INTERNATIONAL POLLUTANTS ELIMINATION NETWORK (IPEN) 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

IPEN
for a toxics-free future

A MESSAGE FROM IPEN'S CO-CHAIRS

Dear Friends and Colleagues of the IPEN Global Network:

Pamela K. Miller

As IPEN Co-chairs, we offer our greetings and best wishes for healthy, safe times for all. We are grateful for your connection to IPEN and consider all of you members of the IPEN family.

In 2023, IPEN's global network worked tirelessly for positive change locally, nationally, and globally. With the resumption of in-person events throughout the year, several events postponed during the pandemic were scheduled, making 2023 an exceptional year for global policy and one of IPEN's busiest years ever. While the workload was challenging, as Co-chairs we were consistently inspired by the dynamic IPEN teams working together for a safe, healthy, and just society.

The 2023 IPEN Global Report reflects much of our work over the year toward a toxics-free future. Some of the highlights include:

Tadesse Amera

- Following our successful, decades-long work through the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, in 2023, we welcomed the development of its successor, the Global Framework on Chemicals, a new forum which we expect will be a key vector for our work for many years to come.
- As part of the Global Framework, we also noted the historic creation of a new Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides, a collaboration that we will leverage in our work to eliminate these toxic chemicals and promote sustainable, agroecological alternatives.
- Our work to eliminate lead paint globally saw new national policies developed and under consideration in several regions.
- At the Stockholm Convention, IPEN's advocacy contributed to listing of three toxic chemicals and promoted the move toward a class-based approach.
- Establishing chemicals and health as a priority issue in the Plastics Treaty negotiations. IPEN remained the leading public interest organization at the Plastics Treaty negotiations, where dozens of our members participate, bringing the voices of those most impacted by toxic plastics to these critical global talks.
- Working with Indigenous Peoples at the Minamata Convention, together we welcomed a historic resolution supporting the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the fight to end mercury pollution.
- Our research, data collection, and advocacy through 2023 educated global delegates and stakeholders and provided the latest science on the health and environmental threats from toxic chemicals, plastics, and waste.
- In 2023, we invested significant resources in media and communications: we launched a new website dedicated to our Plastics Treaty work and nurtured relationships with key journalists, resulting in a significant increase in major media coverage featuring IPEN's views.

Perhaps most importantly, IPEN's network grew stronger and took on important new projects through 2023. Our Women's Caucus met regularly and created new materials, while our Youth Caucus elected its first co-chairs. Our network grew with 21 new NGOs joining IPEN, bringing our membership to 666 groups across 129 countries. In collaboration with our members, in 2023, IPEN conducted 68 projects in 39 countries. Moreover, IPEN's strategic cooperation with key partners from the health, labor, agriculture, science, and gender sectors continues to advance our mission and expand our common toxics-free future movement.

This work continues to bring the power, clarity, and vision of IPEN to new horizons and we are excited to see the evolution of our network in the year ahead. Here's to greater movement toward a toxics-free future in 2024!

With kindest wishes and in solidarity,

Pam and Tadesse
IPEN Co-Chairs

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2023: THREE MAJOR VICTORIES

1 GLOBAL MOMENTUM TO BAN PESTICIDES:

In 2023, an IPEN effort over more than a decade bore fruit with the creation of a new Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides,[i] founded with a goal of a global phase-out of HHPs by 2035. This Alliance, part of the new Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC), is a milestone that we will leverage in our efforts for safer, sustainable agriculture for years to come.

2 PLASTICS AND HEALTH:

IPEN remains the leading organization bringing health and chemical concerns to the forefront of the Plastics Treaty process, shifting the narrative, noting over 130 countries have proposed developing a Treaty that includes controls on chemicals in plastic and nearly all countries agreed the Treaty objective should "protect human health and the environment."

3 ENDING LEAD POISONING THREATS:

IPEN supported lead paint elimination campaign activities by 54 NGOs in 41 countries,[ii] and our efforts helped advance lead paint regulations in 14 countries.

MAJOR VICTORIES FROM 2023

GLOBAL MOMENTUM TO BAN PESTICIDES

In late 2023, nearly two decades of IPEN's work to eliminate threats from toxic pesticides saw a major global breakthrough. In September, IPEN participated in 5th International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) where our efforts successfully contributed to the historic founding of the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC),[iii] a new coordinated forum with a goal of "a planet free of harm from chemicals and waste." The GFC has already committed to stronger action, including on pesticides. As part of the GFC, a new multi-U.N. agency Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides was created, with a goal of a global phase-out of highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs) by 2035.

IPEN and Pesticide Action Network (PAN) have collaborated on eliminating HHPs for more than a decade, including working together to secure HHPs as an Issue of Concern within SAICM in 2015. The formation of the Global Alliance is one of the most significant aspects of the GFC and represents a major victory from the joint 11-year IPEN-PAN campaign. Over the next decade, the Alliance will provide a critical forum for advancing global bans on these highly toxic chemicals and will serve as a hub for valuable partnerships toward ending the use of HHPs.

