



# INTERNATIONAL POLLUTANTS ELIMINATION NETWORK (IPEN) 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



## A CHANGEMAKER: PAMELA MILLER

In 2025, Pamela Miller stepped down as IPEN Co-chair, following her successful two terms that saw major achievements and growth within the IPEN network, including significant victories to end health harms from highly hazardous pesticides, toxic plastics, and many other chemical threats. IPEN is grateful that Pam will continue her role as an advisor and partner.

A proven local to global leader, Pam's hometown was a cancer cluster impacting family members and friends due to a chemical industry producing the highly toxic plastic chemicals, chlorinated paraffins. During Pam's time as IPEN Co-Chair, short and medium-chained chlorinated paraffins (MCCPs) were banned globally under the Stockholm Convention. This was a significant victory, as the amount of MCCPs produced each year is about equivalent to all the PCBs ever produced.

Pam is the Executive Director of Alaska Community Action on Toxics (ACAT) and a staunch advocate with and for Arctic Indigenous Peoples. She continues to serve as a liaison for IPEN to Project TENDR (Targeting Environmental Neurodevelopmental Risks), a group of scientists, health professionals, and children's health advocates working to prevent harm to children's developing brains.



## A MESSAGE FROM IPEN'S CO-CHAIRS

Dear Friends and Colleagues of the IPEN Global Network,

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 2025, IPEN's global network brought voices of those most directly at risk from hazardous chemicals to global policy debates and won national regulations to protect their communities from toxic threats. IPEN is tackling the planetary crisis resulting from the production of hazardous chemicals, as the triple crises of chemicals and plastics, biodiversity loss and climate change pose existential threats. IPEN exposes the myths of a downstream view of chemicals and plastics as merely a pollution problem caused by consumer behavior and instead insists on focusing on the root cause: the production of chemicals and toxic plastics.

As Co-chairs, we were consistently inspired by the dynamic IPEN teams working together for a safe, healthy, and just society. The 2025 IPEN Annual Report reflects much of our work over the year toward a toxics-free future. Some highlights include:

- Following our successful, years-long work, the Stockholm Convention adopted global bans on the toxic pesticide chlorpyrifos and two large plastic chemical groups.
- Our work to eliminate lead paint globally saw new national policies developed and under consideration in several regions.
- IPEN remained the leading global network advancing action on chemicals and health protections at the Plastics Treaty negotiations and welcomed a call by 90 countries to include controls on toxic chemicals in the Treaty text.
- Our research, data collection, and advocacy educated policymakers and stakeholders and won global media attention, drawing more governments toward understanding the health threats posed by toxic pollutants.
- In Latin America, our work with Indigenous women exposed health threats from mercury used in gold mining, bringing attention at the Minamata Treaty to the risks posed to Indigenous Peoples by this ongoing practice.
- At the Global Framework on Chemicals talks, IPEN and its global network partners launched a collaboration to implement the Framework's objectives, including working for a global ban on highly hazardous pesticides.
- In 2025, IPEN provided support to its Participating Organizations for more than 100 projects in 50 countries, including work to expose threats from toxic plastic chemicals, lead paint, mercury contamination, and more.

We also celebrated our Steering Committee colleague Semia Gharbi who was awarded the prestigious Goldman Prize in 2025!

The strength and commitment of IPEN members remains IPEN's most valuable asset. IPEN grew in 2025, now comprising over 700 POs in more than 130 countries. 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 objective for a toxics-free future movement. We are excited to see the continuing evolution of our network in 2026!

With kindest wishes and in solidarity,

Gohar and Yuyun  
IPEN Co-Chairs



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025: THREE MAJOR VICTORIES

1

## TOXIC PESTICIDE AND LARGE CHEMICAL GROUPS GLOBALLY BANNED

Following IPEN's multiyear strategic campaigns, the highly hazardous pesticide chlorpyrifos was globally banned under the Stockholm Convention, and two large plastic chemical groups were also banned. By banning entire chemical families, regulators avoid the industry's ploy of substituting a closely related chemical when another chemical in the family is banned.



