesh, Australia and Britain.

The aim of this week's conference-the third intergovernmental meeting in a process of negotiation that began two years ago-is to draw up "basic obligations" to be written into a future treaty text.

According to conference chairman John Buccini, differing obligations will apply to each of the 12 pollutants, for some a complete ban, for others a phased reduction. From Wednesday, delegates will discuss the difficult question of how to finance the treaty's application. For some countries, phasing out POPs will incur severe financial costs. An example is the insecticide DDT, which is used in many countries to combat malaria, but which brings with it other health risks.

According to UNEP Executive Director Klaus Toepfer, DDT "is a complex question which will be at the heart of the negotiations as always", because while there exist alternatives to the chemical, they are much more expensive.

Pressure groups argue that of the 12 chemicals under discussion, nine are pesticides which could be replaced by safer and more effective alternatives. The 12 POPs under discussion are dioxin, DDT, aldrin, chlordane, dieldrin, endrin, furans, heptachlor, hexachlorobenzene, mirex, PCBs and toxaphene.

L'ONU veut éliminer les substances les plus toxiques jamais inventées

ENVIRONNEMENT

Les Nations Unies s'attaquent aux polluants organiques persistants.

ANDRÉ ALLEMAND
(AVEC LES AGENCES)

Drôle de sigle! Ni jazz, ni folk, ni rock, les «POP's» n'ont strictement rien de populaire. Selon Klaus Töpfer, directeur du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement (PNUE), il s'agirait même «des substances les plus toxiques jamais inventées par l'homme». Depuis hier à Genève, plus de 400 experts mondiaux sont réunis au Centre international de conférences pour négocier un traité sur l'élimination de douze de ces «polluants organiques persistants».

L'enjeu est de taille. Les POP sont ainsi nommés parce qu'ils persistent longtemps dans l'environnement avant de se décomposer. Qu'il s'agisse de pesticides comme le DDT (dichloro-diphényl-trichloréthane), de sous-produits de l'activité industrielle comme la dioxine ou de produits chimiques comme le PCB, ils se déplacent sur de longues distances et se retrouvent même dans des zones situées à des milliers de kilomètres de leur source.

Chez l'homme: cancers, malformations ou stérilité

Les polluants organiques persistants s'accumulent dans les tissus de la plupart des organismes vivants, qui les absorbent en même temps que leur nourriture, l'eau qu'ils boivent ou l'air qu'ils respirent. Toxiques pour l'homme (ainsi que pour la faune et la flore), ces polluants peuvent provoquer des malformations congénitales, des cancers, des dysfonctionnements du système immunitaire et de l'ap-



Manifestation de Greenpeace. Une quinzaine de militants se sont postés à l'entrée du Centre de conférences, brandissant de grandes photos d'enfants aux visages difformes et aux membres torturés.

pareil reproducteur. Des produits à bannir, donc.

Mais les débats sont souvent très complexes. Des pays producteurs (tels les Etats-Unis) souhaitent réglementer plutôt que de procéder à l'élimination pure et simple de ces produits toxiques. De leur côté, les pays en développement réclament une aide financière pour appliquer les mesures de reconversion nécessaires. Par ailleurs, les intérêts peu-

vent être contradictoires: un produit très résistant et toxique comme le DDT est largement utilisé dans les pays pauvres pour combattre le paludisme, maladie responsable, selon le Fonds mondial pour la nature (WWF), de la mort de quatre enfants par minute.

Représentant 110 pays, 70 organisations non gouvernementales (ONG) et 10 organisations internationales, les experts réunis au

Centre de conférences attaquent cette semaine la troisième série de négociations. Engagé à Montréal en juin 1998 et poursuivi à Nairobi en janvier dernier, le processus devrait aboutir, après les deux dernières réunions prévues l'an prochain, à la signature d'une Convention sur les POPs. D'ores et déjà, Genève est candidate pour accueillir le futur secrétariat chargé de faire appliquer cet accord international.

Si certains de ces produits sont connus et ont fait l'objet de nombreux débats, comme le DDT, la dioxine, en accusation dans le récent scandale du poulet belge, les PCB (biphényles polychlorés) ou les furanes.

Les autres le sont moins comme les hexa chlorobenzènes, l'encrine, le mirex, le toxaphène, le chlordane, l'heptachlore, l'aldrine, la dieldrine. ■

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Japan Economic Newswire

September 7, 1999, Tuesday

LENGTH: 354 words

HEADLINE: Japan host to 7 global toxic hot spots

DATELINE: TOKYO, Sept. 7 Kyodo

BODY:

Seven of the 50 global toxic hot spots identified Monday by Greenpeace International are located in Japan, the most of any country on the list along with Britain and Australia, officials at Greenpeace Japan said Tuesday.

The environmental watchdog said the list was released to pressure delegates at negotiations on a U.N. treaty on chemical pollutants to agree to eliminate long-lasting chemical pollutants, or persistent organic pollutants (POPs), such as dioxins, DDT, furans and PCBs.

Negotiations on the treaty, the United Nations Environmental Plan, opened Monday in Geneva and will run through Saturday.

The catalogue, which featured random examples of toxic concentrations of 12 POPs around the world, highlighted seven areas in Japan, the same number as Britain and Australia.

They include Tokorozawa in Saitama Prefecture, and Nose, Osaka Prefecture.

The other five are the town of Hinode in Tokyo, the town of Shintone and Ryugasaki city in Ibaraki Prefecture, Hashimoto in Wakayama Prefecture, the town of Chuo in Okayama Prefecture and Teshima Island in Kagawa Prefecture.

All of the Japanese sites listed were contaminated with dioxins and heavy metals emitted from industrial waste incinerators.

'The report shows the seriousness of chemical pollution in Japan from a global point of view,' said Ayako Sekine of Greenpeace Japan.

The report identifies highly contaminated areas, including large emission sources, contaminated industrial sites and stockpiled materials, the officials said.

The report describes the location, main contaminants, quantities, company or body responsible, source of contamination, and the industrial processes and practices which lead to the contamination of people and the environment.

It also describes what action is needed to clean up the sites.

Other areas mentioned in the report include Argentina, where banned or obsolete pesticides such as DDT and related waste were dumped near a school in one of the poorest provinces in the country, and in the province of Quebec, Canada, where a magnesium smelter has emitted a massive amount of dioxins.

September 7, 1999, Tuesday

SECTION: Pg. 7

LENGTH: 167 words

HEADLINE: BLITZ ON THE 'DIRTY DOZEN' CHEMICALS

BODY:

MEASURES to control 12 toxic chemicals known as the dirty dozen were at the top of the agenda as negotiators resumed talks on the first global treaty to limit or ban the substances.

A key issue facing delegates in Geneva is how far and fast to go toward banning the chemicals, which include pesticides and industrial chemicals linked to cancer, birth defects and other abnormalities.

The 12 persistent organic pollutants, including DDT, dioxin and PCBs, are highly toxic chemicals that break down extremely slowly and are taken up in the food chain.

The five day session, involving some 400 participants from 110 countries, is the third in a planned series of five. The United Nations Environment Programme hopes to conclude a treaty next year.

"This is the first time they're actually going to start talking about what control measures, for instance, to deal with PCBs and aging transformers, what to do about dioxins and furans," said Linda Durkee, of UNEP's chemicals office.

September 7, 1999

LENGTH: 52 words

HEADLINE: PAALBERICHTEN Wel & Wee Malaria-experts tegen DDT-verbod

BODY:

Meer dan 350 malaria-experts in 57 landen zijn tegen het plan van de Verenigde Naties voor een wereldwijde uitbanning van DDT voor het jaar 2007. Tijdens een conferentie in Geneve, deze week, leidt de Wereldgezondheidsorganisatie (WHO) de discussie over het wereldwijd elimineren van DDT, in verband met de schadelijke milieu-effecten. Hoewel in de meeste landen DDT niet meer wordt toegepast, wordt het in 23 landen nog steeds gebruikt als bestrijdingsmiddel tegen malaria. Voor deze landen staat het verbieden van DDT gelijk aan het verhogen van het sterftecijfer", aldus dr. Barend Mons, lid van de internationale malariabond MFI. Volkoren' goed voor het hart...Het eten van volkoren producten, zoals brood en rijst, vermindert het risico op hartziekten met 30 procent. Vrouwen die nooit hebben gerookt en niet te zwaar zijn, kunnen dit risico nog verder doen afnemen door volkorenproducten aan hun voeding toe te voegen. Dit blijkt uit onderzoek dat de Harvard Universiteit gedurende tien jaar deed in Boston onder 75.000 vrouwen. Onlangs verschenen de resultaten in het blad American Journal of Clinical Nutrition....en wandelen ook, trouwensOver gezondheid van het hart gesproken: een flinke wandeling is net zo effectief in het voorkomen van hart- en vaatziekten als stevig sporten. Dit concludeert J. Manson (Harvard Medical School) deze week in het medisch tijdschrift New England Journal of Medicine. Deze conclusie is gebaseerd op een acht jaar durend onderzoek onder ruim 72.000 verpleegsters.Couveusebaby thuis via tvDe proef van het Groningse Martiniziekenhuis waarbij ouders thuis via een speciale tv-verbinding hun kind in de couveuse kunnen bekijken, is een succes. Vrijwel alle ouders maken er gebruik van, zo blijkt uit een evaluatie na een jaar. Sommigen vinden het gezellig hun kind op deze manier toch in de buurt te hebben. Anderen worden 's nachts wakker en willen dan even kijken, dat geeft wat rust", aldus A. Akkermans, manager van de afdeling kindergeneeskunde.

Control of toxic chemicals to be discussed in Geneva

GENEVA (AP) Measures to control toxic chemicals known as "the dirty dozen" were at the top of the agenda as negotiators were set to gather Monday for talks on the first global treaty to limit or ban the substances.

A key issue facing the delegates is how far and fast to go toward banning the chemicals, which include pesticides and industrial chemicals linked to cancer, birth defects and other abnormalities.

The 12 persistent organic pollutants, including DDT, dioxin and PCBs, are highly toxic chemicals that break down extremely slowly and get into the food chain.

The five-day session, involving about 400 participants from 110 nations, is the third in a planned series of five. The United Nations Environment Program hopes to conclude a treaty next year.

"This is the first time they're actually going to start talking about what control measures, for instance, (are

needed) to deal with PCBs and aging transformers, what to do about dioxins and furans," said Linda Durkee of the UNEP's chemicals office.

This meeting and the next, in Bonn next April, "will form the meat of the treaty," said Clifton Curtis, director of the World Wide Fund's Global Toxic Initiative.

The WWF has called for a global ban on DDT, which, although banned in 34 nations and severely restricted in 34 others, is still endorsed by the World Health Organization for use in the control of malaria-carrying mosquitoes.

The UNEP has "a clear and paramount interest in saving human lives" from malaria and other diseases, Klaus Toefer, the head of the U.N. group, said ahead of this week's session.

The UNEP "believes DDT is and will be a tool against these serious illnesses for some time as countries build the capacity to use an array of alternatives."

Financial Times (London)
September 7, 1999
London Edition 1

HEADLINE: Talks open on DDT dilemma
SECTION: INTERNATIONAL; Pg. 03
BYLINE: By Frances Williams in Geneva

International negotiations on curbing the use of pesticides and other toxic chemicals that harm human health and the environment resumed yesterday in Geneva amid a growing controversy over DDT, one of the targeted pesticides that is still used for malaria control.

Negotiators from 110 countries are hoping to complete a global treaty next year that will ban or restrict 12 persistent organic pollutants (pops).

The so-called "dirty dozen" include the pesticides DDT and toxaphene, industrial products such as polychlorinated biphenyls widely used in electrical equipment, and contaminants such as dioxins.

The United Nations Environment Programme (Unep), which is sponsoring the talks, expects the negotiations this week to draw up a phase-out schedule or control programme for each of the chemicals as well as drafting criteria for the inclusion of new ones.

Pops, long-lasting toxic compounds that can travel vast distances, accumulate in the fatty tissues of animals and humans. They are associated with health problems including cancers, damage to the reproductive system, developmental disorders and disrupted endocrine and immune systems. Some pops such as DDT and toxaphene are already banned in western countries, but continue to be employed by developing nations from where they enter the food chain.

Some medical experts argue that there is no substitute for DDT that is as cheap and effective in eradicating the malaria-carrying mosquito. Malaria affects up to 500m people each year.

Others disagree. "There are safe and effective alternatives to DDT," says Romeo Quijano, a doctor from the Philippines which has ended the use of DDT.

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Talks open on DDT dilemma

By Frances Williams in Geneva



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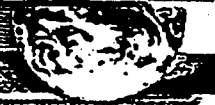
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Malaria experts oppose DDT ban

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Pesticide treaty talks fuel health vs. environment debate



In Third World areas like this slum in Surat, India, DDT is often sprayed to stop the spread of malaria and other diseases.

By Miguel Llanos
MSNBC

Sept. 7 — It's not often you'll find environmentalists and health activists on opposite sides of an issue, but treaty talks on banning the pesticide DDT worldwide have done just that. Both sides acknowledge the damage DDT does to wildlife, but many health experts say DDT's benefits in combating malaria outweigh its faults. And both sides are lobbying diplomats meeting this week to work on an international ban.



Which side do you support in the DDT debate?

- The World Wildlife Fund and its push for a ban by 2007
- The Malaria Foundation and its view that a deadline creates 'unethical pressure'
- Can't decide

VOTE

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THE SETTING is the United Nations Environment Program headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, where country delegates are working on terms for an international ban not just on DDT but 11 other "Persistent Organic Pollutants," or POPs. Together, those POPs are often described as the "dirty dozen".

DDT is the most controversial of the POPs because of its traditional role in combating malaria, a disease that kills up to 2.7 million people a year — mostly in sub-Saharan Africa. About 90 percent are children and pregnant women, and it's estimated malaria kills four children per minute, or 5,000 per day.

Malaria is also re-emerging in regions where it was once under control and killing many more people than it did decades ago, at least partly because of a reduction in DDT use.

On those grim statistics both sides agree, but it's the attack strategy where they differ.

WILDLIFE FUND STAND

Among environmental groups, the World Wildlife Fund has taken a lead role in lobbying for a worldwide DDT ban by 2007.

By its estimates, 35,000 metric tons of DDT are produced each year in at least five countries and the pesticide is legally imported and used in several dozen nations.

