



**For Immediate Release:
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Call to Action To Make The Planet A Safer Place

On World Environment Day Pesticide Action Network (PAN) calls on citizens and governments to take action on highly toxic pesticides and make the planet a safer place. PAN has released an updated list of highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs) to call the attention to these dangerous chemicals.

A large body of scientific research and evidence on the ground raise the alarm on the serious diseases linked to pesticide use, such as cancers, birth defects, endocrine disruption, neurotoxicity, kidney and liver damage. Accurate data on pesticide exposure does not exist. However, yearly estimates of unintentional pesticide poisoning of agricultural workers put the figure in the millions worldwide.

“Pesticides are part of an antiquated technology that has caused deep harm to people and the environment. We must move forward with sound agroecological practices that farmers have developed through thousands of years and proven to be safe” says Judy Hatcher, chair of Pesticide Action Network International.

The costs of inaction on pesticides are enormous. In Sub-Saharan Africa the accumulated health costs, due to pesticides injuries, are projected to increase to US\$97 billion by 2020, as reported by UNEP’s *Costs of Inaction on the Sound Management of Chemicals*.

“Rural communities in Africa have paid a high price for the environmental contamination caused by pesticides and this should stop as we look forward to a new agenda for sustainable development” says Abou Thiam from PAN Africa.

Safe alternatives exist. The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology (IAASTAD) have highlighted the contributions of agroecological practices to sustainable development. UNCTAD’s 2013 report *Wake Up Before It Is Too Late* observes that one of the most effective ways to halve the number of hungry and poor is taking the necessary steps of transition towards more sustainable forms of agriculture that nourish the land and people and provide opportunities for decent jobs.

“Supporting farmers’ ecological agricultural practices is an important step in assuring food security and sustainable development” says Keith Tyrell from PAN UK.

Sarojeni Rengam from PAN Asia Pacific remarks “The international pressure to curb and phase out the use of pesticides is increasing. We look forward to a new era where sustainable development embraces fully the precautionary approach to prevent harm to people and the environment.”

PAN International’s list of HHPs identifies highly hazardous pesticides that present high levels of acute or chronic hazards, using a comprehensive set of criteria by recognized authorities. Carina Weber from PAN Germany says “The PAN International List of HHPs provides a basis for action to implement the progressive ban of HHPs and replace them with safer, agroecological and other appropriate non-chemical alternatives.”

Javier Souza from PAN Latin America (RAPAL) observes “It is time that governments, institutions, organizations, and individuals develop a plan of action on HHPs with concrete measures.”

Nearly 30 years ago, in 1985, Pesticide Action Network launched the Dirty Dozen campaign, calling the attention to acute pesticide poisonings of farmers and environmental contamination. The world listened, and years later most of the Dirty Dozen pesticides are listed in the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions.

Once again, PAN calls on governments and citizens around the world to take action to reduce and eliminate highly hazardous pesticides and support policies to advance a model of ecological agriculture that can provide a dignified living to farmers, agricultural workers, rural communities and offer safe food to consumers.

Add your organizational signature to the *Call to Action on HHPs* here:
http://action.panna.org/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=15775

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