



# INTERNATIONAL POLLUTANTS ELIMINATION NETWORK (IPEN) 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



# A MESSAGE FROM IPEN'S CO-CHAIRS

Dear Friends and Colleagues of the IPEN Global Network:

We send our warmest greetings to all and also our fervent wish that you, your family, and communities are healthy and safe.

IPEN's global network of people working together is a powerful antidote to the divisiveness, fear, hatred, violence, and suffering that we are witnessing in our world. Despite all of the challenges, we continue to work together for a world that is safe, healthy, and just. A world where children are born free of toxic chemicals. We work for the health of all, for present and future generations.

We are excited to share the IPEN Global Report for 2022! Some of the highlights include:

- Following our decades-long work to raise awareness and action on toxic chemicals in plastics, IPEN became a leading voice in the first negotiating session for a new international treaty on plastics, advocating for a strong, health-protective Treaty and ensuring the rights of civil society to fully participate.
- IPEN's work was critical at the Stockholm Convention resulting in a new PFAS listing and progress toward a class-based approach.
- IPEN participating organizations and allies compelled Johnson & Johnson to end global sales of talc-based baby powders.
- IPEN supported global lead paint elimination campaign activities and partnered with WHO and UNEP during the annual International Week of Action.
- IPEN contributed substantively to the Minamata Convention/Mercury Treaty and our work informed a groundbreaking UN report on mercury and human rights abuses.
- In 2022, IPEN released data and reports to educate decision-makers and raise awareness about the health and environmental threats posed by toxic chemicals.
- IPEN's work was featured in major national and international media, highlighting threats from chemicals to global health and the environment.

In 2022, the IPEN network strengthened in many ways, including active discussions, webinars, and meetings of the Global Youth and Women's Caucuses. We further built our partnership with the Endocrine Society and other leading academic scientists. And in 2022, twenty-seven new NGOs joined the IPEN network and by the end of the year, IPEN had 647 Participating Organizations (POs) in 127 countries. At the heart of IPEN's work are the eight IPEN Regional Hubs that help coordinate and support the work of our POs.

Your work inspires and encourages us! We look forward to the opportunities ahead and to work with you in 2023! Take good care.

With kindest wishes and in solidarity,

Pam and Tadesse  
IPEN Co-Chairs



*Pamela K. Miller*

Pamela K. Miller



Tadesse Amara





# HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2022: THREE MAJOR VICTORIES

1

## PLASTICS TREATY:

**IPEN Leading on Chemicals and Health:**  
IPEN emerged as the leading organization working within the Plastics Treaty process to shift the narrative from a focus on visible pollution into a debate centering on chemicals, health, and plastic as an inherently problematic material.



2

## ADVANCING GLOBAL BANS ON PFAS:

IPEN advocacy led to a Stockholm Convention listing of PFHxS, a PFAS substance, and advanced movement toward a class-based approach for restricting chemical families.



3

## J&J TO ELIMINATE TALC:

Work by several IPEN members and other groups prompted Johnson & Johnson to end global production and sales of asbestos-containing, talc-based baby powders.



# MAJOR VICTORIES FROM 2022

## PLASTICS TREATY: IPEN LEADING ON CHEMICALS AND HEALTH



In 2022, IPEN continued our decades-long work to expose health threats from toxic chemicals in plastics, and by the year's end IPEN emerged as the leading organization working within the Plastics Treaty process to shift the narrative from a focus on visible pollution into a debate centering on chemicals, health, and plastic as an inherently problematic material.

Following several years of our engagement in the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), in March 2022 governments at UNEA adopted a resolution calling for a global Plastics Treaty to resolve the plastics pollution crisis. Throughout the UNEA negotiations, IPEN highlighted the importance of developing a Plastics Treaty focused on health and accounting for the impacts from chemicals throughout the plastics lifecycle. At the UNEA event, IPEN hosted a briefing featuring government representatives from Ghana, Peru, and Switzerland on "Why the Plastics Treaty Needs to Consider Chemicals," and at the UN Oceans Conference we co-hosted an event with leading scientists<sup>1</sup> to highlight the global threat of plastic and chemical production. We also produced a series of factsheets and reports analyzing the Plastics Treaty and exposing health threats throughout the plastics life cycle, to educate delegates, the media, and other stakeholders. We also released two new video animations: one to highlight concerns around chemicals, plastics, and health<sup>2</sup> (in English, Spanish, and French), and the other to expose threats from toxic chemicals in plastics and plastic wastes to African communities<sup>3</sup> (in English and French).

