

7 February, 2017

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Asia and the Pacific  
Intervention on Highly Hazardous Pesticides

Given by Sarojeni Rengam

Thank you Chair, and on behalf of Pesticide Action Network, we congratulate you and your fellow co-chair on your election, and thank the government of Brazil for their warm welcome here.

We have been pleased to note the progress of the recognition of highly hazardous pesticides as an issue of concern in ICCM4 and the Resolution (SAICM/ICCM.4/CRP.16) acknowledging that they “cause adverse human health and environmental effects in many countries, particularly in low-income and middle-income countries”, supporting concerted action to address them, and encouraging an emphasis on promoting agroecologically-based alternatives;

This has been a process that began in ICCM3 when a proposal to ban HHPs was introduced (SAICM/ICCM.3/CRP.16) that was supported by at least 65 countries and organisations.

However, to date, there has been a lack of action to address the ICCM 4 Resolution to phase out the HHPs and promote agroecologically-based alternatives.

In the meantime, pesticide poisoning continues unabated, particularly affecting children who are extremely vulnerable to the effects of toxic chemicals.

Women as workers, as mothers and farmers are also affected by these pesticides. This continued poisoning is a violation of human rights to health, safe environment and life. To illustrate this I would like to share the story of 11-year old Silvino Talavera whose mother I met. Silvino was cycling to buy some meat and rice and on his way back he was sprayed with glyphosate used for soy growing. He immediately washed in the river but was hospitalized that day together with his family who fell ill after eating the food Silvino brought home. Silvino returned from the hospital but on the same day, another soy producer sprayed 15 meters from their house, again using glyphosate. Silvino lost consciousness and was brought to the hospital with his siblings. Silvino was pronounced dead the following day. His family suffers many health problems (lung, stomach problems, allergies, headaches and bone aches) *as a result of the continuous pesticide exposure*. His story is unfortunately not unique – everyday children are being exposed and poisoned.

We should not wait any longer or we will fail our children. We need urgent actions to address these problems. We suggest ongoing work to develop a mechanism for global governance to phase-out highly hazardous pesticides, with special focus on the rights and needs of women and children.

Thank you Co-chair.

