

## **International POPs Elimination Project**

Fostering Active and Efficient Civil Society Participation in Preparation for Implementation of the Stockholm Convention

## National campaign for raising awareness of POPs the Stockholm Convention in Lebanon

Malek Ghandour AMWAJ

Lebanon March 2006

#### About the International POPs Elimination Project

On May 1, 2004, the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN http://www.ipen.org) began a global NGO project called the International POPs Elimination Project (IPEP) in partnership with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). The Global Environment Facility (GEF) provided core funding for the project.

IPEP has three principal objectives:

- Encourage and enable NGOs in 40 developing and transitional countries to engage in activities that provide concrete and immediate contributions to country efforts in preparing for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention;
- Enhance the skills and knowledge of NGOs to help build their capacity as effective stakeholders in the Convention implementation process;
- Help establish regional and national NGO coordination and capacity in all regions of the world in support of longer term efforts to achieve chemical safety.

IPEP will support preparation of reports on country situation, hotspots, policy briefs, and regional activities. Three principal types of activities will be supported by IPEP: participation in the National Implementation Plan, training and awareness workshops, and public information and awareness campaigns.

For more information, please see http://www.ipen.org

IPEN gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Global Environment Facility, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Swiss Agency for the Environment Forests and Landscape, the Canada POPs Fund, the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM), Mitchell Kapor Foundation, Sigrid Rausing Trust, New York Community Trust and others.

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and not necessarily the views of the institutions providing management and/or financial support.

This report is available in the following languages: English

# National campaign for raising awareness of POPs the Stockholm Convention in Lebanon

To participate in the international project to eliminate persistent organic pollutants (POPs) AMWAJ Environment of Lebanon proposed organizing an awareness campaign and activities and to release booklets in order to campaign for limiting POPs. AMWAJ has carried out the program as follows:

## 1- Coordinating meeting among partners:

On 10 January 2006, a meeting was held in the head office of AMWAJ in Beirut to coordinate with partnerships in the project with NGO participants from: AMWAJ of the environment: Malek Ghandour and Loutfee Salloum APEP: Refaat Saba – Marie terez Seif LEF: George Abou Jawde – Hiyam Kraidiyeh

Mr. Malek was assigned to be the general coordinator of the activities. All the needed assignments were discussed as follow:

**1.1 AMWAJ** of the environment in Lebanon organizing awareness activities about POPs, Stockholm Convention, releasing booklets, brochures for awareness from dangers that threaten humans and the environment as well.

**1.2 LEF:** Collecting data, and information; Doing research; Preparing a report about the situation of POPs in Lebanon.

**1.3. APEP:** viewing polluted site (Saida Trash Mountain) interviewing locals, officials, collecting data; Perform a study about this polluted site.

### 2- Meeting in the Ministry of Environment:

On 14 January 2006, a meeting was held with the Minister of Environment, Mr. Yacoob Saraf, with representatives of AMWAJ, LEF and APEP. They talked about the activities they would be doing in Lebanon which concern POPs and the importance of cooperating and coordinating between the Ministry and all organizations to work on activities to enable all to have information with the focus on the role of the Ministry to achieve the Stockholm Convention objectives.

#### 3- A seminar in Saida:

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2006, AMWAJ organized a seminar in Saida which is about 35 km from Beirut, and has the famous "Garbage Mountain" which was considered to be a polluted site to study by the NGO, APEP. This seminar was held in Bourj Al Akhdar Restaurant and all the representatives of environmental organizations were there and also municipalities from around Saida, and members of NGOs, LEF and APEP.

Speeches were given by Malek Ghandour from AMWAJ, George Abou Jawde from LEF and Refaat Saba from APEP, about the assignments they are doing in partnership among them in collaboration with international and regional institutes to eliminate POPs. A discussion was held among all participants about the "Garbage Mountain" which has become very dangerous and affects the city and its population.

All the participants agreed on all the efforts made by the municipality of Saida to remove this dump and end its bad effects.

#### 4- Meeting with Dr. Abed-Sallam Albana

On 11 March 2006, a meeting was held in the Commodore Hotel in Beirut between Abed Sallam Albana and Malek Ghandour, where they demonstrated all the preparations and activities done to release brochures and booklets for the project. An evaluation has been held and final reports were prepared and sent before the end of March 2006.