In May, IPEN members from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe participated in the Plastics Treaty Open-Ended Working Group meeting in Dakar, Senegal and in December, at the first Plastics Treaty International Negotiating Committee (INC) meeting, IPEN supported in-person participation by nearly 30 NGOs, and coordinated over 45 IPEN NGO members, working collaboratively to advance the health and chemicals framework. Through our participation we successfully educated delegates about and earned media coverage on the importance of a Treaty that addresses the health threats from chemicals in plastics and understands plastics as materials made from chemicals and fossil fuels. We also worked to ensure that NGO participation would not be curtailed, and contributions from IPEN members and staff helped solidify IPEN's role as the leading voice of civil society in advocating for a health-protective Treaty.

Following this work, IPEN is now recognized as the leading actor bringing data, science, expertise, and advocacy relating to chemicals and health in the Plastics Treaty process. At our UNEA briefing, Swiss Ambassador Franz Perez said,



*I want to thank IPEN for all the work to stimulate and push us in these negotiations. Reports like those (from IPEN) are so critical for us to take the right decisions. Throughout all the negotiations on chemicals that I've been following these last years, IPEN was one of the critical actors to help us to engage on the right track, meaning an ambitious track.*

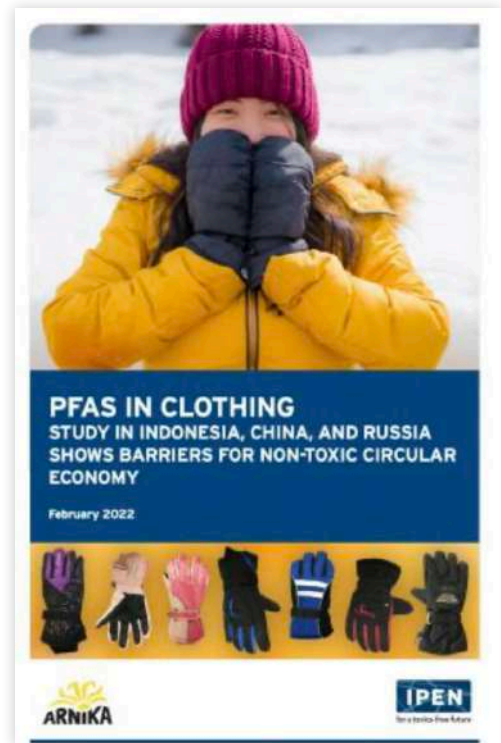
Franz Perez speaking at the IPEN briefing at UNEA5.2



## ADVANCING GLOBAL BANS ON PFAS

Global controls on the PFAS “forever chemicals” have been a priority of IPEN for nearly two decades, and in 2022 we saw significant progress on PFAS through the Stockholm Convention. Previously, six IPEN members developed a report on PFAS in food packaging, and we successfully advocated for the listing under the Convention of two PFAS chemicals, PFOS and PFOA. Our work with a group of fire-safety experts and firefighters to raise awareness about the safer, non-fluorinated alternatives to PFAS in firefighting foam contributed not only to the Convention listing but also served to support the work subsequently conducted by the EU to evaluate the feasibility of restricting the use of all PFAS in firefighting foam.

In 2022, we continued research into PFAS in food packaging and textiles. Our advocacy helped secure a Stockholm Convention listing of another PFAS substance, PFHxS, with no exemptions. We also successfully worked through the Stockholm Convention’s expert review process (POPRC) to win a recommendation to advance a large group of PFAS chemicals, long-chain perfluorocarboxylic acids (PFCAs), through the process. The recommendation for listing this group sends a strong signal that the Convention should adopt a class-based approach for restricting chemical families.



