



a toxics-free future

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## International SAICM Implementation Project (ISIP)

In 2010, in an effort to demonstrate SAICM implementation via IPEN Participating Organizations, IPEN launched an International SAICM Implementation Project, also known as ISIP. ISIP aims to mobilize resources for initial enabling activities pertaining to national priorities, in keeping with the work areas set out in the strategic objectives of section IV of the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy.

In particular, the ISIP supports the Governance objective of SAICM's Overarching Policy Strategy paragraph 26, which calls for enhanced "cooperation on the sound management of chemicals between Governments, the private sector and civil society at the national, regional and global levels."

In addition, ISIP builds on the 2008-2009 Global SAICM Outreach Campaign to raise awareness about SAICM and strengthen collaboration among the public interest, health and labor sectors.

### ISIP Objectives

ISIP's four objectives include:

- Promoting the need for sound chemicals management
- Advancing National SAICM Implementation
- Promoting global SAICM implementation by global civil society
- Building capacity among NGOs developing countries and countries with economies in transition

**Title of activity:** Awareness-raising among legislators, rural workers, and the general public for phase-out of highly hazardous pesticides

**NGO:** Alianza por una Mejor Calidad de Vida (RAP-Chile)

**Country:** Chile

**Date:** February 2011

### Elements of SAICM Covered:

Promote substitution for highly toxic pesticides including effective non-chemical alternatives (27); Provide training in alternative and ecological agricultural practices, including non-chemical alternatives (51); Encourage industry to extend product stewardship and to voluntarily withdraw highly toxic pesticides which are hazardous and cannot be used safely under prevalent conditions (30); Promote integrated pest and integrated vector management (29); Establish programmes for monitoring chemicals and pesticides to assess exposure (66)

### Health and environmental effects of the pesticides:

Exposure to highly hazardous pesticides is a public health issue in Chile. 379 cases of acute pesticide poisoning had been reported by September of 2010, an increase of 39 cases in

relation to the same month the year before. The real figures, however, are much higher, as it is estimated that only 1 out of every 4 cases get reported. It is the seasonal female agricultural workers who are the most highly affected, representing 72% of the mass pesticide poisoning outbreaks recorded in this period. 67,3% of the cases of pesticide poisoning occur in agricultural work, and 17,2% are expressed as suicide attempts or homicide. By September of this year, six deaths had been reported corresponding to four cases of suicide, a work-related death and a homicide (REVEP/MINSAL 2010).

On the other hand, official statistics do not mention the negative impact air fumigation has on communities living in close proximity to agricultural fields, a problem that has worsened in recent years. The number of communities that have organized to demand the right to live in a pesticide-free environment has consequently increased. In spite of the increasing indiscriminate use of pesticides, it took ten years for the norms regulating air fumigation to be approved. The regulation of land fumigation, however, is still pending. Regulations on both air and land fumigation are longtime RAP-Chile demands.

It should be noted that 23% of the cases that occurred in Chile were caused by extremely hazardous and highly hazardous pesticides (categories 1a and 1b), the use of which is allowed. The Chilean Senate is in the initial stage of processing a bill to prohibit the use of these kinds of agrotoxics. It should also be noted, however, that in 2009 a similar initiative was boycotted by members of parliament with interests linked to the agrochemical industry.

### **Information on pesticide levels in the environment, in food, or in people:**

An analysis of pesticide residues in food conducted by Chilean TV Channel 13 with technical support by RAP-Chile revealed that Chileans consume pesticide-contaminated vegetables that cause severe chronic effects capable of generating cancer and other serious diseases. An analysis of spinach, bell peppers, lettuce and tomatoes carried out in April 2010 by a laboratory called Andes Control showed that 20% of the farmers were not complying with the Chilean norm on the Maximum Residue Limits for pesticides (MRL). It revealed that the Chilean norms are far less preventive than those of the developed countries that Chile exports to. 44% of the samples would not be allowed for human consumption in the European Union as they infringe European norms, and 61% of the samples do not comply with the norms currently in force in the United States.

In the case of lettuce, 67% of the analyzed samples presented pesticide concentrations that exceeded the Chilean norms, 100% exceeded the EU norms, and 78% of the analyzed samples exceeded the US norms. With regard to spinach, 11% of the analyzed samples exceeded the limit established by the Chilean law, whereas 22% and 33% exceeded the maximum limits established by the EU and the United States, respectively. In the analyzed samples, residues of seven different pesticides that are potentially carcinogenic and disruptive of the reproductive and endocrine systems were detected in lettuce, tomatoes and spinach.