A 1998 WWF report argued that other "effective and financially feasible" tools exist to combat malaria, among them:

- Soaking bednets in pesticide and thus eliminating spraying, which can then carry the pesticide through the air.
- Using odor bait to attract and then destroy mosquitoes.
- Rotating lower-risk pesticides so that mosquitoes can't develop resistance.
- Eliminating mosquito breeding grounds and introducing natural predators.

MALARIA FOUNDATION STAND

Taking the opposite view is Malaria Foundation International, whose lobbying includes an "open letter" signed by 371 scientists and doctors from 57 countries.

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“... the relevant question is not whether DDT can pose health risks (it can), but whether these risks outweigh the tremendous public health benefits of DDT for malaria control (they do not),” the letter said in a direct response to the WWF arguments.

The foundation contends that “cautious” DDT spraying has saved millions of lives at “negligible” risk to the environment.

“The disease can be fought by spraying minute quantities of DDT on the inside walls only of huts where people live; no outdoor, environmental spraying is done,” the foundation claimed in a statement. “Used this way, the amount of DDT needed to spray just a single cotton plantation can be sufficient to treat all the vulnerable huts in a small country.”

Environment news

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The foundation also argues that a DDT deadline would create “an unethical pressure on the poor to ‘do or die’ — do find the money for expensive alternatives, or simply die of the

disease.”

Right now, alternatives cost about three times as much as DDT, the foundation claims.

SPECIAL REPORT MSNBC's coverage of environmental news, issues

SOME COMMON GROUND

U.N. Environment Program officials say some type of malaria exception for DDT is likely when a final treaty is drafted by the end of next year.

UNEP Director Klaus Toepfer argued that DDT “will be a tool against these serious illnesses for some time, as countries build the capacity to use an array of alternatives.”

Persistent Organic Pollutants

The 12 POPs on the initial U.N. list for global action under the treaty being drafted are:

- The pesticides aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mirex, and toxaphene.
- The industrial chemicals polychlorinated biphenyls

But about the only chance of ending the feud is if malaria-stricken countries get international aid and quickly use it to find and apply alternatives.

The WWF recognized that “adequate financial and technical resources must be earmarked” to

which is also a pesticide.

- The unintended by-products of combustion and industrial processes, dioxins and furans.

combat malaria using non-traditional tools.

And the "open letter" signatories endorsed a two-phase approach: first

guaranteeing that poor countries get the technical and financial aid they need to buy and use alternatives; and only then phasing out DDT when those alternatives are in the field and proven to work.

OTHER POPS

While DDT was the most controversial chemical on the table, dioxin has also been making news when it was found earlier this year in Belgian eggs, meat and dairy products.

The chemical, together with another POP furan, is an unintended by-product of combustion and industrial processes.

Toepfer called the Belgium incident a "wake-up call" to pass the POP ban.

And environmentalists are lobbying for a tough overall ban.

Greenpeace International issued a list of what it called 50 "toxic hotspots" around the world — from the Arctic to part of the site of next year's Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia — which it said were contaminated by POPs.

"Governments have to ensure that this treaty is about elimination and not just about the reduction of these poisons in order to ensure the safety of present and future generations," Greenpeace expert Juan Lopez de Uralde said.

Concentrations of the chemicals are highest in the Arctic regions of Alaska, Canada, Scandinavia and Russia as pollution is carried northward by winds and ocean currents from industrial countries.

Outside the conference center, Greenpeace activists dressed in lab coats stood Monday with placards urging negotiators to take the 12 chemicals "down to zero."

But in some cases banning a chemical isn't so simple. Banning dioxin, for example, is difficult "because you cannot ban all the different industrial processes," Toepfer said.

The Associated Press and Reuters contributed to this report.

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Johannesburg, South Africa, September 8, 1999

Malaria study says safer alternatives to DDT

The World Wide Fund for Nature says there are already sufficient new methods of curbing mosquitoes to allow for a total ban on the use of DDT.

A NEW environmental study released yesterday claimed that innovative methods can fight malaria just as effectively as the harmful insecticide DDT, at a much lower cost to human health, the environment and budgets.

The study was released by the Swiss-based environmental agency World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), which is pushing for a phase-out of the pesticide used in Africa to control malaria.

The WWF said less harmful and cheaper alternatives are the use of pesticide-impregnated bed nets that curb the need for indoor spraying, odour-baited cloth targets to lure insects, lower-risk pesticides and eliminating mosquito breeding grounds.

DDT is one of 12 persistent organic pollutants or POPs - dubbed the "dirty dozen" - that are targeted for restriction or elimination in a global treaty being negotiated in Geneva this week under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme.

Environmental groups say that DDT can travel long distances in the air and water, that it builds up in the fatty tissues of living beings, and that it stays in the sub-soil because it is not biodegradable.

The chemical, also known for its devastating effect on birdlife, was banned in much of the Western world including the United States and

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Britain in the early 1970s.

- [National Malaria Research Programme in South Africa](#)

According to the World Health Organisation, DDT remains the most effective way to deal with mosquitoes that transmit malaria. The agency says the chemical should be phased out when alternatives are available.

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"Up until now, there have been no alternatives that are cheaper and equally effective. WHO's position is that DDT can be used in the fight against malaria in a limited way," said Antero Aitio, a medical doctor at the chemical safety office of the UN health agency.

Aitio said DDT can cause intoxication in humans that can be fatal. Experimental studies had shown that it can cause cancer in animals, but the link between the chemical and cancer remains weak, and unproven in humans, he added.

-- Reuters, September 8, 1999.

September 8, 1999, Wednesday

SECTION: Domestic News

LENGTH: 733 words

HEADLINE: Phase Out, Don't Wimp Out Greenpeace urges Canadian delegates at UN toxics meeting

DATELINE: GENEVA/VANCOUVER, Sept. 8

BODY:

Greenpeace today slammed the stance taken by Canadian government delegates at the UN meeting on toxics discharge control. The week-long meeting in Geneva is the third in a series seeking to establish an international treaty to address the problem of **Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)** in the global environment.

Greenpeace Canada toxics campaigner Morag Simpson, a delegate at all three rounds of talks, said, "Only a few governments, including Canada and the US, are standing in the way of totally eliminating POPs by pretending risks from these chemicals can be managed, when there is no safe level of exposure. Canada has reversed its original position and is refusing to look at strategies for total elimination of all POPs. Instead it is pursuing a chemical industry-driven agenda of focusing on reduction strategies."

In the first round of negotiations in Montreal in 1998, it was agreed to initially target 12 POPs: aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, dioxins, endrin, furans, heptachlor, hexachlorobenzene, mirex, PCBs, and toxaphen. Most of these chemicals are pesticides, some already banned in many nations. Two - dioxins and furans - are unwanted by-products of the industrial use of chlorine and the incineration of chlorine contaminated waste such as PVC plastic. In her opening remarks at the POPs meeting in Montreal, then Environment Minister Christine Stewart said Canada was targeting these 12 POPs for "elimination".

A considerable body of scientific evidence links carcinogenic dioxins with numerous reproductive and immune system malfunctions in humans and wildlife. Many scientists believe there is no safe level of exposure to these chemicals.

Persistent Organic Pollutants - chemicals which persist in the environment for many years and increase in strength as they move up the food chain - can travel on airwaves for thousands of miles from their point of origin. Canada, despite decades-old bans of many POPs, is a net recipient of many pollutants. As a result, the Canadian Arctic is one of the most contaminated places on Earth and its inhabitants amongst the most negatively impacted.

"We deserve a stronger stance from our government representatives," said Simpson, who met with the Canadian government delegation in Geneva last night. "Instead they are at the UN refusing to acknowledge that dioxin elimination is achievable, while back home they are encouraging projects and processes which will increase our domestic burden of POPs."

Simpson cited the proposed Noranda magnesium smelter in Quebec which, when operational, could discharge nearly 2000kg of hexachlorobenzene annually as well as dramatically increasing production and discharge of dioxin. She also voiced concern about government proposals to use incineration as a means of dealing with the toxic contaminants in the Sydney Tar Ponds, despite the proven inadequacies of POPs incineration in Swan Hills, Alberta, where the Bovar incinerator has contaminated a 30km radius of land with PCBs and dioxin.

"We need a phase-out, not a wimp out. This treaty must have a clearly stated goal that reduction is only the first step towards total elimination," said Simpson. "Where they do not already exist, we must find and use safe alternatives for all POPs. We must also fast track development of disposal options for existing stockpiles of POPs - options which do not create even more toxic substances.

"If we do not do this, our legacy to future generations will be reproductive crises for many species and breast milk contaminated to the point where its risks may outweigh its benefits to nursing infants. The negotiators in Geneva know this. They can either act or have this on their consciences forever."

Note to editors: Sydney Tar Ponds, Swan Hills incinerator and the Noranda smelter feature in a new Greenpeace International report, *Opening Pandora's Box: A Catalogue of 50 POPs Hotspots Worldwide*. The full report is available on the Greenpeace International web page: <http://www.greenpeace.org>.

For more information or a copy of the Canadian section of *Opening Pandora's Box*, contact Miranda Holmes, Greenpeace Vancouver at 604-253-7701.

In Geneva, contact Morag Simpson at 011 41 22 328 3055, Room 703 or by leaving a message with Juan Lopez de Uralde at 011 34 609 46 89 54.

September 8, 1999

LENGTH: 203 words

HEADLINE: Unep: POPs ban treaty ready by end-'00

SOURCE: Chemical News & Intelligence

BYLINE: Wing Gar Cheng

DATELINE: SINGAPORE

BODY:

United Nations Environmental Programme (Unep) expects that a global accord banning the use of **persistent organic pollutants** (POPs) would be ready by end-2000, according to a keynote address received by CNI Wednesday.

Unep chief Klaus Toepfer, addressing a meeting on 6 September in Geneva, Switzerland, said the accord would cover phasing out the use of chemicals that pollute air, water and soil and threaten human health.

Toepfer added that if the treaty is ready by next year, it would take at least two years for all countries to ratify the accord, bringing it into effect only in 2003.

There are 12 POPs on the initial list for action under the treaty currently being drafted: aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, dioxin, endrin, furans, heptachlor, hexachlorobenzene, mirex, polychlorinated biphenyls and toxaphene.

Those chemicals fall into three categories: pesticides, industrial by-products, and unintended by-products of combustion and industrial processes.

The meeting - the third session of the Inter-Governmental Negotiating Committee For An International Legally-Binding Instrument For Implementing International Action On Certain **Persistent Organic Pollutants** - ends 11 September.

September 8, 1999

SECTION: NEWS, DOCUMENTS & COMMENTARY

LENGTH: 465 words

HEADLINE: Africa-at-Large:
UN Meeting To Create Treaty On World's Most Toxic Chemicals

BYLINE: International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN)

BODY:

Geneva, Switzerland - As United Nations-sponsored negotiations resumed today on a treaty to control the most wide-spread and toxic chemicals in the world, a coalition of 180 non-governmental organizations involved in the process called for the worldwide elimination of substances such as DDT, dioxin, PCBs and nine other chemicals known to cause significant health and environmental problems.

"The negotiations this week must preserve the goal of eliminating - not managing - these substances which are inherently unmanageable," said Romeo Quijano, MD, a physician and president of the Pesticide Action Network in the Philippines and the Southern co-chair of the International POPs Elimination Network. "We are concerned that governments will buckle under pressure from industry groups and others who say these substances are impossible to eliminate."

The International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) is a group of 180 NGOs from 40 countries focused on achieving a global treaty to phase out and eliminate **persistent organic pollutants** (POPs), the group of chemicals which include such toxic chemicals as DDT, dioxin and PCBs. POPs are highly toxic chemicals that break down extremely slowly in the environment. In humans and wildlife, they are linked to reproductive abnormalities, neurological defects and some cancers.

"These chemicals are the most dangerous and, because it can take decades for them to break down, they have spread to all corners of the earth. All living creatures have these substances in their bodies," said Deepika D'Souza, Executive Director India Center for Human Rights and Law. "The health affects of POPs are well known in humans and even better known in wildlife."

Alternatives to POPs are numerous and varied. For instance, PCBs are being substituted throughout the world with non-toxic oils. Dioxins and furans can be eliminated by preventing the production, use and disposal of products such as PVC plastics. Nine of the twelve chemicals targeted in the POPs treaty negotiations are pesticides that can be eliminated and replaced with safe and effective chemical or management alternatives.

"There is absolutely no conflict between eliminating these chemicals and public health or the public good, said Robert K. Musil, Executive Director of Physicians for Social Responsibility. "In country after country, it has been proven that there are viable alternatives to POPs. This treaty is the opportunity to establish those alternatives and phase out POPs."

For more information or to arrange interviews with experts, contact Amy Kostant, (U.S.) phone: +1-202-463-6670 or e-mail: amyvk@ems.org. In Geneva contact Tom Lalley, +41 22 079/ 470 1681 or Karen Perry, +41 22 079/ 470 1682. For more on POPs and IPEN, visit <http://www.ipen.org>

September 8, 1999

SECTION: INTERNATIONAL NEWS; Pg. 3

LENGTH: 528 words

HEADLINE: Millions more malaria deaths feared if DDT is banned

BYLINE: Sarah Boseley

BODY:

More than 350 of the world's leading malaria experts have signed an open letter of protest against plans for a global ban on the pesticide DDT which they say will lead to millions of deaths in the developing world.

The 371 doctors, health economists and scientists, who include three Nobel laureates, warn of the consequences of an increase in malaria if the United Nations Environment Programme outlaws DDT along with a range of other pesticides known as **persistent organic pollutants** in a treaty to be negotiated this month.

Pushing for the ban are environmental groups, led by the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), which argues that alternatives will be found to combat malaria before the ban takes effect in 2007.

But malaria specialists say cases and deaths have already risen since DDT was outlawed in the Western world in the 1970s. DDT, sprayed on the interior of homes, is a cheap, effective deterrent to the mosquito whose bite spreads the infection. Nothing yet developed works as well or is so easy to use, say the experts. They say they too want rid of DDT, but not until alternatives are found.

The experts accept that the pesticide causes environmental damage, but they accuse WWF of overstating the dangers to humans. Although residues have been found in breast milk, only one study says DDT may be carcinogenic. WWF says it is more concerned about the possible effects on the immune system, based on evidence of what DDT does to wildlife and lactation in women.