## J&J TO ELIMINATE TALC

For many years, IPEN and our member groups have been leaders in global and national campaigns calling on Johnson and Johnson (J&J) to end sales of their asbestos-containing, talc-based baby products. About twenty IPEN members conducted talc research that identified J&J products with talc in their local markets and conducted media and public outreach campaigns. For example, in Mexico Casa Cem developed a series of videos<sup>4</sup> and advocated for ending sales of talc-based products. In India, a report by Toxics Link<sup>5</sup> highlighted J&J’s double standard and called for safer products without talc.

In 2022, IPEN’s coordinated global efforts and the work of many groups around the world culminated in J&J’s announcement<sup>6</sup> that it would end production and global sales of talc-based baby powders. The company noted that demand for its tainted baby powder had fallen due to the widespread public health campaigns targeting the product. J&J continues to face thousands of lawsuits from cancer victims who allege that their cancers are linked to their use of the company’s asbestos-tainted product. In early 2023, US courts denied J&J’s attempt to evade these lawsuits<sup>7</sup> through a phony bankruptcy maneuver.

# INTRODUCTION AND 2022 IPEN HIGHLIGHTS

IPEN's global policy work emerged from the stalled COVID-19 pandemic policy delays. IPEN gradually resumed in-person participation at international meetings in 2022, initially with small IPEN delegations focused on the UNEA and Plastics Treaty preparation meetings, and eventually expanding to larger delegations. This included IPEN delegations of more than 30 members at both the Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions' Conference of the Parties (BRS COPs) in June and the Plastics Treaty December negotiations. Throughout the year, we maintained our focus on stronger global chemical policies and provided support for our members' efforts toward stronger national regulations.



Our work to strengthen global chemical regulations contributed to several positive outcomes in 2022. We successfully advocated for adding the toxic PFAS “forever” chemical PFHxS to the Stockholm Convention and worked to advance the plastic additives UV-328 and Dechlorane Plus through the Convention’s expert review process. We also worked to expose the myths around chemical recycling as a solution to the plastics crisis and successfully demonstrated how chemical recycling does not comply with the Convention’s plastic waste disposal guidelines criteria, as it is not an environmentally sound management technology. Our work on eliminating lead paint helped advance new national regulations. We also began planning work on eliminating lead hazards from used lead-acid batteries. Our efforts to end health threats from mercury included contributing to a groundbreaking report on threats to human rights from the use of mercury in small-scale gold



mining and successfully advocating for strengthening the Minamata Convention. Finally, at SAICM, we supported a significant delegation at the IP4 in August, calling for a stronger and more ambitious instrument and an open, participatory process.

In 2022, IPEN continued to engage in all the relevant international policy forums focused on global chemical regulations and continued to raise the issue of participation inequality, both for developing and transition countries overall and for civil society. Prior to the first Plastics Treaty Open-Ended Working Group meeting in June, we published two opinion pieces and successfully advocated for procedural changes that allowed those on the frontlines of plastic pollution, especially those from low- and middle-income countries, to be active participants throughout the negotiations. At the first Plastics Treaty INC in December, we again brought procedural concerns to the Secretariat and the Office of the Chair to ensure that those from low- and middle-income countries would be heard, leading to four IPEN plenary statements and influencing the chair to reverse restrictions on NGOs’ right to intervene in contact groups. IPEN continues to work to ensure that the unique perspectives, expertise, local knowledge, innovations, and insights of our member groups will be heard and accounted for in all international chemical policy forums.

As attention to the plastics crisis has grown, IPEN has worked to educate governments, civil society, and the media on the interdependent relationship between visible plastics and invisible toxic chemical threats. In 2022, IPEN’s leadership helped prompt a shift in the plastics narrative, from discussions focused on visible plastic waste to the more explicit root of the plastics problem: that plastics are unsustainable materials made of toxic chemicals and fossil fuels. Our progress in this narrative shift is clear from the increasing attention of governments to the threats from chemicals in plastics: in March at the UNEA meeting that adopted the Plastics Treaty mandate, chemicals were not mentioned in the mandate and very few governments





mentioned chemicals or health. Just seven months later, over 60 countries formally raised these issues during the Plastics Treaty negotiations. Moreover, the government-led High Ambition Alliance, currently comprising over 50 countries, now clearly states the need to address toxic chemicals in plastics.