2

## HEALTH AND CHEMICALS AT THE CENTER OF THE PLASTICS TREATY TALKS

At INC-5.2, IPEN [released new data](#)<sup>i</sup> showing workplace exposures to toxic plastic chemicals experienced by government officials such as the Danish Minister of Environment (representing the EU Council Presidency), high-level UN human rights officials, and plastic waste workers in Kenya and Thailand to demonstrate our shared health burden. The study led to a flurry of media attention, keeping the pressure on delegates to seek an ambitious, health-protective Treaty.



3

## GLOBAL PROGRESS TO HALT THE SPREAD OF TOXIC METALS

IPEN members' campaigns led to new lead paint regulations adopted in China, Liberia, and Niger, with another 30 countries where IPEN POs are advancing regulations. In its campaign to end mercury threats, IPEN worked with Indigenous women in six Latin American communities on a key study that demonstrated mercury contamination in women of child-bearing age from artisanal small-scale gold mining (ASGM), the leading source of global mercury pollution.



# MAJOR VICTORIES FROM 2025

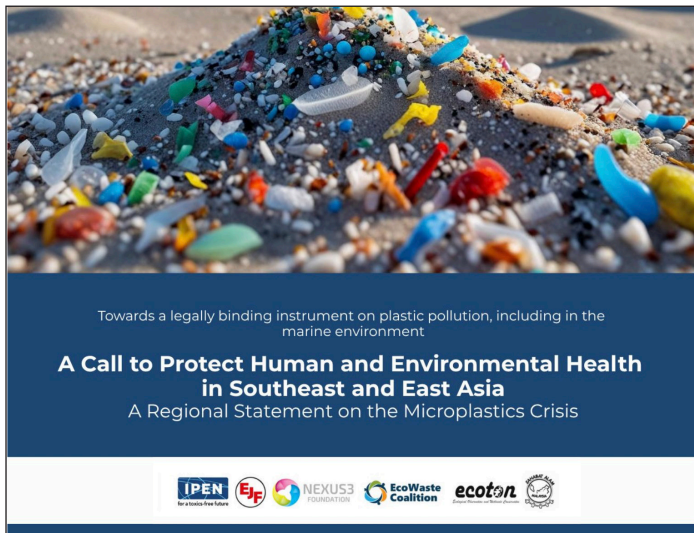
## TOXIC PESTICIDE AND LARGE CHEMICAL GROUPS GLOBALLY BANNED

Following IPEN's multiyear strategic campaigns, the highly hazardous neurotoxic pesticide chlorpyrifos was globally banned under the Stockholm Convention. At the 2025 COP, IPEN and its partner Project TENDR, a group of scientists calling for an end to chemicals that harm children's brains, [submitted a letter](#)<sup>ii</sup> calling for the Convention to adopt the ban. Chlorpyrifos is known to damage children's brains and has been banned in several countries, but a global ban will protect millions of children in countries where the pesticide remains in use.

Additionally, in a win for IPEN's goal to control chemical groups to address hundreds of closely related toxic chemicals at once, medium chain chlorinated paraffins

(MCCPs) and a family of PFAS "forever chemicals" called long-chain perfluoroalkyl carboxylic acids (LC-PFCAs) were also banned. These plastic chemicals are widely used in a broad range of consumer products, exposing millions of people globally. By banning whole chemical families, regulators avoid the industry's ploy of hazardous substitution (sometimes called "regrettable" substitution), when a closely related chemical is used in place of another chemical that has been banned.

Banning these plastic chemicals also helps keep the issue of toxic plastic chemicals a focus of the Plastics Treaty talks, where IPEN is leading efforts to engage delegates around the health concerns from chemicals in plastics.



## HEALTH AND CHEMICALS AT THE CENTER OF THE PLASTICS TREATY TALKS

In 2025, the Plastics Treaty talks continued with INC-5.2 in Geneva in August. While no agreement was reached, during the INC, 90 countries joined in support of a proposal by Switzerland and Mexico that included unprecedented global controls on toxic plastic chemicals.

The proposal followed IPEN's [release of new data](#)<sup>iii</sup> showing workplace exposures to toxic plastic chemicals experienced by plastic waste workers in Kenya and Thailand and by high-ranking UN delegates and government officials. Participants in the study included the Danish Minister of Environment (representing

the EU Council Presidency), high-level UN human rights officials, a representative of the World Health Organization, and other high-ranking officials.