Amir Attaran, director of the Malaria Project in Washington, said: "While it is true that we don't know every last risk of using DDT, we know very well what the risk of malaria is -- and on balance malaria is far, far more deadly than the worst that one could imagine about DDT.

"We are not in love with DDT. But the reality is that if you try to get rid of DDT without guaranteeing that money will be available for alternatives, you will kill people.

"If Western countries like the US or UK want the environmental benefit of a DDT ban, let them pay for it. Africa, Asia and South America have neither the technology nor money to research and implement alternatives to DDT. The rich countries do. For them to advocate a DDT ban while holding tight the purse-strings for those alternatives is obscene."

In their letter the doctors and scientists say that, although they agree DDT must one day be phased out, "we also believe that human life must not be endangered in reaching that goal. In our view, setting a deadline for the elimination of DDT -- whether in 2007 or some other date -- unacceptably endangers health in countries with malaria."

They propose an immediate ban on agricultural use of DDT, which would be extended to malaria control only when Western countries have developed affordable alternatives.

Chris Curtis, a medical entomologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said: "DDT is the cheapest insecticide, and what I feel will happen is -- as has happened several times already -- if they can't use DDT they won't feel they can afford to replace it, so they will simply cut down on the total area that gets [mosquito] control."

Conservation group sets out DDT challenge

By Frances Williams in Geneva

Alternative approaches to controlling malaria can be cheaper and more effective than DDT, according to a report published yesterday by WWF-World Wide Fund for Nature, the international conservation group.

The report, timed to coincide with United Nations negotiations under way this week in Geneva on phasing out or reducing emissions of DDT and 11 other toxic compounds, details innovative approaches in Africa, Asia and Latin America that the WWF says have reduced malaria cases at no extra cost.

These techniques include bednets soaked in insecticide, use of lower-risk pesticides, elimination of mosquito breeding grounds and introduction of natural predators including mosquito-eating fish.

The WWF, alongside other environmental groups, wants the UN talks to agree a complete phase-out of DDT, though it would be willing to see a tightly circumscribed exemption for public health emergencies. The fund says the phase-out should be accompanied by generous donor support for alternative anti-malaria strategies.

DDT's long-term deleterious effects on human health and the environment have caused it to be banned in many countries, but 20 nations still use it to control malaria. Mexico, India and China are the only three known producers of DDT but, according to the fund, Mexico had no production last year and says it hopes to eliminate use of DDT by 2007.

The WWF also yesterday released details of alternatives to all 12 chemicals targeted by the proposed treaty on persistent organic pollutants (pops), due to be completed next year.

Observers said there appeared to be strong support among the 110 governments involved in the UN talks to phase out the eight pesticides listed, including DDT, given a proviso for its use in the case of overriding public health needs.

However, the other four compounds which include polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and dioxins - may be scheduled for restriction rather than elimination, which the chemical industry argues is impracticable.

● Negotiators from Canada, the US and most European countries have agreed a regional pact setting tighter curbs on air pollutants that cause smog and acid rain. The accord, concluded last week in Geneva, is due to be adopted by environment ministers of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in Gothenburg, Sweden, on November 30.

The protocol to the ECE's convention on long-range transboundary air pollution is the first to tackle several pollutants simultaneously, in this case sulphur, nitrogen oxides, ammonia and volatile organic compounds (vocs).

It also sets different emission ceilings for different countries based on the health risks and the vulnerability of the environment.

Most countries will have to make substantial cuts by 2010, some - such as Germany - by as much as 90 per cent from 1990 levels.



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WIRE:09/08/1999 02:15:00 ET

Malaria Study Says Safer Alternatives To DDT



GENEVA (Reuters) - A new environmental study released Tuesday claimed that innovative methods can fight malaria just as effectively as the harmful insecticide DDT, at a much lower cost to human health, the environment and budgets.

The study was released by the Swiss-based environmental agency World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), which is pushing for a phase-out of the pesticide used in Africa to control malaria.

The WWF said less harmful and cheaper alternatives were the use of pesticide-impregnated bed nets that curb the need for indoor spraying, odor-baited cloth targets to lure insects, lower-risk pesticides and eliminating mosquito-breeding grounds.

DDT is one of 12 persistent organic pollutants or POPs -- dubbed the "dirty dozen" -- that are targeted for restriction or elimination in a global treaty being negotiated in Geneva this week under the auspices of the U.N. Environment Program.

Environmental groups say that DDT can travel long distances in the air and water, that it builds up in the fatty tissues of living beings, and that it stays in the sub-soil because it is not biodegradable.

The chemical, also known for its devastating effect on birdlife, was banned in much of the Western world including the United States and Britain in the early 1970s.

According to the World Health Organization, DDT remains the most effective way to deal with

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mosquitoes that transmit malaria. The agency says the chemical should be phased out when alternatives are available.

"Up until now, there have been no alternatives that are cheaper and equally effective. WHO's position is that DDT can be used in the fight against malaria in a limited way," said Antero Aitio, a medical doctor at the chemical safety office of the U.N. health agency.

Aitio said DDT could cause intoxication in humans that could be fatal. Experimental studies had shown that it could cause cancer in animals, but the link between the chemical and cancer remained weak, and unproven in humans, he added.

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Opinions vary on fate of DDT

September 8, 1999
Web posted at: 1:05 PM EDT (1705 GMT)



Since the U.S. ban on DDT, the peregrine falcon population has rebounded.

Negotiations on an international treaty to regulate persistent organic pollutants, known as POPs, resume this week in Geneva, and the use of DDT to control malaria in developing countries will certainly be a hot topic on the agenda.

The World Wildlife Fund, Physicians for Social Responsibility and Malaria Foundation International all have varying positions on the fate of DDT as method of malaria control, and each hopes that their research and opinions will catch the attention of the delegates at the conference.

DDT has been used since the 1940s in Africa and elsewhere to check the spread of malaria, and works by repelling or killing the mosquitoes that carry the virus. Often it is sprayed on the interior walls of homes, which is where engorged mosquitoes appear to land most.

Malaria kills up to 2.7 million people a year and almost all fatalities are either children or pregnant women. While DDT has been banned in many countries, 23 countries still use the chemical for agricultural purposes and disease control.

WWF, Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Malaria Foundation all generally agree that DDT is harmful to the environment and ought to be phased out of use at some point, and that western developed countries need to help monetarily and otherwise with the transition. However, they have different ideas about how these phase-outs should be handled.

WWF advocates that DDT be phased out and banned from use by the year 2007. "Such a deadline is an important tool for motivating donor behavior. Without it, it is much more likely that the recent history of under-funding of work on malaria will continue into the future," said WWF. The 'donors' referred to here are western countries that WWF feels must help fund the transition.

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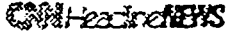
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WWF's call for a specific deadline to ban the use of DDT is "profoundly unethical," said Dr. Amir Attaran of the Malaria Project, a lobbying group for the Malaria Foundation. Attaran authored an "open letter" to diplomats negotiating the POP treaty that defends the use of DDT and calls on the delegates to reject the call for a ban. This letter was written on behalf of and circulated by the Malaria Foundation, and over 370 scientists and doctors have signed it so far. It has been sent to the treaty delegates representing developing countries.

In the letter, Attaran writes, "In our view, setting a deadline for the elimination of DDT — whether that deadline is in 2007 or some other date — unacceptably endangers health in countries with malaria." The Malaria Foundation believes that the elimination of DDT as a weapon against malaria should only take place after "western countries research and successfully implement effective, affordable alternatives to replace DDT," states the letter.

Physicians for Social Responsibility says its goals are an improvement of malaria control and the phase out of DDT, both at the same time. "We believe that this is possible," said Sharon Newsome, director of the Environment and Health Program for the physician group.

To achieve this, plans to phase out the use of DDT ought to be up to the 23 individual countries that still use it, with the emphasis at the treaty discussions centering on how to help these countries fund their programs to move away from DDT, said Newsome. Physicians for Social Responsibility does not specify a date by which the phase out should happen.

To help countries build programs for phasing out DDT, Physicians for Social Responsibility has published the Modern Malaria Control Handbook, which contains medical and scientific information on all aspects of malaria control. The book outlines 150 studies that demonstrate how it is possible to control malaria without the use of DDT, and "emphasizes an integrated public health approach," said Newsome, which would include case detection and treatment, vector habitat elimination and control, and community education and action. "There is no question that a well-designed program does not have to rely on DDT," she said.

One malaria control technique that both the physicians and WWF support as an alternative to DDT is the impregnation of bednets with synthetic pyrethroids. These chemicals are not as toxic as DDT and are thought to break down in the environment more readily.

In a WWF study in Africa, researchers tested the effectiveness of repelling or killing mosquitoes using bednets impregnated with synthetic pyrethroids versus ones that were not. The results showed that there was a substantial decline in malaria cases where the impregnated bednets were used, said Richard Liroff of WWF.

The Physicians for Social Responsibility believe that pyrethroids can

take the place of DDT in an integrated public health approach. The system they advocate would include the identification and treatment of malaria, habitat elimination, community education and controlling the disease using bednets impregnated with pyrethroids.

Attaran considers pyrethroids to be a possible alternative and thinks that they can be effective in some places, but doubts the chemicals' ability to work everywhere. He also pointed out that pyrethroids are much more expensive than DDT and that this is a critical issue for poor developing countries. Not only do they cost more, pyrethroids require more applications than DDT, which adds to the overall price tag.

Liroff of the WWF agrees that pyrethroids are more expensive than DDT, but he believes that recent studies focusing on the application of the pesticide indicate it will be possible to find ways to lower the cost.

WWF's parent organization, Worldwide Fund for Nature released a study Tuesday showing that there are alternatives to DDT that would be less harmful to the environment and human health, and just as cheap. The study was conducted in six areas in Africa, India, the Philippines, South America and Mexico and focused on a variety of alternative techniques.

These include pesticide-impregnated bednets to reduce the need for indoor spraying, odor-baited cloth targets to attract and kill mosquitoes, lower-risk pesticides used in rotation to avoid the development of resistance, introduction of natural predators and sterile insects, and widespread elimination of mosquito breeding grounds.

One sticking point between the different organizations has to do with whether or not a ban of DDT has even been called for. WWF has made clear that they feel there should be a ban by 2007. But, said Newsome, "Negotiators have never, ever said that they were going to ban DDT."

"This is totally false," said Attaran. To back up this claim, Attaran looks at the process by which the diplomats are negotiating. At the last treaty meeting, the representatives were split up into working groups, which would then return to the plenary session with their results.

A certain working group was asked to divide through consensus the various POPs into two lists — chemicals that ought to be banned, and those whose use should be restricted. DDT was not placed on either list, and because the group could not reach consensus over the fate of DDT, Attaran feels it is implicit that some country in that group is definitely thinking about banning the substance.

Attaran also points out that the treaty process has not gotten very far, and that none of the representatives have really stated their opinion publicly about anything yet. It is because of this that the open letter was written, to let the diplomats who have not stated their position on

DDT have an opportunity to read the letter, ponder the information it presents and use it to help them come to a conclusion about the fate of DDT.

Though effective at controlling malaria, DDT does not break down in the environment and is known to bio-accumulate in fish, wildlife and people. Studies have also shown that DDT, like all POPs, can travel thousands of miles from where it was used through air, water and bird migration, causing persistent contamination.

The chemical is thought to pose a considerable health hazard to animals, with recent research linking it to altered sex ratios in gull populations, the thinning of eggshells for birds of prey and the suppression of the immune system in dolphins and harbor seals.

Although its influence on human health is unclear, DDT has shown up in samples of breast milk all over the world, even where the chemical is not used. Scientists are concerned about its effect on the brain development of fetuses and of children who are exposed to this milk. One recent study shows a relationship between DDT and reduced lactation in new mothers in certain areas of Mexico, Africa and the United States.

The research is not conclusive and study of the pesticide still continues.

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September 10, 1999, FINAL

SECTION: News; A20

LENGTH: 479 words

HEADLINE: Toxins treaty on course

BYLINE: The Canadian Press

DATELINE: GENEVA

BODY:

International efforts to reduce or ban the emission of some of the world's most toxic chemicals are on course toward achieving a binding global treaty by the end of next year.

About 400 negotiators from 110 countries are meeting in Geneva this week to decide on measures to control these so-called **Persistent Organic Pollutants**, or POPs -- including such chemicals as DDT, PCBs and dioxin.

Often referred to as the "dirty dozen," these chemicals pose a serious risk to both public health and the environment. They last a long time and can spread far from the source of contamination.

"Probably the most important thing here is that Canada is a massive net receiver of these POPs," says Steve Hart, director of the Transboundary Air Issues Branch at Environment Canada.

Hart, who heads the Canadian delegation, says wind patterns send these chemicals long distances to Canada's northern regions.

About 100,000 Aboriginal people in Nunavut, the Yukon and Northwest Territories are at risk from the harmful effects of these pollutants, he says. At greatest risk are the 25,000 inhabitants of Nunavut.

"PCBs and DDT probably cause the most damage," Hart says.

"They're turning up in alarming concentrations in mother's breast milk and are transmitted to the child."

These chemicals tend to concentrate in fat and are found in traditional Aboriginal foods, such as whale blubber and seal meat, which have a very high fat content.

Some of the chemicals are known to cause cancer while others may cause birth defects and affect the immune and neurological systems in humans and animals.

The chemicals are also being found with increasing frequency in a variety of foods, potentially exposing millions of people to dangerous levels. This recently happened in Europe, where food products were contaminated with dioxins and PCBs.

"Canada was largely responsible for identifying the problem" created by these chemicals, Hart says. "And, I would like to say we played a major leadership role in convincing the other circumpolar countries of the importance" of doing something about it.

Canada and other northern countries such as Iceland, Norway and Russia face similar risks from the chemicals.

"What makes me feel good is that people aren't going to wait for a convention to decide to do something," says John Buccini, chairman of the conference and director of Environment Canada's Commercial Chemicals Evaluation Branch.

"While we're negotiating the convention, people are actually developing their national action plans on POPs. That's a very positive message."

Negotiations on a global treaty began last year in Montreal, followed by a second meeting in Nairobi. Two more sessions are planned after Geneva, with hopes of an agreement by the end of next year and a signing ceremony in Stockholm after New Year's Day, 2001.

