



Green Beagle



---

**PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

25 September 2014

**Lack of appropriate pollution standards identified as a key barrier to helping  
pollution victims in China**

Representatives of civil society, pollution victims, universities, journalists, and Ministry of Environmental Protection identified lack of appropriate pollution standards as a key barrier to implementing a system for helping pollution victims in China. In addition, participants agreed that the lack of information disclosure and monitoring data that tracks industrial emissions was a related obstacle. The dialogue took place at the “Workshop on chemical safety and aid to pollution victims” in Kunming, China between September 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. The two-day workshop was hosted by Green Beagle, Nature University and REEI in collaboration with IPEN and Arnika as part of the EU-funded project “Strengthening the capacity of pollution victims and civil society organizations to increase chemical safety in China” (1).

Lack of stringent standards and difficulties in enforcement have resulted in significant releases of toxic chemicals and metals and subsequent human exposures in communities. These externalized costs of industry have resulted in a variety of health impacts including cancers and other serious diseases. Ironically, the lack of monitoring data makes it difficult to push for industry responsibility and governmental enforcement.

Take municipal solid waste incineration as an example. The Ministry of Environmental Protection recently promulgated a new air emission standard for this highly controversial industry. According to this new standard, the dioxin air emission limit has been reduced by ten-fold to match EU standards. However, in practice, without comprehensive environmental standards including limits for soil, water, air and food, the goals of environmental and health protection cannot be reached and more pollution victims will be created.

In addition, the mercury emission limit for waste incineration is still twice the EU standard. Workshop participants expressed concern that weak limits such as this can hardly stop the waste incineration industry from being a major mercury pollution source in China, precisely at a time when global momentum is building to ratify and implement the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

The workshop on chemical safety and aid to pollution victims in Kunming illustrated numerous examples of interventions in pollution cases and EIA processes with the goal of enforcement and environmental protection. With the help of local NGOs and active pollution victims, the training addressed issues such as how to react to pollution events and how to strategically campaign for the protection of environmental and human health with relevant stakeholders, such as environmental protection departments and companies.

Special focus was paid to the obstacles that NGOs were facing with regards to legal, science and technology, medical, and financial aid systems. Active discussion among workshop participants on lessons learned helped the meeting identify the main barriers to implementing a system for helping pollution victims in China.

#### **Footnotes**

(1) Strengthening the capacity of pollution victims and civil society organizations to increase chemical safety in China is an EU-funded project of IPEN with partners Arnika – Toxics and Waste Programme and Green Beagle that aims to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations and communities impacted by pollution to increase chemical safety in China. The Project (also known as the China Chemical Safety Project) is being implemented in China over two years with the EU contribution.

(2) IPEN is an international organisation promoting safe chemical policies and practices that protect human health and the environment.

This release has been produced as a part of the project financially supported by the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Green Beagle and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

For more information, please contact Dr. Mao Da, project coordinator of Green Beagle (mobile: 15210033727; email: [elephantmao@gmail.com](mailto:elephantmao@gmail.com))

– END –