The study led to a flurry of media attention, including a [global CNN report](#)<sup>iv</sup> on threats from phthalates, toxic plastic chemicals known as "*the everywhere and everyone*" chemicals. IPEN also created and promoted the media narrative that progress in the Treaty talks would rely on moving away from a strict reliance on consensus and instead allowing Members to vote when the plenary is blocked by a few obstructive countries.



## GLOBAL PROGRESS HALTING THE SPREAD OF TOXIC METALS

Since 2009, IPEN members around the world have tested more than 5,000 paints for lead, with more than 30 countries adopting bans or regulations to end the production and sales of lead paint. In 2025, IPEN members' campaigns led to new lead paint regulations adopted in three more countries: China, Liberia, and Niger. In another 30 countries, IPEN POs are working to advance lead paint regulations.

In efforts to end mercury contamination, in 2025, IPEN worked with Indigenous women in six communities in Peru and Nicaragua on a key study to reveal mercury contamination of women of child-bearing age from artisanal small-scale gold mining (ASGM), the leading source of global mercury pollution.

The study found that 99% of women tested had body levels of mercury above the safety threshold recommended recently by experts, and most (88%) had levels above the current US EPA safety levels.

IPEN members in 10 countries also released national data on ASGM, documenting mercury threats in their countries. Together, these projects are building support for amendments to the Minamata Convention at its COP meeting in 2027 where IPEN will advocate for banning the mercury trade and ending the use of mercury in ASGM by 2032.



# INTRODUCTION AND 2025 IPEN HIGHLIGHTS

This past year, the Plastics Treaty negotiations continued to dominate headlines with INC-5.2 taking place in August 2025. IPEN and our Participating Organizations (POs) have leaned on our decades of experience in negotiating other global chemical treaties to seed narrative change at the Plastics Treaty talks and create openings for future progress. IPEN's messaging has been adopted by delegates at large, with the majority of countries acknowledging chemicals of concern in their statements.

Proposals addressing plastic chemicals have consistently gained the most momentum, as evidenced by the broad support for a Switzerland-Mexico proposal on plastic chemical controls at INC-5.2.



IPEN also continued to highlight 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 of plastic, noting industry plans to triple plastic production by 2060.

IPEN's knowledge, more than twenty years of experience, and participation within the global chemical policy arena have also enabled our network to make substantive headway on advancing the need for controls on toxic plastic chemicals through complementary multilateral environmental agreements even as the Plastics Treaty negotiations continue.



At BRS COPs in 2025, IPEN helped bring about bans on a highly hazardous pesticide, chlorpyrifos, and on two large volume plastic chemicals: long-chain perfluoroalkyl carboxylic acids and medium chain chlorinated paraffins.

IPEN's contributions also helped win adoption of guidance to address POPs-contaminated sites (i.e., plastic waste dumpsites) and advanced work to address plastic textile waste and plastic waste fuels (also called refuse derived fuel or RDF) at future COPs.



In 2025, at the first Open Ended Working Group meeting of the new Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC OEWG-1), IPEN and our network engaged to help set the agenda, priorities, and assessment framework.

The GFC is the only international framework for addressing most of the world's concerns about chemicals, where governments and stakeholders express commitments to protect human health and the environment from chemical threats.

IPEN also participated in the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution (ISP-CWP) to ensure that global chemical policy bodies are informed by the latest science and are not manipulated by industry misinformation.



At the Mercury Treaty negotiations (Minamata COP-6), IPEN criticized the failure of the COP to take strong action toward banning mercury in artisanal and small scale gold mining (ASGM), particularly following the release of IPEN’s study demonstrating that 99% of women studied from Indigenous communities in Peru and Nicaragua had mercury in their bodies at levels exceeding global safety limits. IPEN joined Indigenous leaders at the talks in demanding action to ban mercury in ASGM. On a positive note, IPEN welcomed the COP’s decision to phase-out mercury in dental fillings by 2034.

In 2025, over 160 IPENers participated in force at several global policy meetings: BRS COPs, Plastics Treaty INC-5.2, Minamata COP-6, GFC OEWG-1, UNEA-7, and SPP OEWG-3.2. The network also devoted substantial focus on generating new data, producing original science, and raising awareness in their countries to set the foundation of national and global policy advocacy.