September 10, 1999

SECTION: WORLDVIEW

LENGTH: 302 words

HEADLINE: TOXICS: WHO OUTLINES DDT-REDUCTION ACTION PLAN

BODY:

The World Health Organization is recommending a "balanced and informed" approach to reducing the use of the pesticide DDT.

The agency's leaders offered their advice at a meeting in Geneva, where the U.N. Environment Program and delegates from many countries are considering a pact to phase out DDT and 11 other **persistent organic pollutants (POPs)**. Most environmental groups favor a worldwide phaseout of DDT, given its long-term toxic effects on human health and the environment. But many public health experts say DDT is the best way to fight the mosquitoes that spread malaria, a deadly disease that is on the upswing in many parts of the world.

At the meeting, WHO Director-General Gro Harlem Brundtland said a "balanced" approach would reflect both concerns. Under an action plan ordered by the WHO Assembly in 1997, the agency is developing "detailed work plans" which it will make available next month. The first priority will be regional consultations for countries that still use DDT, focusing on needs assessments for eventual transitions to alternatives to DDT. Other elements include safe disposal of DDT stockpiles, and strengthening international research, monitoring and advocacy.

David Nabarro, manager of the WHO's Roll Back Malaria campaign: "We see many countries moving towards the distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito nets as their main strategy to rolling back malaria. Combined with the proper use of safe insecticides to limit mosquito breeding and rapid treatment for people with malaria, and supported by environmental management for vector control, this represents the way forward in reducing malaria death rates throughout the world" (WHO release, Sept. 10).

September 10, 1999, Friday, Final EDITION

SECTION: NEWS, Pg. A8

LENGTH: 360 words

HEADLINE: TOXIC CHEMICALS FOCUS OF WORLD FORUM

BYLINE: CP

DATELINE: GENEVA

BODY:

International efforts to reduce or ban the emission of some of the world's most toxic chemicals are on course toward achieving a binding global treaty by the end of next year.

About 400 negotiators from 110 countries are meeting in Geneva this week to decide on measures to control these so-called **Persistent Organic Pollutants**, or POPs -- including such chemicals as DDT, PCBs and dioxin.

Often referred to as the "dirty dozen," these chemicals pose a serious risk to health and the environment. They last a long time and can spread far from the source of contamination.

"Probably the most important thing here is that Canada is a massive net receiver of these POPs," said Steve Hart of Environment Canada.

Hart, who heads the Canadian delegation, says wind patterns send these chemicals long distances to Canada's northern regions.

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These chemicals tend to concentrate in fat and are found in traditional Aboriginal foods, such as whale blubber and seal meat, which have a very high fat content.

Some of the chemicals are known to cause cancer while others may cause birth defects and affect the immune and neurological systems in humans and animals.

The chemicals are also being found with increasing frequency in a variety of foods, potentially exposing millions of people to dangerous levels. This recently happened in Europe, where food products were contaminated with dioxins and PCBs.

"Canada was largely responsible for identifying the problem" created by these chemicals, Hart said.

"And, I would like to say we played a major leadership role in convincing the other circumpolar countries of the importance" of doing something about it.

Canada and other northern countries such as Iceland, Norway and Russia face similar risks from the chemicals.

September 10, 1999, FINAL

SECTION: News; A17

LENGTH: 167 words

HEADLINE: Countries move to curb toxic chemicals

DATELINE: GENEVA

BODY:

GENEVA -- International efforts to reduce or ban the emission of some of the world's most toxic chemicals are on course to reach a binding global treaty by the end of next year.

About 400 negotiators from 110 countries are meeting in Geneva this week to decide on measures to control these **Persistent Organic Pollutants**, or POPs -- including such chemicals as DDT, PCBs and dioxin.

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Hart says wind patterns send these chemicals long distances to Canada's northern regions.

Some of the chemicals are known to cause cancer while others may cause birth defects and affect the immune and neurological systems in humans and animals.

September 10, 1999

LENGTH: 375 words

HEADLINE: Unep set to agree details of POPs controls

SOURCE: Chemical News & Intelligence

BYLINE: Anna Williams

DATELINE: LONDON

BODY:

The United Nations Environment Programme (Unep) expects to announce details of proposed controls on 12 **persistent organic pollutants (POPs)** following this week's intergovernmental negotiations on a treaty to control POPs, CNI was told Friday.

Murray Newton, a scientific adviser with Unep Chemical, said that by Saturday (11 September)- the last day of talks - the negotiators hope to have agreed what kind of controls will be placed on each of the 12 POPs* on the initial action list. The meeting is the third of five planned intergovernmental negotiation committee (INC) sessions, and is taking place in Geneva, Switzerland.

One of the key objectives of the Geneva talks is to provide a better description of what the international community means by controls and to establish which controls should be applied to which chemicals, said Newton. For example, should a chemical be banned or restricted, and should there be any exemptions?

Environmental pressure group Greenpeace voiced concerns today that the talks are being dominated by "a growing list of US-backed loopholes" which could indefinitely delay chemical phase-outs and/or allow continued uses, imports and exports. According to Greenpeace campaigner Rick Hind, the US is supporting policy changes proposed by many nations while demanding immunity for their share of global contamination by toxic substances.

Unep said another goal of the meeting is to decide how new POPs should be added to the action list. The INC took up recommendations for procedures for adding chemicals which were made in June at a meeting of the criteria expert group, a subsidiary body established by the INC.

There are new POPs candidates under discussion, said Newton, but it is not yet known whether these will be added before the treaty comes into force.

The fourth INC session is scheduled to take place in Bonn, Germany on 20-25 March and the fifth and final session will take place in October or November 2000, probably in South Africa, said Newton. This will be followed by a diplomatic conference on the treaty in spring (Q2) 2001.

*DDT, aldrin, chlordane, dieldrin, dioxin, endrin, furans, heptachlor, hexachlorobenzene, mirex, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and toxaphene.

The materials in the Xinhua file were compiled by The Xinhua News Agency. These materials may not be republished without the express written consent of The Xinhua News Agency.

SEPTEMBER 11, 1999, SATURDAY

LENGTH: 234 words

HEADLINE: negotiators agree to eliminate eight chemicals

DATELINE: geneva, september 11; ITEM NO: 0911149

BODY:

negotiators have agreed to eliminate seven pesticides and an industrial compound as the third round of negotiations on the global persistent organic pollutants (pop) treaty ended here saturday. the eight chemicals to be eliminated are hexachlorobenzene, endrin, mirex, toxaphene, chlordane, heptachlor, aldrin and dieldrin. hailing the progress on the elimination of the eight least produced and used chemicals, the world wide fund for nature (wwf) called on governments to make further efforts to eliminate the remaining most toxic chemicals, ddt and its by-products such as dioxins, pcbs and furans. "the agreement on the least contentious chemicals provides a good foundation for action on the other four," said clifton curtis, director of the wwf's global toxics initiative. "financial assistance can be the deal maker or the deal breaker," curtis said. "there's a chance to really make this treaty work, but it won't without significant, new financial assistance from the developed world." pops are highly toxic chemicals that break down extremely slowly in the environment, travel long distances and are linked to reproductive abnormalities, immune system dysfunction, neurological defects and cancer. the pop treaty is targeted for completion in south africa in late 2000 and a signing ceremony is planned for sweden in early 2001.

September 11, 1999, Saturday, Edition 1

SECTION: INSIGHT

LENGTH: 296 words

HEADLINE: ALTERNATE TACTICS URGED AGAINST MALARIA

BODY:

GENEVA (Reuters) - An environmental study claims innovative methods can fight malaria just as effectively as the harmful insecticide DDT, at a much lower cost to human health, the environment and budgets.

The study was released Tuesday by the Swiss-based environmental agency World Wide Fund for Nature, which is pushing for a phase-out of the pesticide used in Africa to control malaria.

DDT has been banned in much of the Western world since the early 1970s.

The suggested less harmful and cheaper alternatives are: eliminating mosquito-breeding grounds; using lower-risk pesticides; using bed nets impregnated with those lower-risk pesticides to curb the need for indoor spraying; and using odour-baited cloth targets to lure insects.

DDT is one of 12 **persistent organic pollutants** - dubbed the "dirty dozen" - targeted for restriction or elimination in a global treaty that was being negotiated in Geneva this week under the auspices of the U.N. Environment Program.

Environmental groups say DDT can travel long distances in the air and water, that it builds up in the fatty tissues of living beings, and that it stays in the sub-soil because it is not biodegradable. The chemical is also known for its devastating effect on bird life.

According to the World Health Organization, DDT remains the most effective way to deal with mosquitoes that transmit malaria.

"Until now, there have been no alternatives that are cheaper and equally effective. WHO's position is that DDT can be used in the fight against malaria in a limited way," says Antero Aitio, a medical doctor at the chemical safety office of the U.N. health agency.

The agency says the chemical should be phased out when alternatives are available.

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Negotiators pass halfway mark toward "dirty dozen" ban

Sunday, September 12, 1999

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ALEXANDER G. HIGGINS, Associated Press Writer

(09-12) 01:24 EDT GENEVA (AP) -- Negotiators from 115 nations have reached tentative agreement on key elements of a global treaty aiming to ban a "dirty dozen" of dangerous chemicals including DDT, officials said Saturday.

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In six days of talks that ended Saturday, general agreement was reached that production of eight of the chemicals should cease when the treaty comes into force, possibly as early as 2003 or 2004.

But details have yet to be worked out on how to treat DDT, which is given special status because of its "life saving" use in combatting malaria, said the chairman of the talks, John Buccini of Canada.

The World Health Organization urged the negotiators to take a balanced approach to DDT, recognizing its harm to the environment, but remembering the "vital role" it plays in killing malaria-carrying mosquitos.

About two dozen countries are still dependent on DDT for malaria control, and research is needed to help them find substitutes, Buccini said.

This was the third of five planned sessions to draft a treaty on the so-called "dirty dozen" of pollutants, highly toxic chemicals that break down extremely slowly and are taken up in the food chain.

The production stop would apply to mostly older pesticides created after World War II that have largely been supplanted by less dangerous chemicals, Buccini said.

Besides DDT, agreement has yet to be reached on PCBs, a fluid used for decades in transformers and other electrical equipment, as

well as dioxins and furans -- both industrial byproducts.

Negotiators meet again next spring in Bonn, Germany, and hope to wrap up the accord in South Africa late next year. A signing session is planned for Sweden in 2001.

U.N. Works to Ban 12 Chemicals

By Alexander G. Higgins

Associated Press Writer

Sunday, September 12, 1999; 1:23 a.m. EDT

GENEVA (AP) -- Negotiators from 115 nations have reached tentative agreement on key elements of a global treaty aiming to ban a "dirty dozen" of dangerous chemicals including DDT, officials said Saturday.

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But details have yet to be worked out on how to treat DDT, which is

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Some progress on chemical treaty

Controversy over DDT left for later, though



In Third World areas like this slum in Surat, India, DDT is often sprayed to stop the spread of malaria and other diseases.

AP file

MSNBC

Sept. 13 — After a week of talks, negotiators from 115 nations reached tentative agreement that production of eight of 12 chemicals known as the “dirty dozen” should cease when a global treaty comes into force, possibly as early as 2003 or 2004. But what to do about DDT, the most controversial chemical of the 12, was left for later.

Which side do you support in the DDT debate?

* 186 responses

The World Wildlife Fund and its push for a ban by 2007

49%

The Malaria Foundation and its view that a deadline creates 'unethical pressure'

45%

Can't decide

6%

MSNBC INTERACTIVE

Survey results tallied every 60 seconds. Live Votes reflect respondents' views and are not scientifically valid surveys.

DDT WAS GIVEN special status because of its "life saving" use in combatting malaria, said the chairman of the talks, John Buccini of Canada.

The World Health Organization urged the negotiators to take a balanced approach to DDT, recognizing its harm to the environment but remembering the "vital role" it plays in killing malaria-carrying mosquitos.

There was also no accord on the elimination of polychlorinated biphenyls, a fluid used in transformers and other electrical equipment, as well as dioxins and furans which are industrial byproducts.

ACCORD ON EIGHT

A U.N. statement said the negotiators agreed to eliminate the pesticides aldrin, endrin, toxaphene without exemptions.

Five other chemicals — the pesticides chlordane,

The 'Dirty Dozen'

The 12 "persistant organic pollutants" on the initial U.N. list for global action under the treaty being drafted are:

- The pesticides aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mirex, and toxaphene.
- The industrial chemicals polychlorinated biphenyls and hexachlorobenzene, which is also a pesticide.
- The unintended by-products of combustion and industrial processes, dioxins and furans.

dieldrin, heptachlor and mirex and the industrial byproduct hexachlorobenzene — were slated for elimination with limited country-specific exemptions.

The talks in Geneva were the third of five planned sessions to draft a treaty on the so-called "dirty dozen" of pollutants, highly toxic chemicals that break down extremely slowly and are taken up in the food chain.

Besides DDT, agreement has yet to be reached on PCBs, a fluid used for decades in transformers and other electrical equipment, as well as dioxins and furans — both industrial byproducts.

Negotiators meet again next spring in Bonn, Germany, and hope to wrap up the accord in South Africa late next year. A signing session is planned for Sweden in 2001.

THE DDT ISSUE

DDT is the most controversial of the "dirty dozen" chemicals because of its traditional role in combating malaria, a disease that kills up to 2.7 million people a year — mostly in sub-Saharan Africa. About 90 percent are children and pregnant women, and it's estimated

malaria kills four children per minute, or 5,000 per day.

Malaria is also re-emerging in regions where it was once under control and killing many more people than it did decades ago, at least partly because of a reduction in DDT use.

On those grim statistics both health activists and environmentalists agree, but it's the attack strategy where they differ.

WILDLIFE FUND STAND

Among environmental groups, the World Wildlife Fund has taken a lead role in lobbying for a worldwide DDT ban by 2007.

By its estimates, 35,000 metric tons of DDT are produced each year in at least five countries and the pesticide is legally imported and used in several dozen nations.

A 1998 WWF report argued that other "effective and financially feasible" tools exist to combat malaria, among them:

- Soaking bednets in pesticide and thus eliminating spraying, which can then carry the pesticide through the air.
- Using odor bait to attract and then destroy mosquitoes.
- Rotating lower-risk pesticides so that mosquitoes can't develop resistance.
- Eliminating mosquito breeding grounds and introducing natural predators.

MALARIA FOUNDATION STAND

Taking the opposite view is Malaria Foundation International, whose lobbying includes an "open letter" signed by 371 scientists and doctors from 57 countries.