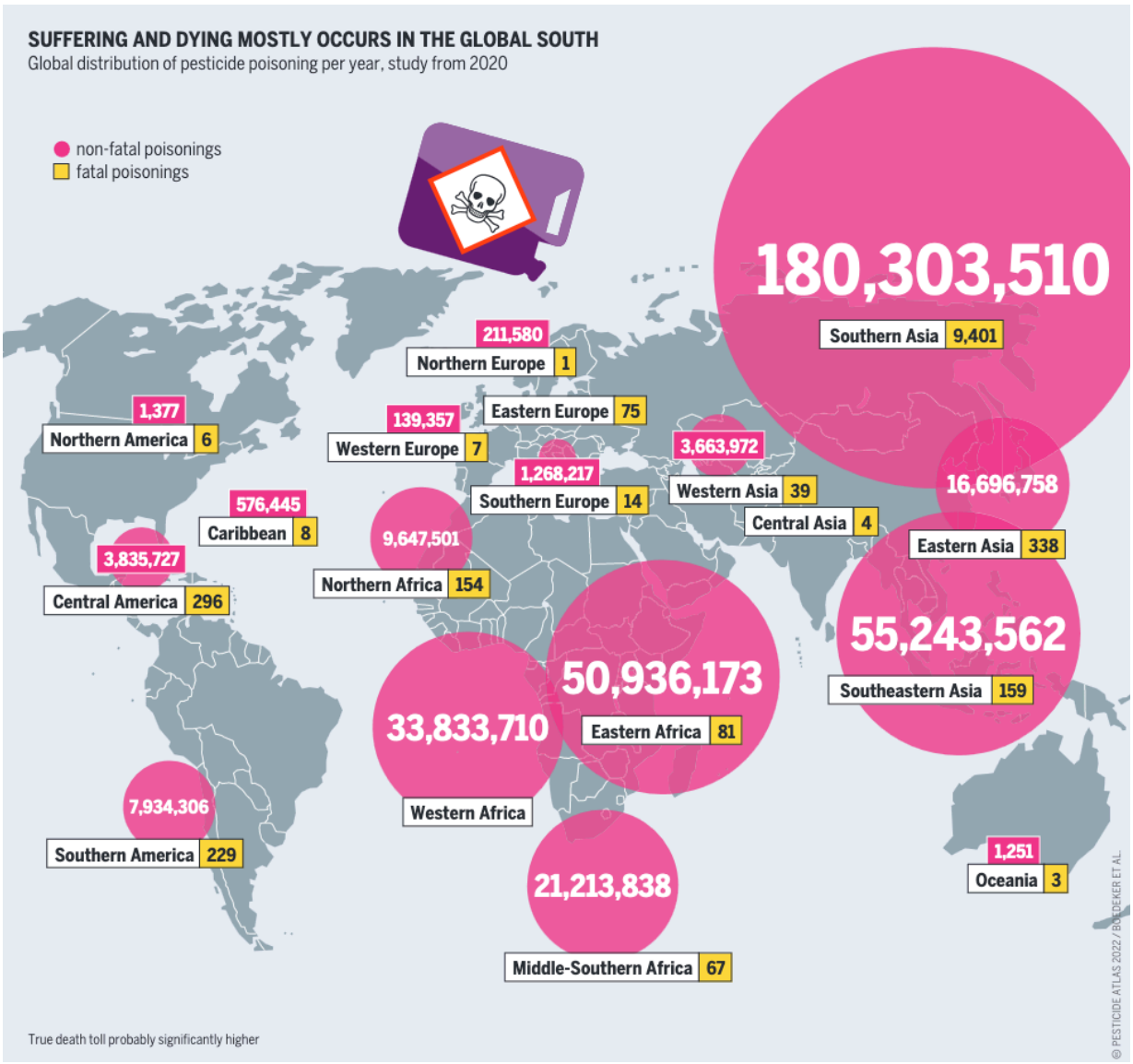


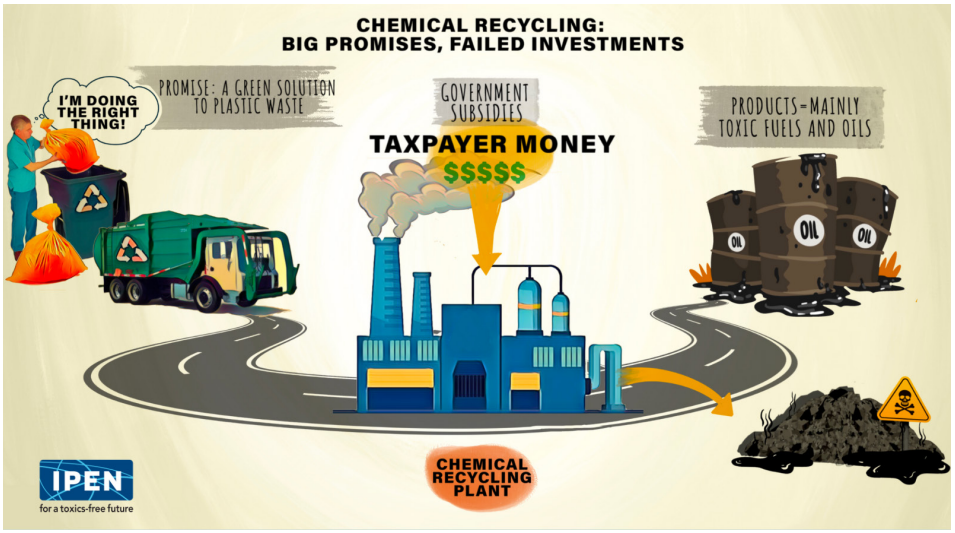
Image credit: Eimermacher/stockmarpluswalter, CC BY 4.0. In Pesticide Atlas 2022, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung & others.