In 2022, IPEN released research, data, and analyses to educate decision-makers and raise awareness about the health and environmental threats posed by toxic chemicals. Our report on Plastic Waste Fuels<sup>8</sup> exposed Australia's deception on plastic waste exports and prompted international media coverage. Later, news reports and government attention followed from our study<sup>9</sup> of the impacts on Sri Lankan communities from the X-Press Pearl incident, a plastic and chemicals shipping disaster. We also released several new reports on POPs, including new data on PFAS and on brominated flame retardants (BFRs) in consumer products. To inform our network members, journalists, delegates, and other stakeholders, we produced numerous publications and other media to highlight the issues around toxic chemicals in plastics. We produced an analysis on "How the UNEA Resolution Relates to Chemicals and Health"<sup>10</sup> and provided a briefing on "Key Principles for a Plastics Treaty."<sup>11</sup> Our "Introduction to Plastics & Toxic Chemicals"<sup>12</sup> provides a comprehensive overview of the problems caused by chemicals in plastics, while our briefing on "Enhancing Controls to Protect Human Health from Plastics"<sup>13</sup> helped educate delegates and other stakeholders on the relevance of health and chemicals in the Treaty negotiations and explains IPEN's view on how the Treaty should address these issues. We also created an e-newsletter for Plastics Treaty delegates, released two video animations detailing threats from chemicals in plastics, and organized and co-hosted numerous side events and briefings on plastics, chemicals, and health for delegates and the media during international policy forums.

During 2022, we worked to increase our media engagement and communications capacity. IPEN studies, research, and expertise were sought by major media outlets and IPEN experts were quoted in several significant news outlets, including the New York Times, Washington Post, and several international media outlets. We increased communications support for our NGO partners, in part by



providing templates for outreach activities (including social media, press releases, web postings, and other materials) for multiple projects. We also helped strengthen and promote resilience among our member groups by providing financial support, producing on-line trainings and webinars, translating documents, and producing social media posts in multiple languages throughout the year.



IPEN's Toxics-Free SDGs campaign continued with activities focusing on PFAS chemicals, MCCPs in plastic rubber toys, refuse derived fuels (RDF), and highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs). Partnerships in 2022 included an ongoing collaboration with UNEP on Women and Chemicals and continued work with the Endocrine Society (including co-hosting side events and work toward two publications to be completed in 2023). We also initi-



ated a collaboration with several of the scientists who co-authored recent papers outlining how threats from plastics and chemicals may have already exceeded the "planetary boundaries." Three of these scientists wrote the foreword for our "Introduction to Plastics & Toxic Chemicals" and their team also co-hosted side events with IPEN at global policy meetings.

The IPEN Women's Caucus and Youth Caucus advanced their work this year. In collaboration with UNEP, IPEN published a report on "Women Leaders: Addressing Chemicals and Waste Issues,"<sup>14</sup> highlighting the work of IPEN women from ten countries. The Youth Caucus organized a side event during the BRS COPs on "Youth Participation in National Implementation Plans and Strategies to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions," advocating for voices of young people to be reflected in the processes. The Women's and Youth Caucuses met online regularly and held in-person meetings during the Plastics Treaty event in December to begin planning activities for 2023 and beyond.

The sections below provide a more detailed description of IPEN's 2022 results.

# POLICY

## REDUCING AND ELIMINATING THE WORLD'S MOST HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS

IPEN's advocacy and participation in the 2022 Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions<sup>15</sup> (BRS COP) contributed to several positive outcomes. A major achievement was the addition of the toxic PFAS “forever” chemical PFHxS to the Stockholm Convention list for global elimination, with no exemptions. This is just the third (of thousands) of PFAS chemicals to be banned globally. The Convention also blocked<sup>16</sup> chemical recycling of plastics and burning PFAS in cement kilns, neither of which are environmentally sound practices, from inclusion in guidelines for managing plastic waste and POPs waste. We also welcomed the Basel Convention decision to address the massive problem of e-waste exports by mandating a Prior Informed Consent procedure for e-waste shipments, which requires exporting countries to receive consent from importing countries before they can ship toxic e-waste.

