



For Release: December 9, 2014

Contact: Aaron Lohr
Endocrine Society
Phone: 202-971-3654
alohr@endocrne.org

Contact: Valerie Denney
IPEN
Phone: 312-320-2162
valeriedenney@ipen.org

New Resource on Health Threats Posed by Endocrine-disrupting Chemicals Released on Eve of International Chemical Safety Meeting

(Washington DC) As governments, industry and public interest groups from across the globe prepare to meet next week to discuss endocrine-disrupting chemicals and other international chemical safety issues, the Endocrine Society and IPEN released a new guide documenting the threat endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) pose to human health.

“There is good reason to suspect that increasing chemical production and use is related to the growing incidence of endocrine-associated disorders over the past 20 years, including male reproductive problems, early female puberty, cancers and neurobehavioral disorders,” said Endocrine Society member Andrea C. Gore, PhD, the guide’s lead author. “Importantly, there is growing evidence that fetuses and children have a particular vulnerability to these chemicals. *Introduction to Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals* was written to help policymakers and others better understand how these chemicals work and to assist them in making informed policy decisions.”

EDCs and other chemicals will be one topic of discussion when policymakers and other stakeholders meet in Geneva, Switzerland Dec. 15-17 to discuss next steps on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), a global chemical safety policy framework. More than 100 countries are participating in the process organized mainly by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) with contributions from the World Health Organization (WHO).

“In Geneva next week, the international community will decide how to respond to regional recommendations and growing stakeholder concerns about EDCs. Some of our goals for the meeting include new initiatives to identify potential EDCs and safer alternatives including non-chemical alternatives, more awareness-raising about the hazards of EDCs, and steps toward translating research results into control actions,” said Olga Speranskaya, PhD and IPEN co-chair.

In 2012, the international community adopted a consensus resolution that identified endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) as an emerging policy issue. Scientific studies have linked EDC exposure to rising rates of male birth defects, infertility, cancer, obesity and neurobehavioral disorders. Nearly every person has been exposed to EDCs, which are found in plastics, foods, pesticides, cosmetics, electronics and building materials.

Over the past year, more than 140 governments from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean recognized the special vulnerability of children during critical periods of development and declared the need for more awareness, information and monitoring of EDCs including in children's products, pesticides, electronics, building materials and textiles. Governments also called for a list of potential EDCs and their associated health effects along with safer substitutes including non-chemical alternatives.

SAICM was adopted in 2006 by the international community to foster the sound management of chemicals with a goal of ensuring that, by the year 2020, chemicals are produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on the environment and on human health

Copies of the Endocrine Society-IPEN guide are available for journalists at <http://www.endocrine.org/edcguide>.

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Founded in 1916, the Endocrine Society is the world's oldest, largest and most active organization devoted to research on hormones and the clinical practice of endocrinology. Today, the Endocrine Society's membership consists of over 18,000 scientists, physicians, educators, nurses and students in more than 122 countries. Society members represent all basic, applied and clinical interests in endocrinology. The Endocrine Society is based in Washington, DC. To learn more about the Society and the field of endocrinology, visit our site at www.endocrine.org. Follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/#!/EndoMedia>.

IPEN is a leading global organization working to establish and implement safe chemicals policies and practices to protect human health and the environment whose mission is a toxics-free future for all. IPEN helps build the capacity of its member organizations to implement on-the-ground activities, learn from each other's work, and work at the international level to set priorities and achieve new policies. To learn more about IPEN visit our site at www.ipen.org Follow us on Twitter at @toxics free.