PLASTICS AND HEALTH

In 2022, IPEN successfully leveraged the plastics crisis to educate governments, policy makers, advocates, media members, and others on the interdependent relationship between visible plastics and invisible toxic chemical threats. In 2023, we continued this work with an increasing focus on the failures and dangers of plastic recycling and the need for a Plastics Treaty that gets to the roots of the plastics problem: toxic chemicals and overproduction.

Taking on recycling is a challenge as there is a general perception of recycling as a public good and as something favored by environmentalists. But plastic recycling is different. Because plastics are made with toxic chemicals, recycling plastics is inherently dangerous, as the chemicals in plastic do not go away through recycling. Instead, they are spread throughout the environment and can expose recycling workers, communities, and consumers who use recycled plastic products to highly toxic chemicals.

IPEN is uniquely positioned to expose the flaws of plastic recycling, focus discussions on chemicals and health, and draw attention to the need to reduce plastic production. At the third Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-3) in November 2023, a measure of our success in moving discussions on chemicals and health ahead of recycling as a solution was the broad agreement that the objective of the Treaty should be protecting human health. Additionally, more than 130 countries endorsed a proposal to advance negotiations focused on chemicals of concern and developing guidelines/criteria for identifying such chemicals. Despite the efforts to delay the treaty process by major fossil fuel, chemicals, and plastic producers, currently the Treaty's "chemicals of concern" discussions are the most developed control concept, which continues to evolve as more scientific research echoes IPEN's concerns related to plastics threatening human health. We expect to continue pushing for an ambitious Treaty through 2024.



ENDING LEAD POISONING THREATS

In 2023, IPEN successfully advanced work in global lead poisoning prevention with our efforts to end sales of lead-based paints. During the annual International Week of Action, IPEN supported lead paint elimination campaign activities by 54 NGOs in 41 countries, including partnering with WHO and UNEP. Our member groups' work helped bring progress toward new lead paint regulations in 14 countries, including regulations that were adopted in Albania, Paraguay, and South Korea, and regulations that are under development in Congo-Brazzaville, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Moldova, Nigeria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, and Zambia.

We also moved forward in developing a global campaign calling for listing lead chromates,[iv] the primary pigments still used in lead paint, under the Rotterdam Convention, including by developing a series of presentations[v] outlining the campaign to inform and work with our member groups. We expect to further progress the campaign through 2024 for activities at the Convention in 2025.

INTRODUCTION AND 2023 IPEN HIGHLIGHTS

In 2023, IPEN engaged throughout the year with a full schedule of global policy meetings, including large IPEN delegations participating in the Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions' Conference of the Parties (BRS COPs), two Plastics Treaty INCs, the Minamata Mercury Convention, the SAICM/GFC meeting, and smaller delegations attending several intersessional and open-ended working group meetings. Throughout the year, we maintained our focus on stronger global chemical policies and provided support for our members' efforts toward stronger national regulations.

Our work contributed to several positive outcomes in 2023.

Our participation in the 5th International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) helped bring about the historic adoption of a new chemicals and waste mechanism, the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC), which includes several components that will directly enhance our work to address globally significant toxic threats. In particular, the creation of a new Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides, with a goal of a global phase-out of HHPs by 2035, is a milestone that we will leverage in our efforts for safer, sustainable agriculture for years to come.

IPEN's advocacy and participation in the 2023 Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions (BRS COP)[vi] included promoting new research on chemicals being considered for a global ban and contributing to successful outcomes. At BRS, we also continued to successfully advocate against inclusion of chemical recycling in guidelines for plastic waste management and exposed the industry ploy to seek lengthy exemptions when chemicals are regulated. At the Minamata COP5,[vii] we called for action to end global threats from mercury pollution and joined Indigenous rights groups in hailing a groundbreaking

resolution calling for Indigenous participation in efforts to address mercury contamination.

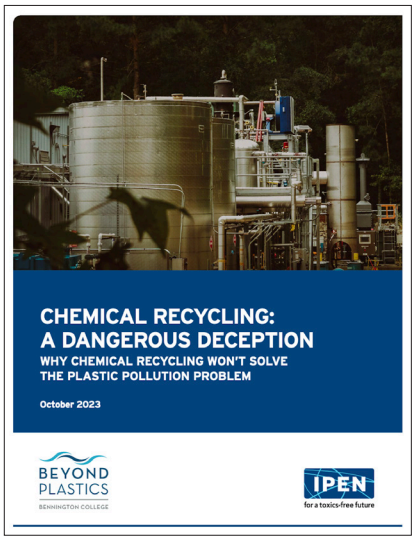
The BRS Conventions will have important convergences with the Plastics Treaty, as we outlined in our side event [viii] on "Plastics and Chemicals Under the Stockholm Convention." IPEN and more than 50 representatives from our Participating Organizations took part in the 2nd and 3rd sessions of the Plastics Treaty Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) meetings. Through the Treaty process in 2023, we continued to influence the narrative and focus on the failures of plastic recycling and the need for a Plastics Treaty that gets to the roots of the plastics problem: toxic chemicals and overproduction.