In the Stockholm Convention's expert review process<sup>17</sup> (POPs Review Committee or POPRC), our advocacy helped move forward a recommendation that the toxic plastic additives UV-328 and Dechlorane Plus should be listed for global elimination. Our work at POPRC also helped advance the review process of two other chemicals: medium-chained chlorinated paraffins (MCCPs) and long-chain perfluorocarboxylic acids (PFCAs), a large group of PFAS chemicals. The recommendation for listing this PFAS group sends a strong signal that the Convention should adopt a class-based approach for restricting chemical families.

IPEN supported more than 30 of our members from around the world to attend the BRS COPs and we conducted pre-meeting training sessions and developed materials to inform their participation. During the negotiations IPEN members made more than thirty statements<sup>18</sup> to the plenary of delegates, advocating for adding specific chemicals to the Conventions' regulatory lists and outlining our views on topics such as finance, gender, POPs-contaminated wastes, and other issues of concern.

Our work at the BRS COPs also focused on exposing the myths around the plastics industry's efforts to promote chemical recycling as the solution to the plastics crisis (and to continue unregulated increases in plastics production). We co-organized a side event<sup>19</sup> to explain the decades-long failures of chemical recycling and created an evocative demonstration to equate chemical recycling with a mythological Unicorn.<sup>20</sup>



The BRS Conventions will have important convergences with the Plastics Treaty, so our work at the 2022 negotiations also focused on highlighting those intersections. We collaborated with the governments of Switzerland and Uruguay on a side event on “Health, Chemicals, Plastics & a Non-Toxic Circular Economy,”<sup>21</sup> organized a side event exposing the threat of “Plastics & Refuse-Derived Fuel,”<sup>22</sup> and IPEN youth co-organized a side event on “Youth Participation in National Implementation Plans.”<sup>23</sup>

In 2022, IPEN released a series of new reports on POPs, including new data on PFAS in consumer products in three BRIIC countries, and a report on BFRs in products in 11 Arabic and African countries. Throughout the year, IPEN experts continued to provide input on the development of new guidance on POPs-contaminated sites, highlighting the importance of using non-combustion waste destruction technologies. Our work to ensure more health protective low POPs content limits for dioxins, SCCPs, and PBDEs also continued with participation in relevant Basel Convention meetings and development of fact sheets and reports.





## ELIMINATING LEAD PAINT AND USED LEAD ACID BATTERIES

IPEN supported lead paint elimination campaign activities by 55 NGOs in 42 countries,<sup>24</sup> including partnering with WHO and UNEP during the annual International Week of Action. IPEN also moved forward in developing its global campaign calling for listing of lead chromates, the pigments used in lead paint, under the Rotterdam Convention.



New lead paint regulations advanced in 2022 include: new regulations were adopted in Jamaica and existing regulations were strengthened in Jordan. Nigeria, Tunisia, Tajikistan, and Malaysia moved to advanced stages of developing national lead paint regulations, while Zambia and Indonesia are in early stages

(Indonesia strengthened its voluntary rules this year). IPEN also continued its Lead Safe Paint certification program with renewal certifications for paint in Bangladesh and the Philippines.

As an Executing Partner in the Global Environment Facility (GEF) - UNEP Project<sup>25</sup> and a member of the UNEP-WHO Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint, IPEN continued to play an active role to advance national lead paint regulations and engage WHO in this effort. Under this project, IPEN works with paint makers (small and medium enterprises or SMEs) to end their use of lead. Six SMEs in Nigeria and four SMEs in Indonesia successfully finished a pilot project to reformulate their paint while another four in Nigeria and five in Indonesia participated in the project. Through this project we found that SMEs in any country can remove lead from their paints and remain competitive.



We also demonstrated that working with civil society at the country level and building their institutional capacity is a sustainable approach to continue the work to eliminate lead paint even after the project ends.

Used lead acid batteries (ULABs) pose significant health threats globally and are an emerging issue for IPEN. Lead acid batteries contain hazardous substances including lead, lead-oxide, and sulphuric acid, but often environmental and health protections are absent or inadequate in their end-of-life management. Previously, IPEN contributed to the UNEA 3 Resolution on Waste Lead Acid Batteries which encourages all states “to continue their efforts for the environmentally sound management of waste lead-acid batteries.” In 2022, IPEN took the first steps to develop a future ULAB campaign. We developed a campaign-scoping document, focusing mainly on ULABs in Africa.