### **Existing pesticide legislation in your country:**

Chile has developed legislation on pesticides, such as Bill N°3.557 passed in 1980, including modifications to Law N° 18.755 (1989), N° 19.558 (1998), N° 20.161 (2007) and Law N°20.308 (2008), and Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), which are practices geared to improve conventional production methods. The application of GAPs is based on Integrated Crop Management (ICM) and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) systems that are geared to the application of practices enabling the financially viable production of foodstuffs as well as the conservation of natural resources. GAPs are already being applied to several crops. In practice, however, as has been detected in pesticide residue analyses, these practices are not generalized. In fact, the female waged agricultural workers in rural areas grouped in ANAMURI (a rural women's organization) reported non compliance with GAP norms and with the certification requirements in both agro-industrial parks and export-oriented agro-industrial fields.

### **Project Outcomes:**

## **Description of the activity conducted to reduce the threat posed by highly hazardous pesticides and advance this SAICM aim.**

RAP-Chile provided technical support and advice to Congress Senator Ximena Rincon in order to pass a bill on phasing out 1a and 1b pesticides (April) and participated in technical working groups supporting the bill.

We held several working sessions with Senator Rincon and her lawyer and the bill was introduced in the Senate in July 2010. We contacted communities affected by pesticide air spraying, as well as health experts on hazardous pesticides, so that they too came to support the bill. We then attended a meeting at the Senate Agriculture Committee to discuss the bill. We contacted TV Channel 13 and provided technical support for a special broadcast on pesticide residues in food. This show reached a large audience and had great impact. After the program, RAP-Chile was contacted by other media for interviews on this issue. Research proved that Chilean people are eating vegetables poisoned with highly hazardous pesticides (1a and 1b class and pesticides with chronic health effects associated to cancer and other diseases).

### **Impact on target groups:**

As a result of our activities:

- a) The public is now more aware of pesticide residues in food.
- b) An increasing group of stakeholders is now considering RAP-Chile to be an important source of reference on pesticide issues.
- c) A network of grassroots communities and organizations was created. It includes the San Pedro Family Health Public Center (CESFAM) and its network in the Valparaiso region, the Rural Women's organization ANAMURI, BioBio and Chiloe organic farmers and communities in Chiloe Island. The network plans to continue supporting the bill.

### **Impact on target policies:**

As a result of our activities, the bill phasing out 1a and 1b pesticides (July 17, 2010, *Boletín N9 6.969-01 introduced by Senators Ximena Rincon and Patricio Walker*) is being discussed by the Senate.

### **Deliverables, outputs and/or products:**

The project has developed several educational materials, such as 3 brochures with information on the pesticides sprayed in the Valparaiso Region, one for each community: San Pedro (Quillota), Limache and Chincolco (Petorca), and provides follow-up of pesticide poisoning cases affecting rural workers and seasonal female workers as well as technical support on highly hazardous pesticides for three communities located in the Valparaiso region, namely San Pedro (Quillota), Limache and Chincolco (Petorca).

We conducted several workshops in San Pedro, Quillota, and in Chincolco, Petorca, on pesticides and their impact on human health and the environment (April). We also provided technical support (from May to September) to organic farmers and communities in Chiloe Island (October 14). With the FAO, we participated in an International Workshop on local and current methodology for vegetal protection to basic products of family food staples in Andean countries (October 21/22, 2010). We also participated in a panel in a sub-regional consultation meeting for the Rotterdam Convention and FAO (November 23/26, 2010).

### **Communication Efforts:**

Our activities and interventions with the Senate received good media coverage in press releases published in the RAPAL Magazine, and a national newspaper called *El Clarín* de Chile. The Coordinator of *Alianza por una Mejor Calidad de Vida* was interviewed in a documentary titled "Legacy: Testimonies for the Time Capsule" by Marina Robles and team on environmental impact in the BioBio Region, winner of BioBio Regional Funds for Audiovisual Creation. One of the chapters is related to pesticides. It was launched on September 12 by the Concepcion TV

Channel. Marina Robles talks about the documentary at the following YouTube address:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13RlfaZfhzA>

María Elena Rozas was also interviewed by the producers of “Fruits of Fruit”, a documentary about pesticide impact. Made by students from the Alberto Hurtado University in June, July and August 2010, this documentary is expected to be released shortly.

**NGO Recommendations for next steps:**

The SAICM National Implementation Plan in Chile should include a progressive ban on highly hazardous pesticides approving the bill introduced in the Senate.

Grassroots organizations should be empowered to enforce pesticide legislation.

Support for agro-ecological alternatives should be implemented as part of Good Agricultural Practices.