"... the relevant question is not whether DDT can pose health risks (it can), but whether these risks outweigh the tremendous public health benefits of DDT for malaria control (they do not)," the letter said in a direct response to the WWF arguments.

The foundation contends that "cautious" DDT spraying has saved millions of lives at "negligible" risk to the environment.

"The disease can be fought by spraying minute quantities of DDT on the inside walls only of huts where people live; no outdoor, environmental spraying is done," the foundation claimed in a statement. "Used this way, the amount of DDT needed to spray just a single cotton plantation can be sufficient to treat all the vulnerable huts in a small country."

The foundation

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The foundation also argues that a DDT deadline would create "an unethical pressure on the poor to 'do or die' — do find the money for expensive alternatives, or simply die of the disease."

Right now, alternatives cost about three times as much as DDT, the foundation claims.

SPECIAL REPORT: MSNBC's coverage of environmental news, issues

SOME COMMON GROUND

U.N. Environment Program officials say some type of malaria exception for DDT is likely when a final treaty is drafted by the end of next year.

UNEP Director Klaus Toepfer argued that DDT "will be a tool against these serious illnesses for some time, as countries build the capacity to use an array of alternatives."

But about the only chance of ending the feud is if malaria-stricken countries get international aid and quickly use it to find and apply alternatives.

The WWF recognized that "adequate financial and technical resources must be earmarked" to combat malaria using non-traditional tools.

And the "open letter" signatories endorsed a two-phase approach: first guaranteeing that poor countries get the technical and financial aid they need to buy and use alternatives; and only then phasing out DDT when those alternatives are in the field and proven to work.

OTHER CHEMICALS

While DDT was the most controversial chemical on the table, dioxin has also been making news when it was found earlier this year in Belgian eggs, meat and dairy products.

And environmentalists are lobbying for a tough overall ban.

Greenpeace International issued a list of what it called 50 "toxic hotspots" around the world — from the Arctic to part of the site of next year's Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia — which it said were contaminated by "dirty dozen" chemicals.

"Governments have to ensure that this treaty is about elimination and not just about the reduction of these poisons in order to ensure the safety of present and future generations," Greenpeace expert Juan Lopez de Uralde said.

Concentrations of the chemicals are highest in the Arctic regions of Alaska, Canada, Scandinavia and Russia as pollution is carried northward by winds and ocean currents from industrial countries.

But in some cases banning a chemical isn't so simple. Banning dioxin, for example, is difficult "because you cannot ban all the different industrial processes," Toepfer said.

The Associated Press and Reuters contributed to this report.

September 13, 1999

LENGTH: 382 words

HEADLINE: Unep global treaty to ban 10 POPs

SOURCE: Chemical News & Intelligence

BYLINE: Anna Williams

DATELINE: LONDON

BODY:

Negotiators at last week's United Nations Environment Programme (Unep) talks on **persistent organic pollutants (POPs)** have proposed the elimination of ten chemicals from an initial action list of 12, Unep said in a statement on Monday.

Three pesticides - aldrin, endrin and toxaphene - are scheduled for elimination with no exemptions in the proposals for a treaty to reduce and/or eliminate POPs.

Another five pesticides - chlordane, dieldrin, heptachlor, mirex and hexachlorobenzene - are set for elimination with limited country-specific exemptions. New use and production of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) is to be banned, while DDT will be prohibited for all uses except the control of certain diseases. There was no agreement on the banning of dioxins and furans but Unep said it has agreed a procedure for adding chemicals to the action list.

Unep said elimination would take place once the treaty enters force, with the exception of the exemptions. The treaty is expected to be ratified some two to three years after a diplomatic conference on the treaty in spring (Q2) 2001. The diplomatic conference will follow the two more (fourth and fifth) negotiating rounds.

Production and use of DDT would be limited to the control of vector-borne diseases such as malaria, while all other uses, including agriculture, would be prohibited. Proposals under discussion include a continuous review (in consultation with the World Health Organisation) of the need for DDT to control vector-borne diseases and the availability of safer, effective and affordable approaches to DDT.

Unep said discussions focused on PCBs already in use, principally in electrical equipment, and the problems related to identifying existing applications and dealing with replacement costs - particularly in developing countries.

About 115 countries, 17 intergovernmental organisations and 72 non-governmental organisations participated in this third round of negotiations, which took place in Geneva, Switzerland on 6-11 September.

The proposals will now go to participating countries for consultation, followed by consideration at the fourth round of negotiations on 20-25 March 2000 in Bonn. The fifth and final round is scheduled to take place in South Africa in October or November 2000.

September 13, 1999

SECTION: Pg. NA

IAC-ACC-NO: 55895918

LENGTH: 360 words

HEADLINE: Japan host to 7 global toxic hot spots.

AUTHOR-ABSTRACT:

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BODY:

TOKYO, Sept. 7 Kyodo

Seven of the 50 global toxic hot spots identified Monday by Greenpeace International are located in Japan, the most of any country on the list along with Britain and Australia, officials at Greenpeace Japan said Tuesday.

The environmental watchdog said the list was released to pressure delegates at negotiations on a U.N. treaty on chemical pollutants to agree to eliminate long-lasting chemical pollutants, or **persistent organic pollutants (POPs)**, such as dioxins, DDT, furans and PCBs.

Negotiations on the treaty, the United Nations Environmental Plan, opened Monday in Geneva and will run through Saturday.

The catalogue, which featured random examples of toxic concentrations of 12 POPs around the world, highlighted seven areas in Japan, the same number as Britain and Australia.

They include Tokorozawa in Saitama Prefecture, and Nose, Osaka Prefecture.

The other five are the town of Hinode in Tokyo, the town of Shintone and Ryugasaki city in Ibaraki Prefecture, Hashimoto in Wakayama Prefecture, the town of Chuo in Okayama Prefecture and Teshima Island in Kagawa Prefecture.

All of the Japanese sites listed were contaminated with dioxins and heavy metals emitted from industrial waste incinerators.

"The report shows the seriousness of chemical pollution in Japan from a global point of view," said Ayako Sekine of Greenpeace Japan.

The report identifies highly contaminated areas, including large emission sources, contaminated industrial sites and stockpiled materials, the officials said.

The report describes the location, main contaminants, quantities, company or body responsible, source of contamination, and the industrial processes and practices which lead to the contamination of people and the environment.

It also describes what action is needed to clean up the sites.

Other areas mentioned in the report include Argentina, where banned or obsolete pesticides such as DDT and related waste were dumped near a school in one of the poorest provinces in the country, and in the province of Quebec, Canada, where a magnesium smelter has emitted a massive amount of dioxins.

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UN progress slow on "dirty dozen" pollutants ban

Updated 11:19 AM ET September 13, 1999

GENEVA, Sept 13 (Reuters) - Negotiators meeting in Geneva under U.N. auspices have struck a preliminary deal to ban eight of a "dirty dozen" of toxic pollutants in a global pact but have exempted the harmful insecticide DDT, officials said on Monday.

There was also no accord on the elimination of polychlorinated biphenyls, a fluid used in transformers and other electrical equipment, as well as dioxins and furans which are industrial byproducts.

These are among the so-called "dirty dozen" persistent organic pollutants, or POPs, that are targeted for restriction or elimination in the treaty expected to come into force in 2003.

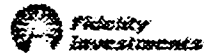
A U.N. statement said the negotiators agreed to eliminate the pesticides aldrin, endrin, toxaphene without exemptions.

Five other chemicals -- the pesticides chlordane, dieldrin, heptachlor and mirex and the industrial byproduct hexachlorobenzene -- were slated for elimination with limited country-specific exemptions.

The Swiss-based conservation group World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) said more hard work would be needed at the next round of negotiations in Bonn in March next year.

The Geneva session was the third meeting aimed at drafting the treaty. The fifth and final negotiating session is planned for early in 2001.

The WWF said in a statement that the 15-member European Union as well as Iceland and Norway had been at the forefront of calls for strong elimination commitments for POPs.



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But it criticised the United States and Australia for "pressing for loopholes and escape mechanisms that would weaken the treaty."

REUTERS 

On DDT, John Whitelaw, a U.N. Environment Programme official, said the negotiators opted for an exemption on public health grounds.

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The chemical, banned in much of the West including the United States and Britain in the early 1970s, is currently used for malaria control by more than 20 countries and the World Health Organisation says it remains the most effective way to deal with mosquitoes that transmit the disease.

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Environmental groups say DDT can travel long distances in the air and water, that it builds up in the fatty tissues of living beings and that it builds up in the sub-soil because of its non-biodegradable character.

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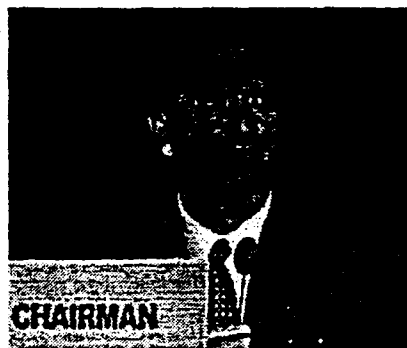
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Phaseout of World's Worst Chemicals Closer

GENEVA, Switzerland, September 13, 1999 (ENS) - In the third round of talks on a global treaty, held here all last week, negotiators agreed to aim for a complete phaseout of 10 persistent organic pollutants (POPs) under a UN Environment Programme treaty. Two chemicals under consideration for the ban were exempted.

John Buccini of Canada chaired the negotiations (Photos courtesy [Earth Negotiations Bulletin](#))

The negotiators from 115 countries worked with 17 intergovernmental and 72 non-governmental organizations, bringing the total number of participants in the talks to more than 420.



Delegates recognized the public health need for an exemption for DDT, used in controlling mosquito borne diseases, such as malaria.

PCBs would still be allowed in electrical equipment where they are already in use, but banned from new applications.

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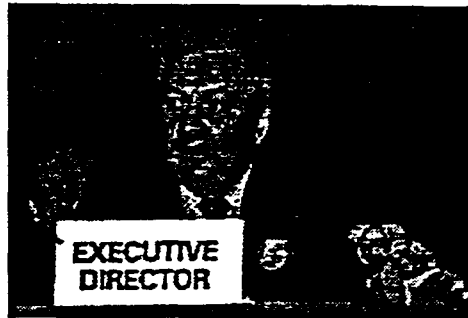
Three of the 12 POPs in the UN Environment Programme mandate are slated for elimination with no exemptions. These are the pesticides aldrin, endrin and toxaphene.

Another five POPs are set for elimination, with limited country specific exemptions. These are the pesticides chlordane, dieldrin, heptachlor, mirex, and hexachlorobenzene, which is also an industrial compound and a by-product.

Except for the exemptions, elimination of these chemicals would take place once the treaty enters into force.

There was less clarity over the status of the two other POPs to be covered by the treaty - dioxins and furans. Unlike the others, these are only produced as by-products of processes, rather than being useful chemicals in their own right.

The current text states that they should be reduced, but the USA led a group opposing the suggestion by the European Union that the aim should be "continued minimisation aiming to elimination." That phrase will remain the subject of further discussion at the next major round of negotiations in Bonn, Germany next year.



Klaus Toepfer

UNEP Executive Director Klaus Toepfer said the talks are now at a critical point. He stressed it is time to develop specific control measures and set deadlines. No country is immune to POPs, he said, and no country acting alone can address the problems they

create.

Egypt stressed the need for technical assistance to build landfills and incinerators to destroy POPs stockpiles and supported development of training and awareness programmes at the subregional levels.

Lesotho expressed concern that the text overlooked technology transfer, rehabilitation of contaminated areas and formulation of national implementation plans.

After premiering an original video, native activists spoke on the importance of the POPs negotiations and linked environmental rights to their human rights struggles. There was agreement on a procedure for adding chemicals to the convention. With the exception a few remaining issues, the meeting also agreed on scientific criteria and data requirements for screening and evaluation.

The meeting is formally known as the Third Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for an International Legally Binding Instrument for Implementing International Action on Certain Persistent Organic Pollutants. It builds on the foundation for a treaty laid at the first session in Montreal in June and July 1998, and the second session held in Nairobi in January 1999. The negotiations are in response to the mandate from the UNEP

Governing Council to reach agreement in the year 2000 on a treaty to reduce and/or eliminate 12 specific POPs and to establish scientific criteria and a process of identifying additional pollutants for future international action.

A final round of negotiations will be held in South Africa towards the end of 2000. A global POPs treaty is due to be signed in Sweden in the spring of 2001.

{ENDS Environment Daily, contributed to this report. Environmental Data Services Ltd, London. Email: envdaily@ends.co.uk; Website: <http://www.ends.co.uk>}

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Zu giftig für Mensch und Umwelt

Dauergifte wie DDT und Dioxine sollen dank einer Konvention welt- weit verschwinden. Die Staatengemeinschaft tut sich schwer.

Autor: Von Stefan Hartmann

Die dritte von sechs Verhandlungsrunden zur weltweit verbindlichen Konvention über Dauergifte fand vergangene Woche in Genf statt. Die Konvention, die unter der Ägide des Umweltprogramms der Vereinten Nationen zu Stande kommen soll, wird über zwölf Dauergifte richten aus der Gruppe der Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP). Dazu gehören die giftigen Dioxine und Furane, die bei Verbrennungsprozessen freigesetzt werden, ferner polychlorierte Biphenyle (PCB), die in Kondensatoren und Transformatoren verwendet werden, sowie neun gefährliche Schädlingsbekämpfungsmittel. Zu diesen gehören unter anderen Aldrin, Chlordan, DDT, Dieldrin, Endrin, Mirex, Toxaphen und Hexachlorbenzen.

Inuits wehren sich

Pestizide kommen vor allem in der Landwirtschaft und im Fall des DDTs bei der Malariabekämpfung zum Einsatz. Die Dauergifte werden über die Luft und das Wasser in weit von ihrem Einsatzort entfernt liegende Regionen verfrachtet. Sie werden nur sehr langsam abgebaut und reichern sich in der Nahrungskette an. Einige dieser Substanzen liessen sich zum Beispiel in hohen Mengen in der Milch von Inuitfrauen in Alaska nachweisen.

Vertreter des Inuitvolkes protestierten an der Genfer Verhandlung gegen die schleichende Vergiftung der Fischbestände durch Toxaphen, das 2500 Kilometer südlich in den Baumwollfeldern der Vereinigten Staaten eingesetzt wird. Der direkte Einsatz von Pestiziden führt weltweit zu einer ausserordentlich hohen Zahl an Vergiftungen und Todesfällen.