While it is challenging to take on the positive image of plastic recycling, our global network has produced research over 20 years and in 2023 generated data showing threats from plastic recycling in consumer products, in communities near recycling facilities, and even through blood testing of recycling workers. In 2023, we brought global attention to these issues and exposed the false industry narrative of recycling our way out of the plastics problem. For example, our work with Greenpeace on their *Forever Toxic* report[ix] highlighted threats throughout the plastic recycling stream and was heavily cited by delegates and the media before and during the Plastics Treaty INC-2 in Paris in May.

At the INC-3 in Nairobi in November, we highlighted recent science showing that plastics are inherently toxic, with the message "Safe and Circular Plastics Do Not Exist."[x] During INC-3, the governments of Switzerland and Uruguay led a proposal endorsed by 130 countries to advance negotiations focused on chemicals of concern and developing guidelines/criteria for identifying such chemicals. While the proposal did not advance, moving the large majority of countries to understand the threats from chemicals in plastics in just 18 months is a major achievement and we expect the chemicals of concern issue will continue to generate momentum for results within the treaty process.

Building on our successful approach over decades, IPEN continues to lead in bringing data, science, expertise, and advocacy around chemicals and health in the Plastics Treaty process, and in bringing voices from the Global South to global policy negotiations. In all global policy forums, we worked to ensure that civil society, and especially our member groups from low- and middle-income countries, would be heard during the negotiations. We also brought our independent science and research to educate delegates, media, and other stakeholders. In 2023, we exposed the significant undercount [xi] of the plastic waste trade and developed policy solutions [xii] for addressing harmful chemicals through the Plastics Treaty. Research with our participating organizations in Thailand [xiii] and Kenya[xiv] exposed health and environmental threats from toxic chemicals in plastics. Partnering with Beyond Plastics, we produced the first comprehensive critique of chemical recycling,[v] exposing the falsehoods of the industry's marketing campaign and outlining the dangers of this polluting technology.

During 2023, we made significant progress in enhancing our communications capacity and media engagement, with notable coverage by major media outlets including CNN, Le Monde, the Washington Post, Associated Press, Reuters, and many others. We increased communications support for our NGO partners, resulting in several successful outreach campaigns, primarily around their work on plastics and the Plastics Treaty. We also helped strengthen and promote resilience among our member groups by providing financial support, producing online trainings and webinars, developing translations of about 60 documents (many in multiple languages), and producing social media posts in multiple languages throughout the year.



IPEN's Toxics-Free Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) campaign [xvi] continued in 2023 with activities focused on the SAICM youth campaign, plastics, HHPs, low POPs content levels, and PFAS in clothing and in food packaging. Partnerships that continued or launched in 2023 included an ongoing collaboration with UNEP on Women and Chemicals and continued work with Gothenburg University and the Endocrine Society (including work to update our 2014 joint report on EDCs, for release in early 2024). We also continued work with scientists who co-authored recent "planetary boundaries" papers, including co-authoring correspondence [xvii] published in the prestigious journal Science outlining the failures of plastic recycling.

IPEN's Women's Caucus and Youth Caucus advanced their work this year. The Women's Caucus produced a monthly blog series [xviii] and released a series of factsheets [xix] on threats to women's health from toxic chemicals, and the Youth Caucus [xx] produced regular e-newsletters, is active on social media, and in 2023, elected the first Youth Caucus Co-Chairs.

The sections below provide a more detailed description of IPEN's 2023 results.

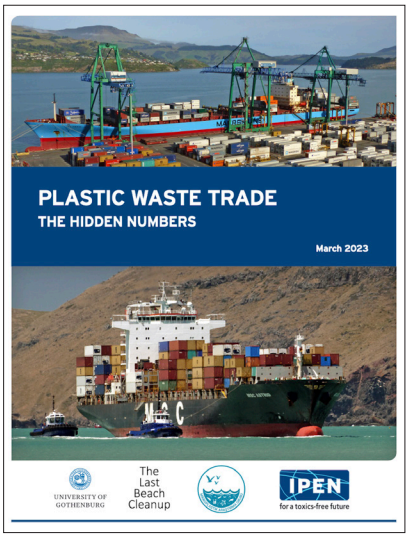
POLICY

REDUCING AND ELIMINATING THE WORLD'S MOST HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS

In 2023, ahead of the BRS negotiations, IPEN research found high levels of plastic chemicals in the blood of Thai e-waste workers, exposed toxic plastic chemicals in products and the food chain in Kenya, and demonstrated the significant undercount in most studies of the plastic waste trade. These reports were vital in educating delegates about threats from these toxic chemicals and alerting them to convergences between their work and the ongoing Plastics Treaty negotiations. To further emphasize this convergence, we hosted a side event on "Plastics and Chemicals Under the Stockholm Convention" with speakers from the Norwegian Environment Ministry, University of Wollongong, and others.