## REDUCING AND ELIMINATING MERCURY POLLUTION



IPEN data, background research, and global studies deeply contributed to a groundbreaking report on “Mercury, Small-scale Gold Mining and Human Rights”<sup>26</sup> by the UN Special Rapporteur on Toxics and Human Rights that exposed the

human rights abuses deriving from the use of mercury in small-scale gold mining. Echoing IPEN’s advocacy, the UN report recommends amending the Minamata Convention to end the international trade in mercury, end mercury mining, and prohibit mercury use in small-scale gold mining.

IPEN continued its active engagement in the Minamata Convention/Mercury Treaty and its Expert BAT/BEP Groups. IPEN’s advocacy at the Minamata COP4 contributed to the adoption of a proposal from African countries that called for new regulations on certain uses of mercury-based dental amalgam and a phase-out of mercury in compact fluorescent lamps (CFL) and cold cathode fluorescent lamps.

In collaboration with the Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) and the IPEN member Nexus 3 Foundation, IPEN continued to engage in reviewing legal options to stop sales of mercury by the oil and gas industry, developing technical criteria for siting and construction of interim storage facilities for mercury, and consideration of remedial options for ASGM mercury-contaminated sites in Indonesia.



## ADVANCING STRATEGIC INTERNATIONAL POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

IPEN continued its active participation in SAICM with a significant delegation of about thirty IPEN members and staff at the IP4 in August. While the Stockholm Convention provides an international forum for developing protections from POPs, there are thousands of toxic chemicals that can harm our health and the environment but are not considered POPs. SAICM is the only international agreement that addresses the full range of health and environmental concerns associated with the production and use of these chemicals. At IP4, we contributed our views calling for a stronger and more ambitious instrument and a process that engages robust, meaningful, and inclusive participation of all stakeholders. We also contributed to the UNEA

discussions on developing a Science to Policy (Science-Policy) Panel, calling for policies based on sound, independent science, the precautionary principle, the industry’s duty to disclose information, and citizens’ right to know.

IPEN has been leveraging growing awareness of global plastic pollution to elevate the understanding of the public health threats from toxic chemicals through the life cycle of plastics. Following several years of IPEN engagement in the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), in March 2022, governments adopted a UNEA resolution calling for a global treaty to resolve the plastics pollution crisis.

Throughout the UNEA negotiations, IPEN highlighted the importance of developing a Plastics Treaty focused on health and accounting for the impacts of chemicals throughout the life cycle of plastics. IPEN hosted a series of events, including a UNEA briefing featuring government representatives from Ghana, Peru, and Switzerland on “Why the Plastics Treaty Needs to Consider Chemicals,” and following adoption of the resolution, IPEN produced an analysis explaining “How the Plastic Pollution Resolution Relates to Chemicals and Health.”

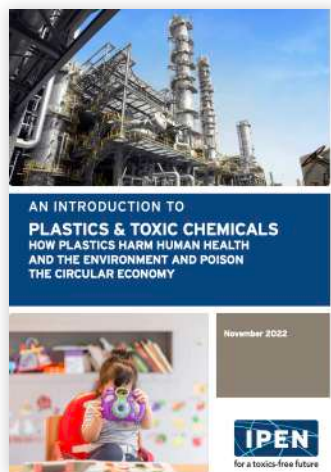




Throughout 2022, our work around plastics accelerated. IPEN members from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe participated in the Plastics Treaty Open-Ended Working Group meeting in Dakar, Senegal, calling for a Treaty that addresses plastics as carbon and chemicals, accounts for the health and environmental threats from toxic chemicals in plastics, and promotes safer, non-toxic materials that are compatible with a circular economy.

