



For Immediate Release
For More Information

23 September 2016
Pam Miller
+1-907-242-9991
pam@ipen.org
Twitter @toxicsfree
www.ipen.org

**“Teflon Chemical” (PFOA) warrants global action
UN Expert Committee also recommends global action on 3 other hazardous chemicals**

(Rome, Italy) A UN expert committee has determined that PFOA, commonly known as the “Teflon chemical,” warrants global action under the Stockholm Convention, an international treaty that bans the world’s most hazardous chemical pollutants.

In a consensus decision, the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC) agreed that PFOA *“is presumed to be an immune hazard to humans”* and linked to, *“high cholesterol, ulcerative colitis, thyroid disease, testicular cancer, kidney cancer and pregnancy-induced hypertension.”* Experts concluded that PFOA does not degrade in the environment, is transported over long distances, and biomagnifies in animals, threatening the food chain. As a result, the expert group, noting a recent study concluded that, *“a ‘safe’ concentration in the environment cannot be established.”*

“PFOA is clearly a threat to human health and the environment, especially for communities across the world living in the PFOA-contaminated red zones,” said Dr. Mariann Lloyd-Smith, Advisor to IPEN and National Toxics Network. *“The fluorochemical industry and their allies in governments can no longer hide behind a wall of secrecy and deceit. It’s time for accountability, cleanup, and compensation.”*

PFOA now moves to the next year-long stage of evaluation by the Committee which includes investigation of alternatives and risk management options along with a formal recommendation to the Committee about listing PFOA in the treaty.

Other key decisions made by the POPRC at its twelfth meeting held from 19 to 23 September in Rome include:

***Recommendation for a global ban on a toxic flame retardant is upheld,
but many loopholes weaken the proposal***

Last year, the POPRC agreed to recommend the global elimination of DecaBDE, a toxic flame retardant chemical widely used in electrical equipment and present in e-waste. However, this year the Committee bowed to pressure from the European and Canadian auto industries and included a large number of poorly-defined exemptions in order to continue its production and use. In addition, the UK proposed sweeping exemptions for military vehicles and aircraft, but withdrew their proposal after IPEN revealed they had colluded with industry lobbyists and submitted industry comments as their own.¹

“The European and Canadian auto industry associations demanded a long list of exemptions simply because they did not want to pay the cost of testing to validate the spare parts,” said Joe DiGangi, Senior Policy and Technical Advisor, IPEN. *“This is an abuse of the Convention, especially when alternatives are widely available. We need a true global ban of this substance that completely stops production and use, deals with the millions of tons of e-waste dumped in developing countries, and closes all loopholes that would pollute our consumer products.”*

Recommendation for a global ban of short-chained chlorinated paraffins.

After years of delay, the POPRC finally recommended a global ban of short-chained chlorinated paraffins (SCCPs). No other POPs chemical has been produced in quantities as large as SCCPs. SCCPs are endocrine

¹ <http://ipen.org/news/ends-uk-submits-industry-lobbyist-comments-stockholm-convention-expert-committee>

disruptors widely used in metal cutting, and are present in alarmingly high levels in many children's products made of PVC, such as toys, children's costumes, and stickers. SCCPs are suspected to cause cancer in humans and are found in the animals that serve as essential traditional foods for Arctic Indigenous Peoples. Technically feasible, cost-effective, alternatives are available for all known uses including many viable non-chemical alternatives.

"SCCPs are out of the public eye, but contaminate the bodies of people around the world," said Pam Miller, IPEN Co-Chair and Alaska Community Action on Toxics. *"Now it is time to eliminate this dangerous chemical without exemptions."*

Dicofol warrants global action

Dicofol is a pesticide that uses DDT in its production and is found in milk, baby formula, eggs, fruits, vegetables, human breast milk, and blood. Dicofol is very toxic to aquatic animals and causes reproductive damage in birds. It is an endocrine disruptor and suspected human carcinogen. The POPRC agreed that, *"Dicofol as a result of its long-range environmental transport is likely to lead to significant adverse environmental effects and may lead to significant adverse human health effects, such that global action is warranted."*

"We are now one step closer to a global ban of this antiquated organochlorine, first cousin to, and contaminated with, DDT," said Dr. Meriel Watts, Pesticide Action Network (PAN). *"An important next step is to identify alternatives to Dicofol, particularly non chemical alternatives that can be used safely in sustainable agriculture."*

Failure to recommend treaty action on hexachlorobutadiene (HCBD)

Hexachlorobutadiene (HCBD) is unintentionally formed and released from industrial processes including incineration and the production of certain chlorinated chemicals and magnesium. In 2015, China blocked addition of HCBD to the part of the treaty dealing with unintentional production, citing the need for more information. The Committee gathered information justifying action under the Convention but failed to recommend action under Convention, consistent with the push in 2015 by China.

"The current decision gives the governments the impression that the Committee no longer thinks unintentional emissions of HCBD are important – even though all their reports indicate these represent almost all emissions of HCBD," said Joe DiGangi, IPEN. *"At the upcoming Conference of the Parties, governments should proceed to add HCBD to the treaty for action on unintentional releases."*

Industry influence

Finally, this year's meeting was characterized by industry influence on the positions and decisions of members and government representatives. *"Although there were positive results from the meeting, broad-ranging requests for exemptions by industry were carried and defended by government representatives even while recently peer-reviewed scientific papers and public data were excluded to the detriment of scientific accuracy and disclosure,"* stated Pamela Miller, IPEN Co-Chair. *"It is troubling to witness the complicity of public government agency representatives whose primary mission is to protect human health and the environment, and it raises ethical concerns about the undue influence of industry in the POPRC process."*

The Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC) is a subsidiary body to the Stockholm Convention established for reviewing chemicals proposed for listing under the Treaty. The POPRC conducts a review process for proposed chemicals and makes a decision on whether the chemical is likely, as a result of its long-range environmental transport, to lead to significant adverse human health and/or environmental effects such that global action is warranted. If global action is warranted, the POPRC conducts an in-depth review of the chemical. Following this review, the POPRC then makes recommendations to the Conference of the Parties for the listing new chemicals. Members of the POPRC are government-designated experts in chemical assessment or management.

####