IPEN's advocacy and participation in the 2023 Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions (BRS COP) contributed to several successful outcomes. We gathered at the BRS COP with more than 50 members and partners and developed pre-meeting training sessions and materials to inform their participation. During the negotiations, IPEN members offered more than fifteen statements to the plenary [xxi] of delegates on a variety of topics, including supporting listings of DP, UV-328, and methoxychlor, calling for strong guidelines for plastic waste and POPs contaminated wastes, and other issues of concern.

We successfully advocated for adding the toxic plastic chemicals Dechlorane Plus and UV-328 and the pesticide methoxychlor to the Stockholm Convention list for global elimination. Our work also contributed to the Basel Convention's ongoing rejection of plastics chemical recycling from inclusion in guidelines for managing plastic waste. While we welcomed the decisions to add three chemicals to the list of banned substances, we cautioned about the growing trend of broad exemptions included with new listings. We produced and distributed



a briefing [xxii] advocating against exemptions that, in some cases, would allow decades of continued production and use of globally banned chemicals.

IPEN also continued our participation at the Stockholm Convention's expert review process,[xxiii] the POPs Review Committee (POPRC). In 2023, following years of IPEN advocacy, the POPRC recommended listing two chemical groups, long-chain PFCAs and MCCPs, for global elimination. This is significant as it continues to demonstrate that the Convention can address groups of chemicals all at once rather than taking on individual substances one at a time over decades. The POPRC also adopted guidance on long-range transport, identifying plastics as a vehicle for the global dispersal of chemicals, and moved the pesticide chlorpyrifos forward to the final review stage, which we expect will lead to a recommendation for listing the chemical for a global ban in 2024 and a listing decision in 2025.

IPEN's work to ensure more health protective Low POPs Content Limits for dioxins, SCCPs, and PBDEs continued with a side event [xxiv] at the BRS COP on the issues and new factsheets and reports. Throughout the year, IPEN experts continued to provide input on the development of new guidance on POPs Contaminated Sites, highlighting the importance of using non-combustion waste destruction technologies. The guidance should be ready for adoption at BRS COP 2025.

ELIMINATING LEAD PAINT

In 2023, IPEN focused on gathering information and creating documents in anticipation of a ramp up of the campaign to list lead chromates under the Rotterdam Convention as hazardous chemicals subject to the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure at the next BRS COP in 2025. IPEN shared a series of presentations and papers that built the case for an Annex III listing of lead chromates in the Convention, explained how this would assist with the wider goal of banning lead paint worldwide, and provided guidance on how governments that have adopted lead paint control laws can submit Notifications to the Rotterdam Convention nominating lead chromates for a Convention listing. IPEN will continue to build on this campaign through 2024 in the lead up to the 2025 meeting.

IPEN continued its longstanding action during International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, supporting lead paint elimination campaigns and partnering with WHO and UNEP during the annual International Week of Action. Activities during Prevention Week spanned the globe and engaged with a variety of stakeholders. Some NGOs prepared formal research and policy discussions, like Tanzania's AGENDA for Environment and Responsible Development, which released results on a study to monitor paint companies' compliance with lead paint regulation and convened with government and industry stakeholders to discuss compliance mechanisms. Others engaged in demonstrations and activated youth groups; for instance, the Environment and Social Development Organization mobilized girl guides and boy scouts for a rally throughout Dhaka City, Bangladesh. Many others focused on media outreach, with activities like a press café in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on "The Harmful Effects of Lead on Children's Health" and several media interviews presented by IPEN member ECOIS-BISHKEK.

REDUCING AND ELIMINATING MERCURY POLLUTION

IPEN action on mercury in 2023 centered on the Minamata COP5, where we contributed to the adoption of stronger rules for eliminating mercury in dentistry and worked with Indigenous leaders to welcome a historic resolution[xxv] calling for support for the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the fight to end mercury pollution.

Also at COP5, IPEN stressed the need for ending global threats from mercury pollution with a focus on prohibiting artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) as an allowable use of mercury and promoting appropriate health care services for exposed populations—particularly in ASGM areas.

Unfortunately, a significant setback[xxvi] on controlling mercury waste occurred when a proposal was adopted allowing countries to exempt themselves from restrictions on exporting mercury-tainted waste, which could result in undeclared shipments of toxic mercury waste being exported from wealthy regions to low- and middle-income countries. Looking ahead to COP6 in 2025, IPEN intends to pursue stronger rules and advocate for an end to the mercury trade.

In addition to activities at Minamata COP5, IPEN continued its collaboration with the Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) and the IPEN Participating Organization Nexus 3 Foundation from 2022, resulting in a national report on mercury reduction and storage, including cleanup plans for mercury-contaminated sites in Indonesia.