IPEN also partnered with leading scientists to highlight the global threat of plastic and chemical production by organizing and co-hosting an event at the UN Oceans Conference. To educate delegates, journalists, and the public, we developed numerous reports and factsheets, including our “Key Principles” that form the foundation for a meaningful Plastics Treaty and our “An Introduction to Plastics and Toxic Chemicals” report. For the Plastics Treaty’s first INC in Uruguay, IPEN supported in-person participation of nearly 30 member NGOs, and coordinated the efforts of more than 45 NGOs, working collaboratively to advance the health and chemicals framework.

Based on a report released in 2021, IPEN held a joint webinar together with UNEP about women, chemicals, and the SDGs. IPEN released a report on case studies of women leaders addressing chemicals and waste issues. IPEN’s Toxics-Free Sustainable Development Goals campaign also continued in 2022, launching 47 projects across 41 countries. In 2022, IPEN supported activities focused on PFAS in food packaging and textiles, MCCPs in plastic-rubber toys, refuse-derived fuels, and highly hazardous pesticides.





# NURTURING CAPACITY AND PARTNERING TO STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND THE GLOBAL TOXICS-FREE MOVEMENT

In 2022, travel and in-person meetings resumed, and IPEN resumed attending face-to-face meetings. IPEN also continued its online capacity building. During the reporting period, IPEN held more than 35 webinars, trainings, and meetings attended by more than 1,500 participants. IPEN continued to offer online capacity building to its member organizations. Twenty-nine people attended professional online trainings in financial management and project management. The Francophone Africa hub <sup>27</sup> held a regional training on fundraising for its member organizations.

The IPEN Women's Caucus held three online meetings and one face-to-face meeting during the Plastics Treaty INC in Uruguay. The online training course on gender and chemicals was promoted throughout the year. Between its launch in 2021 and the end of 2022, 512 people had taken the free online course. In December, IPEN released the first newsletter on women and chemicals for the network. The IPEN Youth Caucus held regular meetings throughout the year and arranged two webinars, each with a specific focus on youth. The Youth Caucus actively participated in policy meetings throughout the year. In December, IPEN held a network-wide plastics strategy meeting where IPEN members met to assess how IPEN can advance its mission by leveraging the Plastics Treaty process and setting 2025 and 2030 goals for the plastics campaign. The strategy will be formulated into concrete, measurable goals in early 2023.

- **Planetary boundaries:** IPEN is collaborating with scientists who produced a series of reports warning about the threats to the Earth's adaptive capacities, including studies showing that the crisis posed by plastics and chemicals has already exceeded the "planetary boundaries"<sup>28</sup> with risks for the stability of the Earth's ecosystems. IPEN and scientists from the team joined for a side event at the 2022 UN Oceans Conference and three of the scientists wrote the preface for our "An Introduction to Plastics & Toxic Chemicals" report.
- **University of Gothenburg, Sweden:** IPEN started a collaboration to assess how toxic chemicals in recycled plastic pellets may migrate into marine life.



IPEN also continued to expand its reach through partnerships, including:

- **UNEP:** an ongoing collaboration with IPEN on Women and Chemicals.
- **Endocrine Society:** IPEN and the Endocrine Society are developing a follow-up to the 2014 Introduction to EDCs report, with a focus on pesticides and plastics, and a separate report on dioxins as endocrine-disrupting chemicals.

In 2022, IPEN completed the first phase of its Health and Wellness Initiative, supporting IPEN member groups from 29 countries for activities in mindfulness/contemplative practices, and for group therapy (healing sessions for persons dealing with anxiety, loss, or who have family or friends impacted by COVID-19). A total of 1,304 people participated in the health and wellness program. Subsequently, IPEN facilitated an IPEN core team retreat for 17 individuals from 13 countries.

In 2022, twenty-seven new NGOs joined the IPEN network and by the end of the year, IPEN had 647 Participating Organizations (POs) in 127 countries. The network has been continuously supported by eight IPEN Regional Hubs. The IPEN POs not belonging to a Regional Hub continued to be served by the Events and Administration Officer in the IPEN Secretariat. IPEN's General Assembly, held online in May 2022, elected Pam Miller for her second and final mandate as IPEN co-chair.

In support of our members' local and national work, IPEN signed 118 partnership agreements with POs for their work on the ground in 52 countries. Some of the local and regional activities included support to 42 IPEN members under the IPEN Health and Wellness Initiative, and support to 29 IPEN members during the International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week of Action.