An den Verhandlungen in Genf nahmen Vertreter aus 110 Regierungen sowie von 70 Nichtregierungsorganisationen (NGO) teil. Dies ist neu: Seit dem Umweltgipfel von Rio de Janeiro von 1992 können sich diese "Stimmen der Zivilgesellschaft" bei solchen Verhandlungen äussern. Die POP-Konvention sollte im Frühling 2001 in Stockholm unterschriftsreif sein.

Die Schweiz ist bei den POP-Verhandlungen vertreten. In der Schweiz (und in der EU) sind die PCBs und Pestizide seit 1986 verboten. Doch als Standort einer bedeutenden chemischen Industrie habe unser Land die "moralische Pflicht, sich in der Frage dieser hoch giftigen Substanzen aktiv engagieren", erklärt Delegationsleiter Georg Karlaganis vom Bundesamt für Umwelt, Wald und Landschaft. Dies sei im Fall von DDT keineswegs einfach. In vielen Ländern der Dritten Welt sei die Todesrate von Malaria sehr hoch; in 20 Ländern werde daher zur Innenraumbehandlung gegen die Stechmücke nach wie vor DDT beigezogen. Solange kein adäquater Ersatz für das Insektizid vorliege, müssten daher bei einer Konvention über solche Dauergifte Ausnahmestimmungen gelten. Auch seien Übergangslösungen und andere Verfahren nötig. Von NGO-Seite wird gewarnt, giftige Substanzen durch schneller abbaubare, aber ebenso giftige Substanzen zu ersetzen.

Polen hat 65 000 Tonnen Gift

Kaum eine Regierung scheint bereit zu sein, zusätzliche Mittel für eine Umsetzung der POP-Konvention bereitzustellen. Die internationale Gemeinschaft finanziert zwar bereits heute verschiedene globale Umweltprojekte. Für die fachgerechte Beseitigung der riesigen Lagerbestände an alten Pestiziden etwa in Afrika sind allerdings erhebliche Beträge nötig. Nach Schätzung der Uno-Ernährungs- und Landwirtschaftsorganisation lagern in Entwicklungsländern allein 100 000 Tonnen von Pestiziden unter prekären Umständen. Alte Pestizide bilden auch in Europa ein grosses Problem, wie das Beispiel Polen zeigt, das allein auf 65 000 Tonnen sitzt. Bis heute wurden weltweit erst 3000 Tonnen entsorgt.

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United Press International

September 14, 1999, Tuesday, BC cycle

SECTION: International

LENGTH: 544 words

HEADLINE: Headway in global talks to phase-out toxic pollutants: but hurdles remain

BYLINE: BY JOHN ZAROCOSTAS

DATELINE: GENEVA, Switzerland, Sept. 14

BODY:

Senior negotiators from over 115 countries made forward movement in the third round of global talks to phase-out the world's most toxic **persistent organic pollutants** top United Nations officials said. "This was a breakthrough meeting," said the chief of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) Klaus Toepfer, at the end of a six 6 day marathon negotiating session here. But some participants, who spoke on condition of non-attribution, said that the latest round failed to resolve the most burning issues. The Same sources said that poor developing countries, spearheaded by India and the Group of 77, plus China, put rich industrialised nations on notice that a final deal will largely hinge on whether sufficient funds are earmarked for technical assistance to help them meet their treaty obligations. The objective of the talks is to reach a global treaty by the end of 2000 to eliminate twelve of the world's deadliest POP's such as pesticides like Aldrin, and toxaphene and dangerous industrial chemicals like polychlorinated biphenyl's and by- products such dioxin and furans. If a treaty is concluded it would most likely come into force around 2003-2004 after a specified number of countries ratify it. The participants agreed to proposals to eliminate seven of the eight POP's pesticides, with the exception of DDT, and one industrial pollutant hexachlorobenzine. Delegates also agreed three pesticides -aldrin, endrin and toxaphene- would be eliminated as the treaty entered into force, said Jim Willis, director of chemicals at UNEP. He said that another five would targeted for elimination, with country by country exceptions on specific use, which would be subject to bi-annual or five-year reviews. But the talks achieved mixed results sources said concerning the most hazardous POP's to human health such as dioxin, furans, PCB, and DDT, and much of the text is studded all over the place with brackets. POP's have been linked to causing abnormalities, and cancer, among other serious illnesses. Participants to the UNEP sponsored talks also agreed that production and use of DDT in agriculture would only be allowed to combat vector diseases such as Malaria, and that all other uses, including Agriculture, would be banned. About 20-25 countries that suffer from Malaria are still highly dependent on DDT. Clifton Curtis, director Global of toxics initiative with the world wildlife Fund (WWF). The talks, also came up with a proposal that calls for the elimination of new use and production of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB'S) used in electrical equipment such as transformers and capacitors, and pre-fabricated building units. But the talks did not come up with a clear mandate on how to deal with "the millions of tons" of PCB's still out there, said an environment diplomat. A number of observers tracking the talks were also dismayed that too much focus was placed on DDT and less on Dioxin and furans. But some advanced countries such as Australia and the United States, pointed out that dioxin inventories are difficult to develop and argued they should be minimized with the ultimate aim of eliminating them. European Union countries, however, which recent

SUNS
South-North Development Monitor, Email Edition
September 14, 1999

Geneva, Sept 13 (Someshwar Singh) -- Developing countries have voiced their concern against a rushed, last-minute deal on the crucial issue of funding and technical assistance for the emerging Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).

This position came out clearly, at the closing plenary, Saturday, of the third session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-3) for an International Legally Binding Instrument for Implementing International Action on Certain Persistent Organic Pollutants.

China, India and Gambia were among the countries who spoke on the issue, expressing frustration at the lack of progress on this front so far.

The negotiations are in response to a mandate from the General Council of the UN Environment Programme to reach an agreement in year 2000 on a treaty to reduce and/or eliminate 12 specific POPs and to establish scientific criteria and a process for identifying additional pollutants for future international action.

Two more negotiating sessions of the INC are planned - INC-4 at Bonn in March, 2000, followed by INC-5 in South Africa in the autumn of 2000.

A Diplomatic conference is scheduled to be held subsequently for adopting and signing of the POPs treaty - the first one to seek concerted global action to contain POPs. Sweden has offered to host that conference in the spring of year 2001.

China and India said at the close of the INC-3 that the technical and financial aspects of the POPs Convention should be 'fully discussed' before and be 'acceptable to everyone' and not be left for the very last minute at the Diplomatic conference.

"If left to languish until the very last minute, it would be detrimental to the Convention per se," the Chinese delegate pointed out.

"Progress on the technical and financial aspects have not been to the extent developing countries would have liked to see here," said the head of the Indian delegation. "We would have liked to come closer to the negotiation text. All that we have for now is that 4 different groups of countries have put forth their suggestions."

The delegate of Gambia pointed out that there should not be a repeat of what happened at the PIC (Prior Informed Consent) Procedure Convention (on trade in certain dangerous chemicals) - where the most crucial issue was left to be dealt with only towards the end.

It is recognized that industrialized countries will be in a strong position for responding to the treaty provisions. Many have already put in place extensive measures.

Developing countries and countries with economies in transition, on the other hand, often lack the means-both technical and financial.

"They will need, and the industrial world will need to provide, substantial support to enable full participation in and compliance with the future POPs treaty," noted Klaus Topfer, UNEP's Executive Director in his address to the conference last week.

"Financial assistance can be the deal-maker or the deal-breaker," said Clifton Curtis of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). "There's a chance to really make this treaty work, but it won't without significant, new financial assistance from the developed world."

The most notable success at the Geneva meeting was that 'the policy substance' of the Convention text had begun to 'crystallize,' said John Buccini of Canada (Chair of the INC-3) at a press conference Saturday. Buccini said the tentative Convention text would now go back to governments for further consultations.

Headway was made in terms of classifying 10 of the 12 POPs which are intentionally (rpt intentionally) produced - in terms listing them either in annex 'a' or 'b' referring to prohibited or restricted lists.

A UNEP press release said that three of the 12 POPs - aldrin, endrin and toxaphene - are pesticides and are slated for elimination with no exemptions.

Another five - chlordane, dieldrin, heptachlor, mirex and hexachlorobenzene-are set for elimination, but with country-specific exemptions.

Of these five, hexachlorbenzene is an industrial compound and also a by-product.

With the exception of exemptions, eliminations would take place once the treaty enters into force.

New use and production of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are to be prohibited, under policy proposals developed by negotiators. Discussion has focused on PCBs already in use - principally in electrical equipment - and related complexity of identifying existing applications and dealing with replacement costs, particularly in developing countries.

UNEP also said that there has been agreement on a procedure for adding chemicals to the convention. With a few remaining issues, there was also agreement on scientific criteria and data requirements for screening and evaluation.

There also appears to be a general agreement on the controversial issue of phasing out DDT - most certainly for its agricultural use - but retaining the possibility of its limited production and use to save human lives in the fight against malaria.

This means that countries may need to have stocks of DDT, the only one among the POPs that has a life-saving value (in addition to its harmful environmental and health effects), available to fight malaria until such

time that alternatives are available to replace even such necessary health-related uses of DDT.

However, no time-frame has been discussed with regards to the phase out of DDT and it appears in both the annexes and is still under brackets.

But WWF maintains that negotiators in Geneva agreed to eliminate seven pesticides and one industrial compound, which "are the least produced and used."

The other four - DDT and by-products dioxins, PCBs and furans - are far more controversial.

Asked as to when the POPs treaty would actually start being implemented, Buccini said while it may take another three to four years before the Convention is ratified and comes into force, a number of countries were already taking measures to deal with POPs.

However, most of the initiatives taken are by developed countries which are already in the process of phasing out some of the intentionally produced POPs. But a number of transnational chemical companies have facilities in the developing countries.

Among the POPS, the dioxins and furans are POPS that affect all countries. They are unintended by-products of combustion and many industrial processes, including burning of garbage.

While the recent dioxin health care in Belgium alerted the whole world to the potential hazards, it also exposed the preparedness

of the developed countries not just to test the presence of hazardous substances in food but also their capability to deal with them in time. It is recognised that for developing countries to be able to come up to the same level of detection and reaction, it will take a lot of time, money and effort.

A controversial development at the INC-3 related to the exemptions being developed in the draft with respect to the production and use of some of the POPs. While there appears to be an agreement for research purpose, other justifications are being debated.

According to the international environment NGO, Greenpeace, the US, Canada, Australia, Japan and South Korea are 'promoting the increase and continued proliferation of dioxins in the planet.'

"The US and its allies should spend their efforts and resources in phasing out their own toxic pollution sources, and funding clean alternatives instead of polluting these negotiations," said Juan Lopez de Uralde of Greenpeace International.

"Now is the time to begin developing specific control measures and deadlines for the 12 POPs listed in the mandate," said Klaus Topfer, while addressing the conference earlier.

"From incinerators that release dioxins into the environment- to contamination of the air, water, soil, wildlife, and food with pesticides and PCBs-worrisome signs are growing, and the world is watching, and for good reason."

Decades worth of electrical equipment containing PCBs are aging, and in serious danger of leakage and accidents. Most are located in or near urban areas.

Dioxins and furans, unintended toxic by-products of many industrial and combustion processes, have been releases largely unmeasured and unchecked in most countries.

Obsolete and unwanted stocks of POPs pesticides often are poorly marked and stored, threatening to leak into water supplies and poison the air and land.

On the crucial issue of financial sources and mechanisms, Sweden plans to sponsor a workshop in January/February 2000. Recommendations from this workshop are to be presented at the next INC in March 2000 in Bonn. This workshop is to bring in government experts from 40-50 countries, reflecting "regional balance", along with experts of international organizations, the private and non-governmental sectors. However, all participants "will act in their personal capacity, with the workshop report reflecting their views as experts."

Sweden has selected the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), an environmental NGO, to serve as 'consultant/secretariat in coordinating and undertaking preparations for the workshop.

WWF International's global toxic programme is managed from its US chapter - WWF-US.

Treaty Talks Fail to Resolve DDT Question

By Elizabeth Olson
International Herald Tribune

GENEVA — Negotiators have reached a broad agreement to ban most of the "dirty dozen" — 12 highly toxic chemicals and pesticides — but were unable to decide the fate of the most controversial, DDT, because of its use as a cheap and effective means to combat malaria.

A week of talks in Geneva among 115 nations striving for a global treaty on the hazardous substances produced a tentative accord over the weekend that calls for a halt in the production of eight chemicals when the treaty takes effect.

The treaty, which has been negotiated since 1998 under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Program, is expected to be signed in Stockholm in 2001, following two more negotiating rounds. The next round is planned in Bonn in March 2000.

Bans on the pollutants would go into effect when the treaty is ratified by a sufficient number of countries, probably in 2004.

Yet to be determined is how to handle DDT, which has divided environmentalists and public-health specialists. DDT, which poses health risks to wildlife, particularly birds, and has been found in the milk of nursing mothers, has been banned in many industrialized countries. But more than two dozen countries still rely on the chemical against malaria, which kills 1.1 million people each year.

The World Health Organization, which has launched a major initiative to eradicate malaria, urged negotiators to weigh DDT's dangers against its benefits.

Despite the "often insidious health impacts of DDT," the chemical plays an "important, sometimes vital role" in malaria control, said the agency's chief, Gro Harlem Brundtland.

The health organization has said that DDT remained the most effective way to rid areas of malaria-carrying mosquitoes. It is used by countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas, typically to spray interior walls of buildings, where mosquitoes often are found.

The World Wide Fund for Nature countered by issuing a study last week that concluded that methods employing lower-risk pesticides could be equally effective in controlling malaria.

Although environmentalists have eased their demand for a firm date for DDT elimination, the dispute has resulted in DDT being considered separately from the other hazardous substances, John Buccini of Canada, the chairman of the talks, acknowledged.

The treaty sees "long-term elimination," he said, "with uses limited to public health programs."

Clifton Curtis, director of the Fund's Global Toxic Initiative, said the group was "committed to achieve elimination of DDT conditioned on the availability of alternatives."

Such alternatives depend on financing to help developing countries in finding or developing alternatives not only for the use of DDT, but also for the production of it and similar chemicals. China, Mexico and India are the largest producers.