ADVANCING STRATEGIC INTERNATIONAL POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

As noted above, in 2023, IPEN's participation in the 5th International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) negotiations successfully contributed to the historic founding of the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC). The GFC provides a platform for collaborations and policy guidance that IPEN can build on for years to come. We also contributed to the UNEA Science to Policy (Science-Policy) Panel Open-Ended Working Group discussions, calling for policies [xxvii] based on sound, independent science, the precautionary principle, the industry duty to disclose information, and citizens' right to know.

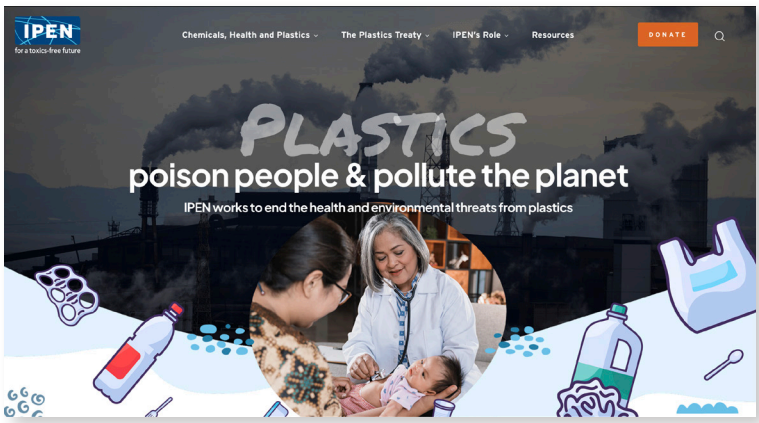
IPEN's Toxics-Free Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) campaign continued in 2023, starting 46 projects across 27 countries. In 2023, IPEN-supported activities focused on: the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) youth campaign, Plastics Country Situation Reports, National Highly Hazardous Pesticide campaigns, working with countries to stand up for strict low POPs content levels, and adding and extending the work from 2022 on PFAS in food packaging.

In 2023, IPEN continued to influence the narrative around and shape the direction of the global Plastics Treaty negotiations, generating widespread attention to health

and chemicals by delegates, advocates, and the media (see a roundup of our media coverage, on page 13). IPEN members from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe participated in the 2nd and 3rd sessions of the Plastics Treaty Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC). For the INC-2, 48 IPEN leaders from 31 countries participated at the negotiations in Paris, where IPEN worked to highlight the failures of plastic recycling and to advocate for a Treaty that addresses chemicals and health.

Prior to the INC-2, we invested considerable resources to launch a new website [xxviii] featuring our Plastics Treaty work. The website provides easy access to our meeting materials, quick views, media coverage, IPEN publications, and more. Prior to each INC, we sent emails to delegates with resources and advocacy materials and provided online preparatory sessions for our members to enhance their participation at the negotiations. Also ahead of INC-2, IPEN worked with Greenpeace to provide research and background information for a report exposing the myths of and health threats from plastic recycling as an industry-friendly approach that would enable unsustainable plastic production while posing toxic threats to workers, consumers, and communities along the recycling stream. The report was featured in Reuters, the Guardian, Grist, and more than 40 other global and national news outlets.

We also influenced the INC-2 talks through new research on plastics, chemicals, and health. Our report on the plastic waste trade showed that many plastic wastes are left out when the waste trade is assessed, meaning that researchers are missing massive amounts of plastic waste in their studies on plastic waste management. We also released a new analysis on managing toxic chemicals in plastics, describing potential approaches in the Plastics Treaty to establish criteria for a negative list of toxic chemicals.



Prior to INC-3, our major report [xxix] with Beyond Plastics demonstrated the historic and current failures of chemical recycling, exposing it as a dirty, dangerous technology that threatens health while producing few useful products. The report was widely covered [xxx] in the media, including in stories by the Associated Press, Politico, E&E News, The Intercept, Grist, Inside Climate News, and other outlets. At INC-3, we also focused on recent science pointing to the reality that there are no known safe, circular plastics. This new science includes correspondence co-authored by IPEN's Science Advisor published in the prestigious journal Science outlining the failures of plastic recycling and newly published IPEN data [xxxi] showing that plastic pellets collected from 13 countries contained hundreds of chemicals, including highly toxic pesticides and pharmaceuticals. We also produced a report [xxxii] on children's toys from 10 countries showing high levels of the toxic plastic chemicals chlorinated paraffins in all toys sampled, demonstrating the health risks to children and the spread of chemicals globally through plastic products.

NURTURING CAPACITY AND PARTNERING TO STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND THE GLOBAL TOXICS-FREE MOVEMENT

In 2023, IPEN welcomed 21 new NGOs to the network, bringing the number of Participating Organizations (POs) to 666 across 129 countries, which are served by the eight IPEN regional hubs. In collaboration with our members, IPEN conducted 68 projects with POs for their work on the ground in 39 countries.

2023 saw in-person meetings rebounding in force; IPEN provided 140 travel grants: 92 direct grants and 48 indirect grants (via UNEP or other networks) to support the attendance of our PO representatives at regional and global policy meetings. We also provided administrative support to an additional 147 individuals. The IPEN Youth Caucus were an active presence in the policy meetings throughout the year and strengthened their coordination and engagement by appointing the first IPEN Youth Co-chairs: Sonia Buftheim, Senior Toxics Program Officer with the Nexus for Environment, Health, and Development (Nexus3 Foundation), Indonesia, and Stanley Okwara, a Research Associate with Centre for Earth Works (CFEW), Nigeria.