#### 5- A seminar in Beirut

On 15 March 2006, AMWAJ organized a seminar on POPs in collaboration with LEF and APEP in the LEF center in Beirut. Participants from representatives of organizations, academic institutions, officials, and the media were there. Speeches were given by:

- 5-1 Malek Ghandour representing AMWAJ commented on the international priorities of UNEP's Global Civil Society Forum to work on three basic cases: Power, chemical management and tourism. He also presented the international project of getting rid of dangerous organic wastes and POPs. In collaboration with LEF and APEP AMAJ has launched the project to eliminate POPs in Lebanon and to gather all the governmental and non governmental efforts to get rid of POPs. These include:
  - Collecting data that relates the subject and results.
  - Forming civil reference concerning POPs in Lebanon.
  - Releasing brochures and booklets to raise awareness.
  - Observing bad actions.
  - Encouraging media to do some investigations and producing media reports.

- 5-2- George Abou Jawde representing LEF spoke about the situation of POPs in Lebanon based on available information, programs and activities, especially through the program of UNDP in the Ministry of Environment in Lebanon. Then he spoke about Stockholm Convention and the Lebanese approval of it, asking about the government commitment. Also he spoke about dangers of chemicals and the importance of avoiding using these dangerous substances.
- 5-3- Refaat Saba representing APEP spoke about the study. They have focused on a polluted site; the Garbage Mountain in Saida.
  - This site is one of the examples of bad management of garbage and wastes.
  - The bad effect of this site on marine life and costal areas.
  - Putting pressure to reach a solution

Then the roles of NGOs were discussed:

- Collecting data about the subject.
- Showing the danger of organic wastes and POPs.
- Putting lots of pressure to make positive changes

#### 6- Conclusions and General Recommendations

At the national level, it is urgently important to discuss and develop NGO strategies for advancing the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on POPs in Lebanon and the Middle East region in general, by developing a NGO work program to overcome the import, distribution and use of highly toxic persistent organic pollutants.

NGOs in Lebanon can play a key role regarding the implementation of the Convention at national and regional levels. NGOs can influence the implementation and further development of the Convention, via monitoring, via their observer status, or via participation in development and implementation of National Implementation Plans.

We face in Lebanon a range of problems. The most important are:

- The low public awareness regarding toxic chemicals
- The little knowledge on POPs residues in the different media of the environment (Air, Water, Soil)
- Little knowledge of POPs residues in the food chain
- The mostly underdeveloped waste management
- The low public participation in decision making processes
- Often no data or only data full of gaps are available on POPs

We regard as important the following NGO actions:

- Take part in enabling activities
- Raise public awareness on national level
- Promote chemical alternatives to the POPs
- Promote sustainable agriculture

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#### 7- A meeting in the Saida Municipality

On 20 March 2006, there was a meeting in the Saida Municipality. Dr. Abed Rahman Al – Bezree chairman of Saida Municipality was there, with all the members and Malek Ghandour (AMWAJ) George Abou Jawde (LEF), Refaat Saba (APEP), and Adnan Malki (UNDP - GEF Small Grants Programme).

They all discussed what associations are doing to raise awareness of POPs, and how to begin a study in Lebanon especially about the garbage dump in Saida. They also asked the municipality to pay attention to this serious matter, in order to eliminate all the dangers that come from burning wastes, garbage, and tyres. They also discussed what comes out of these gases such as dioxins, which are considered as one of the main types of POPs, and how it harms the environment and human health.

Dr. Bezree encouraged the efforts of NGO's in this meeting to help in eliminating this dump and removing it, by means of a generous donation from his highness Al Waleed Bin Talal for a total cost of 5 million pounds. The delay that stops them from beginning the project has been caused by studying the project and all the possible environment effects.

#### 8- Leaflets

- 8-1- Released leaflets to identify the project and POPs and the sources, with the role of NGO's and dirty dozen
- 8-2- Released sticker includes the dangers of pops and the list of dirty dozen
- 8-3- Encouraged news media to produce special related reports on the topic
- 8-4- Gathered activities and reports in one brochure to have a reference on the subject

#### **Brochure**



#### **Newspapers**



International POPs Elimination Project – IPEP Website- <u>www.ipen.org</u>

### Poster