In addition to DDT, negotiators failed to make progress on PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, which are industrial chemicals used in electrical transformers and plastics and as paint additives. Also still to be negotiated are dioxin and furans, industrial byproducts.

Progress on 'dirty' chemicals pact

By Frances Williams in Geneva

The latest round of negotiations on a global pact to curb use and emissions of a "dirty dozen" highly toxic pesticides and other chemicals has ended with tentative agreement to eliminate eight of them.

The United Nations-sponsored talks also made progress on tackling the remaining four, including DDT, which is used to eradicate malaria-bearing mosquitoes. The negotiators, from 115 countries, agreed on a public health exemption for DDT while aiming at a phase-out.

Klaus Töpfer, executive director of the UN environment programme (Unep), said last week's meeting represented a breakthrough in eliminating "some of the worst pollutants of the 20th century". The "dirty dozen" are persistent organic pollutants (pops), long-lasting compounds that travel great distances and accumulate in the food chain.

The proposals must now go to governments for consultation before a new round of talks next March in Bonn. Unep hopes to conclude a treaty late next year.

Eight of the 12 pops have been recommended for elimination as soon as the treaty enters into force, which could be as early as 2003 or 2004. The pesticides aldrin, endrin and toxaphene would be banned without exception though there could be limited country-specific exemptions for chlordane, dieldrin, heptachlor, mirex and hexachlorobenzene.

The use of DDT would be prohibited for all but disease vector control but negotiators have yet to decide on a timetable for elimination and what help should be given to the two dozen or so countries still using DDT to switch to different malaria-control strategies.

Negotiators also proposed to ban new use and production of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

September 15, 1999

SECTION: Business

LENGTH: 173 words

HEADLINE: EUROPEAN CHEMICAL NEWS- Proposed UN DDT ban sparks malaria concerns

BODY:

The use of a much-maligned pesticide, DDT, has been defended in the fight against malaria in an open letter signed by 371 scientists, doctors and health officials.

The letter appeared in a run to a round of UN talks which might agree a global ban on the so-called dirty dozen **persistent organic pollutants** (POPs), which includes DDT.

According to World Health Organisation estimates, 300-500 new cases of malaria are contracted each year and about 2.7 M of these die.

The US-based Malaria Project claims that if DDT is banned with no guarantees that money will be made available for alternative then people will die.

The European Commission believes that countries which use DDT as a cheap way of preventing malaria would demand that the treaty include an exemption for such use.

At present over 20 countries, including China, Mexico and India, continue to use DDT for this purpose.

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Chemical Business NewsBase: European Chemical News.

CHEMICAL REGULATION REPORTER

BNA, Inc.

September 17, 1999

International Issues

Negotiators Agree to Ban Eight POPs, Restrict DDT, PCBs; Dioxins Still Open

GENEVA—Negotiators from more than 110 countries reached an agreement in principle on the elimination of eight persistent organic pollutants (POPs), officials said Sept. 11.

Negotiators also agreed in principle that production of DDT should be eliminated in the long term, and that production of new polychlorinated biphenyls should be banned, officials said. However, significant differences remain on whether to ban dioxins and furans, officials said.

The agreement was reached at a meeting here Sept. 6-11 aimed at hammering out the first global convention on the reduction and elimination of the world's most toxic POPs. The meeting was the third in a series of five that negotiators hope will culminate in a diplomatic conference to adopt the convention in the spring of 2001.

John Buccini, head of the Canadian Environmental Protection Service's commercial chemicals evaluation division and chairman of the Geneva meeting, told reporters Sept. 11 that negotiators arrived at a tentative position for a ban on the production and use of eight POPs—the pesticides aldrin, chlordane, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mirex, and toxaphene, as well as the industrial chemical hexachlorobenzene.

Production and use of three POPs—aldrin, endrin, and toxaphene—would be banned upon the entry into force of the convention, which probably would not take place until 2003-2004, Buccini said.

Production of the other five POPs would also be banned upon entry into force, he added, but some "small or residual uses" would still be allowed for a short period thereafter.

DDT, PCBs. Buccini also said negotiators reached a common position on DDT, the highly toxic chemical that is still being used in some 20 developing countries mainly to control the spread of malaria, as well as PCBs, which have widespread use in power-generating equipment.

"The negotiators have agreed that the type of restriction they are looking for on DDT would be long-term elimination and that production of DDT would be limited for uses for public health purposes," the chairman said. "DDT has been used in the past for some agricul-

tural applications, [and] the indication here is that no production would be entertained for use in agriculture."

"The negotiators are favoring elimination of production of new PCBs," Buccini said. "The situation that has to be investigated further is that PCBs are put into uses such as transformers where the equipment is designed for 40 years or longer. Therefore, the difficulty here is to see how much of this material is out there, how it can be eventually retired, and what type of management we might want to put on it when it is in use."

"It's a very complex issue," he added. "The simplest way to portray the issue is that some entire power generation systems have PCB equipment in them. It's not a question of going in and taking out a transformer here and there; you're looking at very significant changes."

Malaria Issue. A public dispute over what to do about DDT overshadowed most of the week-long conference. In a statement issued prior to the opening of the meeting, nearly 400 scientists and doctors denounced a proposal from the Worldwide Fund for Nature and other environmental groups calling for a global ban on the production and use of DDT by 2007. The medical researchers argued that, in the absence of an anti-malarial vaccine, DDT remained one of the few means available to control a disease that claims nearly 3 million lives each year, primarily in developing countries.

WWF countered in a statement that while it shared the concerns of the medical community, "the cause of finding alternatives [to DDT] and getting funding committed will be far better served by establishing a deadline for phaseout . . . As with other international treaties, exceptions to the phaseout can be made if necessary, if effective, affordable alternatives to DDT are not developed by WWF's proposed deadline of 2007."

United Nations Environment Program Executive Director Klaus Töpfer stepped into the debate Sept. 6. "DDT requires special attention and caution," he declared in an opening speech to the meeting. "We must ensure that we move toward reducing and eliminating releases of DDT into the environment, but not at the cost of lives lost to malaria or other diseases."

Three countries are known to manufacture DDT—China, India, and Mexico. Environmental representatives attending the meeting told BNA that Mexico had promised to phase out production by 2007 and that India had suggested a 2010 date for shutting down its production. However, China remains noncommittal on the issue, they said.

Dioxins, Furans. Less of the public spotlight was focused on what some participants said was the far more significant problem of dioxins and furans, two targeted POPs produced as unintended byproducts of combustion and industrial processes.

"Not as clear an outcome has been arrived at here," Buccini said. "We have a proposal that governments are going to go home with and consult on, but I think with the degree of clarity we've brought to the 10 intentionally produced substances at this meeting, we'll probably arrive [at a decision] at the next meeting," which is scheduled to take place in Bonn in March 2000.

Jim Willis, head of UNEP's chemicals division and secretary for the meeting, said negotiators were looking toward a United States-backed initiative that would have signatory countries prepare national "action pro-

grams" to reduce dioxin and furan emissions rather than commit to an elimination schedule in the treaty.

"At this stage in our understanding of measuring of dioxins and furans, we're not as far along as we are with some of the other POPs," Willis said. "Part of this is because they are generally present in such low levels of environmental releases, we're really looking at how to measure incredibly small levels. There's general recognition that the ability to go out and do these measurements and establish good, reliable baselines of data in developing countries is probably beyond our current means."

"Negotiators are now looking at an action plan-based approach rather than an approach which addresses trying to get releases down to X percent of some previous year's level," he added. "That's not to say that negotiators are throwing out the idea of baselines and developing data, but in fact national action plans to reduce and eliminate dioxins and furans simply seems a more practical, pragmatic, and effective approach at this point."

A U.S. State Department official involved in the Geneva talks told BNA that U.S. negotiators want the POPs treaty to include "meaningful levels" of prevention of dioxin production and release. These provisions must be doable so that all countries, including developing ones, can implement them, he said.

An outright ban on production of dioxins, as called for by some environmental groups, is not feasible, he said.

Environmental Groups Opposed. Environmental groups denounced this approach, saying it was one of several attempts by the United States and a number of other countries to undermine the convention.

In addition to the action plan initiative on dioxins and furans, U.S. officials also argued for exceptions that would essentially exempt POPs-containing products from the convention's requirements if they are in the hands of consumers at the time the treaty enters into force.

Examples of such exceptions sought by the United States include farmers holding pesticides containing banned POPs; "site-limited intermediates" or banned POPs which are intended for conversion into other chemicals; telephone poles sprayed with PCBs; and "de minimis" concentrations in which banned POPs in very small concentrations are created in production processes, such as trace levels of PCBs resulting from the production of paint pigments.

"The proposed loopholes could indefinitely delay chemical phaseouts and/or allow continued uses, imports, and exports," Greenpeace International declared in a statement Sept. 10. "U.S. representatives admit this is a political judgment based on their belief that the U.S. Congress may not ratify a strong treaty."

Clifton Curtis, head of WWF's Global Toxics Initiative, said Australia and Canada were backing the U.S. efforts to promote the action plan approach on dioxins and furans. "But there are some fairly strong proponents for saying there does need to be a home [for dioxins and furans] within the elimination schedule," he added, citing a European Union proposal that calls for "ultimate elimination" of the two substances.

Criteria for Including New POPs. On other issues, Buccini said that negotiators have for the most part endorsed criteria and procedures adopted by an expert group in June for including new POPs within the framework of the convention. The chairman noted that some differences remain on the technical screening criteria concerning persistence in water and bioaccumulation potential, and that these differences were expected to be addressed at the next negotiating session in Bonn.

However, negotiators still have to tackle the difficult issues related to implementation of the proposed convention, in particular the extent of technical and financial help that will be offered to developing countries to ensure that they come on board.

Buccini said he was pleased with the outcome of the Geneva meeting but added that much difficult work remained. "We're at the third of five meetings, so that means we're 60 percent of the way there, but it may be the easy 60 percent . . . getting closure may be the more difficult part of the road."

"I see the next meeting [in Bonn] as being a very difficult one," he added. "We will want to come out of that meeting with a clear proposal on all measures for the convention in order that governments can consult."

By DANIEL PRUZIN

September 23, 1999

SECTION: Business

LENGTH: 128 words

HEADLINE: CHIMIE HEBDO- United Nations conference in Geneva to ban 12 **persistent organic pollutants**

BODY:

Original text in FRENCH

The United Nations' conference in Geneva in mid Sep 1999 aimed to ban 12 **persistent organic pollutants** (POPs).

The difficulties of banning DDT are discussed.

Examples are given of chlorine-containing groups of products among the POPs.

The United Nations Environment Programme (Unep) hopes to draft before the end of 2000 an international treaty to control POPs, imposing a total ban or a limited use, according to the degree of danger of the product.

The bans could apply worldwide, or be varied according to country.

Poorer countries would need payments to enable them to suppress the pollutants.

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Chemical Business NewsBase: Chimie Hebdo.

ENDS

Progress on POPs treaty, but hard road ahead on listing criteria

The text of a new UN Convention to deal with persistent organic pollutants (POPs) began to take clear shape at a third negotiating meeting in Geneva on 6-11 September. Agreement in principle has been reached on restrictions on most of an initial list of 12 POPs, but a predictable lack of consensus prevails on how to deal with PCBs and dioxins. Of greater long-term commercial and environmental significance will be the treaty's procedures for adding substances to the initial list, and on this there are still fundamental disagreements over the scientific and other criteria to be used.

Negotiations on the POPs treaty under the auspices of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) began last year. Two more negotiating meetings are scheduled next year, and it is hoped that the treaty will attract sufficient ratifications to enter into force in 2003 or 2004.

The Convention is intended to regulate at global level chemicals which are persistent, bioaccumulative and give rise to hazards to humans or the environment. But to qualify for control they must also be transported for long distances in the environment – for instance, by the global

“distillation” phenomenon in which certain organochlorines are conveyed from temperate or tropical regions and deposited in colder latitudes (ENDS Report 261, pp 9-11).

Twelve chemicals have already been identified for control. But the treaty will also include a process for reviewing and adding new substances to this initial list. A Criteria Expert Group (CEG) has been discussing criteria and a procedure for this purpose.

The Convention is likely to contain three annexes on which a chemical might be listed.

INTERNATIONAL

One will be for chemicals whose production and use are to be banned, a second for those whose production and use will be restricted, and a third for substances for which reduction or elimination measures will be specified. The chemical industry is keen on the second annex to make it distinct from the first for obvious strategic reasons.

At the Geneva meeting, tentative agreement was reached to ban the production and use of eight of the 12 POPs. Most are pesticides no longer approved within the EC.

Production and use of aldrin, endrin and toxaphene will be banned when the Convention enters into force. Production of the pesticides chlordane, dieldrin, heptachlor and mirex and the industrial chemical hexachlorobenzene will also be banned at this point, but with some limited uses permitted for as yet unspecified periods.

On DDT, the meeting was preceded by controversy when some 400 scientists and

doctors signed a document attacking the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) for proposing a ban on the pesticide in 2007. DDT is still used for malaria control in some 20 countries, and the signatories argued that protecting humans from malaria is more important than the health and environmental hazards posed by the chemical.

WWF countered that the signatories had unnecessarily polarised the debate. The group says that its intention in proposing a firm phase-out date for DDT was to catalyse the provision of funding and research on alternative means of malaria control.

The group withdrew its proposal at the meeting. But its approach won some backing from both UNEP and the World Health Organization. The latter presented an action plan for reducing reliance on DDT for malaria control, based on assessment of countries' needs to make a transition to alternatives and increased provision of technical and financial resources to help them make the switch.

Negotiators in Geneva agreed that the Convention should permit the use of DDT only for public health purposes. No phase-out date has yet been suggested.

On the other two groups of chemicals on the initial POPs list, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and dioxins, there was little consensus.

Countries generally agree that there should be no new uses of PCBs. The bone of contention is what to do with the substantial stocks of PCBs in existing equipment. Some PCB units, especially transformers, may have working lives of 40 years or more. The EC was a leading proponent of setting a phase-out deadline for PCB equipment, but concerns about the cost of identifying, destroying and replacing it precluded an agreement at this stage.

Accord on how to deal with dioxins – unlike the other 11 POPs, inadvertent by-products of combustion, chemical and other processes – will prove difficult. The USA is opposed to enshrining a requirement to reduce dioxin releases in the Convention on the grounds that reliable baseline data are lacking. The EC, in contrast, wants it made explicit that elimination of dioxin releases should be a long-term goal. China and Russia, meanwhile, argued that reduction of dioxin releases should depend on countries' capacities, and on provision of technical and financial assistance.