Alongside the ramp up of in-person activities, IPEN continued its online capacity-building activities adopted during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic as a means of increasing reach and in response to participants' positive reception. In 2023, IPEN held 63 webinars/virtual meetings with 1,955 participants, which achieved gender parity with 1,096 women (56%). We also offered media outreach and social media engagement trainings, with over 50 attendees.

- **UNEP:** an ongoing collaboration with IPEN on Women & Chemicals.
- **Planetary boundaries:** our ongoing collaboration with scientists who produced studies showing that the crisis posed by plastics and chemicals has already exceeded the "planetary boundaries" [xxxiii] and risks the stability of the Earth's ecosystems. IPEN and scientists from the team collaborated on correspondence published in Science, and one of the lead authors included her quote for IPEN's INC-3 press release.[xxxiv]
- **Gothenburg University, Cukurova Üniversitesi, and the Last Beach Cleanup:** IPEN and the institutions are collaborating on science around plastic pellets and the plastic waste trade.
- **Endocrine Society:** IPEN and the Endocrine Society have developed a follow-up to our 2014 Introduction to EDCs report,[xxxv] with a focus on pesticides and plastics, for release during the UNEA-6 meeting in February 2024.

In support of IPEN's expanding toxics-free outreach and network-building capacity, IPEN's General Assembly elected two new Executive Committee (EC)[xxxvi] members: Hemantha Withanage from Sri Lanka and Michael Green from the US replaced Mariann Lloyd-Smith from Australia and Ravi Agarwal from India. Additionally, the IPEN Steering Committee [xxxvii] was elected for a new three-year mandate.

In addition to organizational growth, IPEN has also continued to attend to other avenues of support to strengthen its network. While IPEN completed the final phases of its internal Health and Wellness initiative first developed during the Covid pandemic, in 2023, IPEN integrated health and wellness activities into its work culture—practicing meditation prior to Secretariat meetings in October in Berkeley and each morning of the Anglophone and Francophone African Regional meetings in November in Kenya.

> I believe that women hold the key to a sustainable and a toxics-free future for all. My dream is to create a world where women lead the way, they are empowered, have equal access to all the resources, are educated, aware and are in impactful positions. At IPEN, we work together with so many wonderful women and are striving to create a world which protects women from toxic chemicals. This women's day I congratulate all the women at IPEN for their immense contribution to achieve an equal and a sustainable world.
>
> Tripti Arora, IPEN Gender Coordinator

COMMUNICATIONS, OUTREACH, AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

IPEN continued to expand its outreach to the media on toxic pollution issues. In particular, the Plastics Treaty negotiations attracted global attention and offered a prime platform for IPEN and its POs to educate the public on the link between plastics and toxic chemicals.

Selected earned media coverage included:

- Prior to and during INC-2, we briefed several journalists on the Treaty negotiations and conducted interviews about the talks, resulting in significant coverage, including, among others:
  - During INC-2, our Co-chair Tadesse Amera was featured in a live CNN global interview from the talks.[xxxviii]
  - Associated Press: UN talks on a treaty to end global plastic pollution open in Paris [xxxix] and Delegates working to end global plastics pollution agree to craft a draft Treaty[xl]
  - Washington Post: Administration seeks more relaxed approach on reducing plastics[xli]
  - Reuters: Plastic recycling in focus as treaty talks get underway in Paris[xlii] and After rough start, UN plastic treaty talks end with mandate for first draft[xliii]
  - Le Monde: Plastic pollution is a multi-faceted threat[xliv]
  - Deutsche Welle: Nations meet to strike plastic pollution treaty[xlv]

- Media coverage of INC-3 included:
  - Associated Press: Talks on a landmark treaty to end global plastic pollution are advancing[xlvi] (quotes IPEN and also links to our chemical recycling report) and At talks on cutting plastics pollution, plastic credits are on the table[xlvii]
  - Reuters: In UN talks for a global plastic treaty, delegates to face off over production limits[xlviii] and Kenya president urges progress on global treaty against plastic pollution[xlix]
  - Financial Times: Plastics prove tough target for circular treatment[l]
  - TRT World: A robust Plastics Treaty is needed to protect global health[li] (op-ed by IPEN Co-chair Tadesse Amera)
  - Wired: This Treaty Could Stop Plastic Pollution—or Doom the Earth to Drown in It[lii]

Other notable earned media included coverage in Grist about the mercury treaty[liii] and IPEN's plastic waste trade[liv] report, and IPEN's PFAS in popcorn report in Salon.[lv] Finally, IPEN was quoted in this Reuters global story [lvi] on the climate COP results and the oil and gas and petrochemical industries' plan to shift from fossil fuels to plastics in the face of stronger climate action.