*"It's not a waste management issue,"  
"It's a **chemical issue and a health issue**,  
human health and also biodiversity"*

Dr. Tadesse Amara  
IPEN Co-Chair

## COMMUNICATIONS, OUTREACH, AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

IPEN continued to expand its outreach to the media on toxic pollution issues. Selected earned media coverage included:

- An IPEN investigation led to a Reuters exclusive<sup>29</sup> that exposed Australia's deceptive "ban" on plastic waste exports.
- IPEN was cited as a source and was quoted in major international media reports, including the New York Times<sup>30</sup> and Washington Post,<sup>31</sup> among other coverage of the UNEA Plastics Treaty resolution, highlighting plastics as a chemicals and health issue.
- IPEN was featured by major media outlets during the Plastics Treaty INC-1 negotiations, including AP, Reuters, Wired and other outlets (see summaries with links to full articles).<sup>32</sup>
- IPEN background and experts were quoted in stories by the Associated Press,<sup>33</sup> Bloomberg News, and Inside Climate News on the controversies around chemical recycling.
- We also wrote and placed opinion pieces in Chemical Watch and Environmental Health News that successfully called for improving participation guidelines in the Plastics Treaty process, and earned international coverage in Le Monde, El Pais, The Standard (Kenya), and other major international and national media outlets.



We also continued to conduct educational outreach activities for our network. We developed and conducted more than 35 IPEN webinar trainings or meetings with more than 1,500 participants. IPEN's communications team provided network members with tools and resources to use in their local and national efforts. For example, for International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, IPEN created social media graphics (including images with text in all UN languages), a press release template, a campaign video<sup>34</sup> (with subtitles available in all UN languages), web-site updates, and other communications support. IPEN also commits significant resources to translating key documents, reports, and videos for use in national and global policy efforts. In 2022, we produced translations of about 75 documents, many translated into multiple languages, at a cost of \$20,000. This work includes engaging translators, creating special text documents for smooth coordination between translators and the design team, and redesigning materials with translated text, all of which often requires a significant effort. These translated materials are invaluable for our global members' local and national work.



## CHALLENGES

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, international policy meetings from 2020-2021 were delayed, leading to a backlog that cascaded into a series of global events in 2022. This created logistical and financial challenges for IPEN. Also, as financial needs grew this year, a large portion of IPEN's funds were devalued, because the emerging financial crisis linked to inflation and the Russia-Ukraine war impacted the exchange rate from Swedish Krona to US dollars and reduced the international value of much of IPEN's core funding. To address this challenge, IPEN began a fundraising effort resulting in multiple new and potential donors. IPEN's Executive Committee is also now set to approve new IPEN efforts to invest in core fundraising capacities, noting IPEN does not have a development officer or any dedicated development staff.



## TOWARD A TOXICS-FREE FUTURE

As the global community continues the Plastics Treaty process, IPEN will remain a key actor in effectively contributing to the policy and thematic shaping of the Treaty and other global chemical policies. Our 25 years of experience beginning with the first negotiations leading to the development of the Stockholm Convention, the first global treaty on toxic POP chemicals, gives us a critical and unique advantage, as the Stockholm Convention will influence what the Plastics Treaty will become. The chemical industry is investing heavily to promote extremely limited negotiations around waste management and recycling but science and data are increasingly demonstrating the urgent need to reduce plastics production. This is where IPEN's global network of NGOs, 25 years of experience, and a track record of bringing science, research, and global data into the international policy arena will be vital for developing a health-protective Treaty. For 2023 and beyond, IPEN is poised to remain the leading organization working for a Plastics Treaty focused on regulating chemicals in plastics to protect our health.



## ENDNOTES

- 1 <https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/events/the-invisible-global-crisis-exceeding-the-limits-of-the-pollution-planetary-boundary-new-science-and-opportunities-to-tackle-threats-to-human-and-marine-life-un-ocean-conference-side-event/>
- 2 [https://youtu.be/D6GHVXVK4\\_s](https://youtu.be/D6GHVXVK4_s)
- 3 <https://youtu.be/WWePq7NfuTY>
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