The debate closed with proposals for the minimisation and elimination of dioxins still in square brackets in the draft text. So are proposals for national action plans on dioxins, including the compilation of emission inventories, preparation of control strategies and an implementation schedule.

While the discussions on the "dirty dozen" attracted most attention, the outcome of negotiations on the body of the Convention will be of greater long-term significance. Important issues remain to be settled at the next two meetings.

● **General exemptions:** There is general agreement that the Convention should provide for banned chemicals to continue to be used for research purposes. But the USA led arguments for other exemptions – for use of POPs in the hands of consumers or present in manufactured articles or chemicals when bans or restrictions entered into force, for POPs generated in manufacturing processes and present at *de minimis* levels in products, and for site-limited intermediates.

All these proposals remain in square brackets in the draft text. Greenpeace attacked the USA for pushing for loopholes in the treaty which are likely to stimulate

extra production in the run-up to a ban and delay POPs phase-outs for many years.

● **Imports and exports:** There is no consensus whether trade in POPs regulated under the Convention should be banned. One reason is concern that trade restrictions affecting non-parties to the treaty might fall foul of World Trade Organization rules.

● **New chemicals:** The EC and USA were again at loggerheads over how to deal with new chemicals with POPS-type properties. The EC wanted an outright ban on the production, commercialisation and use of new and "newly developed" chemicals of this kind to be included in the treaty. The US argued for a narrower approach applying solely to new chemicals, whose commercialisation should be "avoided" rather than expressly banned.

Delegates agreed that the issue should be tackled through existing chemicals assessment and regulation schemes – but the divide between the EC and US approaches remains.

● **Adding chemicals to the treaty:** The bulk of the procedure for adding chemicals to the treaty's annexes was agreed at the meeting. The initiative to do so can be made by a party to the Convention, which must submit specified information to the treaty's secretariat. If the submission survives an initial screening, it will be passed to a review committee, which will prepare a "risk profile" and then a "risk management evaluation". The issues to be taken into account in both documents are specified in the treaty, and parties to the Convention and observers will be consulted at both stages.

The committee will then submit a recommendation to the periodic Conference of Parties, which will take the final decision whether to list a substance.

There is concern that this process could take four years or more, and the EC proposed in Geneva that the procedure should not be specified too closely in the body of

the treaty, allowing it to be adapted in the light of experience. However, the USA was opposed to allowing too much flexibility in this way.

Significant disagreements also remain over the criteria to be used in identifying chemicals as candidates for listing as POPs.

One major issue is whether parties should be able to propose chemicals for listing on the basis of toxicity or ecotoxicity data alone. The USA, backed by Canada and Australia, insisted that such information should always be compared with exposure data. However, exposure data are often lacking, and the EC argued that such comparisons should not be obligatory.

The draft text leaves this question for later resolution. The key clause left in brackets would make comparisons of toxicity data with observed or predicted environmental levels resulting or anticipated from long-range environmental transport obligatory. The chemical industry

would doubtless favour its inclusion.

At an even finer level of detail, there is still no agreement on two key criteria for proposing substances as POPs – persistence and bioaccumulation. On the former, the EC favours the use of a half-life in water greater than two months. The USA and Japan want a much less stringent half-life of six months or more.

On bioaccumulation, the proposals agreed by CEG would favour the use of a bioaccumulation or bioconcentration factor. In the absence of this information, a substance's tendency to partition between water and fat, known as the log K_{ow}, may be used. During CEG's discussions, Denmark proposed a log K_{ow} threshold of four, while Japan and others wanted a less demanding value of five.

CEG was unable to resolve these differences, and neither was the Geneva meeting. There are other disagreements over the amount and type of data needed to propose a substance for listing as a POP, encapsulated in a dispute over whether "reasons for concern" or clear evidence of adverse effects arising from long-range transport should suffice. And negotiators have still to agree a definition of long-range transport – whether it be at sub-regional, regional or extra-regional scale, and what a "region" means – as a basic POPs qualifying criterion.

Overall, reasonable progress has been made in the three negotiating meetings. But with the standard dispute over funding to help developing countries meet their obligations under the treaty to add to the list of unresolved issues, the talks next year may not proceed so easily.

ENDS

The EC wants elimination of dioxin releases to be an explicit long-term goal - but the USA argued that reliable baseline data are lacking

Gezond
October 1999
Consumentenbond
The Netherlands

Gifdozijn moet in 2000 weg zijn

Van gifstoffen als dioxinen hebben we onze buik vol. En op dit punt van onze campagne voor een "zuivere voeding" staat de Consumentenbond niet alleen. Ook de Verenigde Naties en de Wereldgezondheidsorganisatie zijn die mening toegedaan.

Lees hier over het actieplan om de wereld te schonen van de twaalf ongezondste chemicaliën, waarin onlangs een belangrijke doorbraak is bereikt.

Chemicaliën zijn niet allemaal enge en giftige stoffen. Zo zijn de meeste hulpstoffen in ons voedsel - herkenbaar aan hun E-nummer - uitgebreid getest en bij normaal gebruik veilig bevonden. Maar er zijn ook ongezonde chemicaliën. Helaas komen ook die - vaak onbedoeld - in ons voedsel terecht. Dioxinen in de kip vormen hiervan het bekendste voorbeeld, maar de meeste sluipen er ongemerkt in.

Om welke stoffen gaat het nu precies? In 1997 heeft de Unep, het milieuplan van de Verenigde Naties, samen met de Wereldgezondheidsorganisatie (WHO) een lijst opgesteld van de twaalf voor het milieu meest ongewenste en voor de mens meest schadelijke stoffen. Dit dubieuze dozijn ("dirty dozen") vindt u in het kader. Negen van de twaalf zijn plaagdoders (pesticiden), chemisch geweld tegen ziekten en plagen bij landbouwgewassen. PCB's zijn industriële oliën, en dioxinen en de verwante furanen ontstaan als ongewenste industriële bijproducten.

Deze twaalf hebben gemeen dat ze, anders dan de meeste stoffen in de natuur, door bacteriën en andere micro-organismen niet of heel langzaam worden afgebroken ("persistent"). Zo belanden ze in het milieu, vooral in bodem en oppervlaktewater - zelfs tot op de Noordpool - en komen onvermijdelijk in de voedselketen terecht, en uiteindelijk in "eindverbruikers", zoals de mens. We dragen ze dus allemaal met ons mee, opgeslagen in ons lichaamsvet.

Alle twaalf ongezond

Ze zijn ook alle twaalf ongezond. Bij dieren is aangetoond dat het "dubieuze dozijn" geboorte-afwijkingen, diverse vormen van kanker, aandoeningen aan zenuw- en immuunsysteem en de voortplanting, en verstoring van het hormonenevenwicht kan veroorzaken. Wat ze in piepkleine hoeveelheden precies bij de mens doen, weet niemand, maar er zijn wel aanwijzingen van vergelijkbare problemen. Vooral de invloed op kleine kinderen baart zorgen; zo is al aangetoond dat ongeborenen dioxinen binnenkrijgen via de placenta, en zuigelingen via moedermelk. De latere gevolgen hiervan zijn onbekend, maar zeker niet heilzaam.

Vandaar dat de Unep het plan heeft gelanceerd om in 2000 bindende afspraken te maken over het schonen van dit giftige dozijn. Daarvoor is een internationale aanpak nodig, en moeten productie en verspreiding van het dozijn aan banden worden gelegd. Medio september is hierover in Genève voor 10 van de 12 stoffen een principe-overeenkomst bereikt. Alleen DDT krijgt een aparte regeling, vanwege haar rol in de malariabestrijding. Ook Greenpeace voert momenteel actie tegen het dubieuze dozijn. De Consumentenbond ondersteunt dit plan van harte.

Wilt u meer informatie over het "dubieuze dozijn", kijk dan op internet bij: <http://irptc.unep.ch/pops/default.html>.

Kader

Het dubieuze dozijn

Dit zijn, in alfabetische volgorde, de twaalf stoffen uit het "dubieuze dozijn":

- aldrin
- chloordaan
- DDT
- dieldrin
- dioxinen
- endrin
- furanen
- HCB
- heptachloor
- Mirex
- PCB's
- toxafeen

Kader

Zuivere Voeding

Zoals beloofd heeft u van ons nog de definitieve uitslag van de campagne "Zuivere Voeding" te goed. In totaal reageerden 13.630 mensen op onze kaartjes en oproep op internet, waarvan een naar verhouding groot aantal Gezond-lezers (hartelijk dank!).

De Top-3 van de door u belangrijkste gevonden thema's luidt:

1. Genetische gemodificeerde producten (48%)
2. Duidelijke informatie op het etiket (34%)
3. Bestrijdingsmiddelen (31%)

Uiteraard zullen we op deze thema's nog terugkomen. De meeste van de in dit artikel genoemde gifstoffen zijn bestrijdingsmiddelen.

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HEADLINE: unep guidelines to identify sources of organic pollutants

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BODY:

guidelines are now available at the united nations environment program (unep) for helping countries identify sources of poly-chlorinated biphenyls (pcbs) to safeguard public health and the environment.

although out of production today but still found in a variety of electrical equipment and materials, pcbs were used as additives to oils in electrical equipment, hydraulic machinery and other devices, according to a unep press release available here monday. klaus toepfer, unep executive director, noted that pcbs are among the most widespread environmental pollutants on the planet, saying that they have been detected in all environmental media, including surface and ground water, soil, food and air. the unep guidelines give specific details on how to tell the equipment contains pcbs, a knowledge gap that is vital to fill because various manufacturers assigned their own names to the pcbs they produced.

"countries are determined to respond to this problem, and these guidelines will be valuable as a tool in identifying sources of pcbs, with the ultimate goal of establishing management priorities and strategies," toepfer said. he also pointed out that pcbs are persistent, capable of being transported long distances and soluble in fat. they bio-accumulate as they move higher in the food chain. "europe, along with the rest of the world, got a wake-up call only a few months ago when chicken, eggs, and other meat products had to be removed from the market because of contamination from dioxins and pcbs," toepfer said. covering basic identification techniques, the document also cites more than 90 trade names and synonyms for pcb mixtures and lists dozens of transformer and capacitor manufacturers that used pcbs. the guidelines are part of continuing efforts by the unep to assist countries in dealing with pcbs and the other 11 persistent organic pollutants (pops) which are the focus of the legally binding international treaty now being negotiated, toepfer added.

Toxic Chemicals and Public Health

By John Peterson Myers and Michael Lerner

BOLINAS, California — At a UN conference last month, a widespread consensus emerged on eliminating from commerce 12 of the most toxic chemicals on earth, which belong to a class known as persistent organic pollutants. The consensus around these chemicals, however, foretells controversy in the future, and carries us pell-mell toward international disagreement, and potential trade wars, over other manmade substances.

A confrontation between free trade and environmental health, triggered by technological innovations, is already visible in trans-Atlantic disputes.

Europeans have made clear that they do not want genetically engineered foods and hormone-treated beef forced on them. U.S. companies and trade negotiators, meanwhile, protest that the scientific research on such products remains ambiguous.

Coming to grips with persistent organic pollutants will raise the stakes for everyone.

These substances, known to harm wildlife and humans, remain chemically active for several decades after they have been applied. The decision to reduce or eliminate 12 of them is relatively uncontroversial, so long as important public health exceptions allow DDT to be used for malaria control until better alternatives are deployed. The real crunch will come in deciding what criteria to apply to chemicals that might be banned in the future.

Endocrine-disrupting chemicals, a group that includes a number of widely used pesticides, basic plastics and plastics additives, are likely to come under international scrutiny next. Emerging science shows that these compounds interfere with hormonal action, especially in the developing fetus. They can

wreak havoc with reproductive organs, neurological development and disease resistance.

The U.S. National Academy of Sciences recently released a groundbreaking report confirming that concerns about these chemicals were plausible and significant. It noted four reasons to be suspicious of endocrine-disrupting chemicals.

First, laboratory experiments show that they can interfere with hormones at extraordinarily low concentrations. Second, low and intermediate concentrations may have especially serious consequences for fetuses during certain developmental "windows." Third, the effect of endocrine-disrupting chemicals in mixtures cannot be predicted by studies of one compound alone, although humans experience these chemicals in so many different combinations that a thorough toxicological assessment of all likely mixtures is literally impossible. Finally, the effects of exposure on a fetus may not be apparent until adulthood, long after knowledge of exposure has disappeared.

The academy accurately noted that studies of many potential effects of these chemicals on humans — such as breast cancer, endometriosis, sperm count declines, lowered immune resistance and learning disabilities — still need to be done and may take decades to complete. It concluded that the absence of scientific certainty is not a result of the chemicals' safety, but of ignorance.

Among the products that could be affected are major money-makers for the chemical and pesticide industries. Most notable is bisphenol A, a building block of polycarbonate plastic but also a mimic of the hormone estrogen. Polycarbonate leaches bisphenol A into

food from can linings, and into children's saliva when it has been used as a dental coating to prevent tooth decay. Although the research on the chemical's health risks is ambiguous, it may be sufficiently alarming to cause Europe to act.

The eventual verdict on many endocrine-disrupting chemicals is virtually guaranteed: plausibly but not certainly guilty. Yet this is exactly the kind of circumstance in which Europe has proven willing to take preventative measures, while the United States, pushed hard by companies producing these toxic chemicals, has not.

The battle forming over persistent organic pollutants is fundamentally one of ideas. On the one hand, there is an emerging global consensus that precautionary action is essential to a healthy, sustainable planet. On the other, industrial interests are demanding a "smoking gun," of the type previously required by tobacco manufacturers, before they are willing to change.

The good news is that UN members will likely sign a treaty next year on eliminating persistent organic pollutants. The unanswered question is whether this will be a move toward wider acceptance of a higher public health doctrine. Will we invoke the precautionary principle as a guide for evaluating potential risks from new technology, or will commercial interests force society to wait for an impossible level of proof before acting to protect public health and safety?

Mr. Myers is co-author of "Our Stolen Future," a book on endocrine-disrupting chemicals. Mr. Lerner is president of Commonweal, a health and environmental research institute in the San Francisco Bay Area. They contributed this comment to the International Herald Tribune.