In other communications work, IPEN funded 16 POs to support their communications outreach leading up to the Plastics Treaty INC-3. Some activities and outcomes included:

- Rapal Uruguay distributed press materials and spoke on regional radio with a member of Parliament about plastics pollution. The media outreach also resulted in a TV interview [lvii] from the Treaty talks in Nairobi with María Isabel Cárcamo of Rapal Uruguay.
- Alliance Zero Waste Indonesia distributed media materials and conducted a media tour [lviii] with journalists to view plastic waste dumps, incinerators, and other toxics sites. They also created a social media "talk series" [lix] to highlight concerns around chemicals in plastics.
- Armenian Women for Health and a Healthy Environment produced and distributed on social media [lx] factsheets on phthalates and microplastics in products and a brochure on endocrine disrupting chemicals in plastics.
- In India, Paryavaran Mitra hosted a webinar with area experts on the Plastics Treaty and used social media [lxi] to highlight threats from chemicals in plastics.
- Bios Tandill Argentina distributed press materials on threats from microplastics, including an audio documentary [lxii] featuring scientists and experts from their region, earning media coverage from regional and national news outlets.
- In Mali, IPEN member Support for the Valuation and Promotion of Private Initiatives (AVPIP) distributed press materials about toxic chemicals found in plastic toys in Mali and other countries, resulting in regional media coverage and social media engagement.[lxiii]


Associated Press

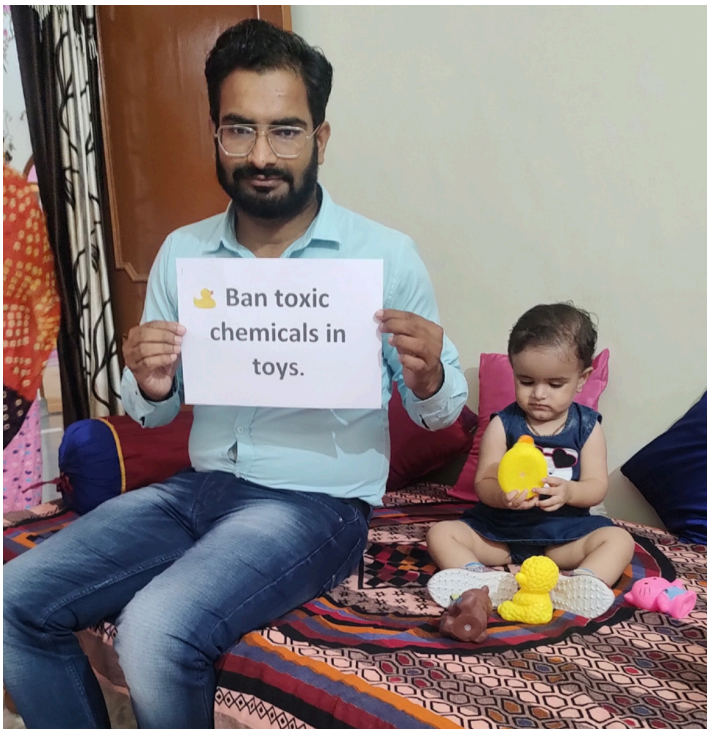
Delegates working to end global plastics pollution agree to craft a draft treaty

"Projections suggest that a child born today will see plastic production double by the time they turn 18, but we know that the consequences of increasing plastic production will be disastrous for our health, the planet, and the climate," said Dr. Tadesse Amera, who led the International Pollutants Elimination Network's delegation at the talks. "The stakes are high, but we are optimistic by the growing awareness among delegates of the need for global controls."

CHALLENGES

Our work at BRS successfully won new listings of two toxic plastic chemicals, but industry lobbied for exemptions to the listings that will allow some continued production and use. IPEN opposed these exemptions, but the allowance suggests a need for future advocacy to counter this industry ploy.

As IPEN is growing, we continue to work on shoring up our internal processes and building out our staff. In 2023, IPEN's digital content manager of 15 years passed away, and our finance manager left to the private sector. As a result, IPEN recruited a new finance manager, and we have hired IPEN's first-ever staff person dedicated to development. This new role will also include 50% time spent on communications. In addition, several of IPEN's core personnel met in October to formalize a global management team, with the aim to optimize IPEN's internal operation and cultivate emerging leaders.



TOWARD A TOXICS-FREE FUTURE

In 2023, IPEN continued working as a key actor in effectively contributing to the shaping of the Plastics Treaty. Our 25 years of experience, our global network, and our commitment to science and real-world data make us uniquely suited to influence Treaty delegates, policymakers, media, and other advocates. Further, we have developed a powerful, reciprocal approach of generating local data to influence international policies and leveraging global policies for national and local regulatory development. This approach has proven successful in other arenas and has significantly helped us influence the Plastics Treaty talks. Building on our successful prior approach, IPEN continues to lead in bringing data, science, expertise, and advocacy around chemicals and health in the Plastics Treaty process, and in bringing voices from the Global South to the Treaty negotiations. For 2024 and beyond, IPEN is poised to remain the leading organization working for a Plastics Treaty that aims at the root of the plastics problem and focuses on regulating chemicals and reducing plastic production to protect our health.

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www.ipen.org

ipen@ipen.org

@ToxicsFree