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INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR AN
INTERNATIONAL LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT
FOR IMPLEMENTING INTERNATIONAL ACTION ON
CERTAIN PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS

Fifth session

Johannesburg, 4-9 December 2000

Item 3 of the provisional agenda *

REVIEW OF ONGOING INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES RELATING
TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

Related work on persistent organic pollutants under the
World Health Organization

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to transmit to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, in the annex to the present note, information provided by the secretariat of the World Health Organization. The information is circulated as submitted and has not been formally edited.

* UNEP/POPS/INC.5/1.

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Annex

INFORMATION DOCUMENT ON THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S ACTION PLAN FOR THE REDUCTION OF RELIANCE ON DDT USE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PURPOSES

BACKGROUND

In accordance with World Health Assembly Resolution 50.13 (May 1997), WHO has begun to implement an action plan and long-term strategy to reduce reliance on DDT for public health vector control. To ensure that no adverse health consequences will result from these actions, WHO will assist Member States in strengthening their vector control programs and will promote efforts to make viable alternatives available.

WHO has participated in the INC process from its beginning and has advised delegates on the public health implications associated with regulations on DDT production and use that may be proposed under a future convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. In particular, WHO has called upon Member States to involve appropriate health officials in national and international activities related to the work of the INC. Since INC3, the WHO-Wide Work Group on DDT, under the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Project has overseen the development of the Action Plan for Reducing Reliance on DDT. Relevant WHO information materials on DDT have been distributed at the INCs and can be found at the RBM website: <http://www.rbm.who.int>.

WORK UNDERTAKEN SINCE INC-4

Advocacy

WHO has been working to establish greater collaboration between the environmental and health sectors in establishing international consensus on the production and use of DDT for public health purposes. Ministries of Health have been provided information on the treaty negotiations and have been encouraged to directly participate in national and international dialogue on DDT and the POPs treaty. In addition, WHO has provided information to the general public as well as health and environmental specialists through press interviews, the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) website, formal presentations at international meetings and joint workshops with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

Resource Mobilization

WHO is engaging partners in resource mobilization to support countries in strengthening public health vector control capacity and decreasing reliance on DDT. With assistance from the Pan American Health Organization, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama have already mobilized approximately US\$750,000 for the phase out of DDT as part of a regional proposal supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). About US\$240,000 of the \$750,000 is from national contributions. Development of a similar project for the Africa region is underway and is expected to be submitted to the GEF for funding in early 2001. Additional contributions have been received from the U.S. Government and efforts are underway to raise funds from other donor countries and organizations. RBM has also reallocated funds in support of the WHO efforts to assist Member Countries in reducing reliance on DDT. These funds are contributing to the overall implementation of the WHO DDT action plan and initially will support the development of needs assessment guidelines for vector control, country level activities to assess and strengthen vector control activities, and the preparation of national action plans for the reduction of reliance on DDT.

Technical Assistance

WHO is leading an effort to develop a technical strategy for the reduction of reliance on DDT and strengthening of public health vector control capacity at country level through human resource development and evidence based decision making. A Committee will be convened in early 2001 to develop a standard

needs assessment methodology for use by national governments to identify the managerial, technical, and financial requirements to improve malaria vector control and reduce reliance on DDT. Based on these needs assessments, WHO will support countries in the preparation of national action plans that establish integrated strategies for enhancing malaria control while reducing reliance on DDT.

Data Gathering

In consultation with its Regional Offices, WHO has generated information identifying countries that currently and/or have recently relied on DDT for indoor residual house spraying. Approximately two dozen countries fall into this category. Additional data including information on the quantities used, existence of stockpiles, and the extent of malaria transmission is being tabulated. WHO is collaborating with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and UNEP in collecting important data that will provide base-line information characterizing the extent of DDT stockpiles in various countries.

Alternatives

The introduction of cost-effective, affordable, and sustainable vector control methods are essential for reducing reliance on DDT. WHO is supporting the development of chemical and non-chemical alternatives through research, evaluation, and field testing that is being undertaken by WHO Collaborating Centres and other partners. In addition to the development of public health pesticides that are less damaging to the environment, an important priority is to collect evidence for environmental approaches to vector control and to develop integrated vector management strategies that rely less on chemicals in general. The development, evaluation, and field testing of alternatives are a major component of the regional project in Mexico and Central America to phase-out DDT and the proposed project in Africa.

Safe Management of DDT Stockpiles

DDT stockpiles have the potential to pose risks to both human health and the environment if not properly managed. As a member of the recently established Coordinating Group on Stocks of Obsolete and/or Unwanted Pesticides and Industrial Chemicals (under the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC)), WHO is working closely with the other IOMC members to accurately inventory DDT stockpiles and to prevent the accumulation of additional stockpiles. Efforts will also support the development and strengthening of regulatory and enforcement programs to assure that DDT stocks are not misused or diverted for agricultural purposes.

For more information on WHO's program to reduce reliance on DDT, please contact:

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