In 2025, IPEN supported more than 100 projects in over 50 countries. Participating organizations:

- Researched and conducted government outreach on the mercury trade and mercury use in ASGM in 20 countries.
- Developed national situation reports on bisphenols and phthalates in 24 countries, in preparation for government outreach to urge new national regulations on these pervasive plastic chemicals.
- Monitored chemical exposures of waste and recycling workers in Thailand and Kenya.
- Ran dozens of lead paint elimination campaigns engaging government officials, consumers, and the paint industry.

**BAHAYA EDCS**  
(Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals/  
Bahan Kimia Pengganggu  
Kelenjar Hormon)

**Bahaya dari EDCs**  
Apa Itu Bahan Kimia  
Pengganggu Kelenjar Hormon?

EDC adalah zat kimia yang mengganggu hormon alami tubuh kita dan dapat meningkatkan risiko penyakit serius, termasuk kanker, infertilitas, dan kondisi kesehatan lainnya.

Also among the PO projects were 24 communications campaigns on the gendered impacts of endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs). With support from IPEN’s Women’s Caucus, IPEN POs adapted and translated key campaign messages to reach communities in their countries in ways that resonated locally. Each adaptation reflected creativity, cultural context, and a shared commitment to protecting women’s health from harmful chemicals.

Among the PO projects’ successes were the Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment’s “Women and EDCs” campaign, which resulted in the inclusion of a session on EDCs in plastics during the national Ministry of Environment’s seminar on plastic pollution - a major step for adding EDCs to the national chemical agenda.

In projects to expose threats from the plastic chemicals bisphenols and phthalates, in Sri Lanka, Centre for Environmental Justice’s long-time [advocacy on toxic plastic chemicals in baby bottles](#)<sup>vi</sup> made major progress in 2025 when the country’s Consumer Affairs Authority [mandated safety standards](#)<sup>vi</sup> on BPA and phthalates in baby bottles and other plastic bottles. IPEN and CEJ first studied [BPA in baby bottles](#)<sup>vii</sup> and began calling for regulatory action in 2021.

In Sierra Leone, Center for Female Researchers ran the country’s first awareness campaign on bisphenols and phthalates — partnering with the country’s EPA to discuss EDCs and impacts on women, engaging 400 urban and rural students and leading to the creation of research and advocacy clubs for high school girls.

Finally, a significant highlight of 2025 was IPEN Steering Committee member Semia Gharbi being awarded [a 2025 Goldman Prize](#)<sup>viii</sup> – becoming the fourth IPEN leader to win the prestigious honor. Often called the environmental Nobel Prize, the award is granted annually to environmental leaders from each continent.



In recognizing her achievements in the African region, the Goldman Prize highlighted Semia’s work to expose illegal shipments of hazardous waste sent to Tunisia from Italy. The award noted that following her campaign, “More than 40 corrupt government officials and others involved in waste trafficking were arrested (and) her efforts spurred policy shifts within the EU, which has now tightened its procedures and regulations for waste shipments abroad.” IPEN is deeply honored that, in recognition of IPEN’s support for her work, Semia noted in her remarks that she was sharing the prize with IPEN.

The sections below provide a more detailed description of IPEN’s 2025 results.

# POLICY

## REDUCING AND ELIMINATING THE WORLD'S MOST HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS

### *Global Bans on Chlorpyrifos, MCCPs, and LC-PFCAs*

At [BRS COPs 2025](#)<sup>ix</sup> in April, 48 IPENers from 28 countries worked to ensure a final approval of three new listings of POPs to be banned globally under the Stockholm Convention, bringing IPEN's multi-year campaigns to a successful conclusion. POs delivered over two dozen [plenary interventions](#),<sup>x</sup> met with their countries' delegates to disseminate [scientific reports and policy analyses](#),<sup>xi</sup> and co-organized five side events on [gender](#),<sup>xii</sup> [children's health](#),<sup>xiii</sup> [labor](#),<sup>xiv</sup> [plastics and youth leadership](#),<sup>xv</sup> and waste incineration. Notably, the bans on MCCPs and long-chain PFCAs cover thousands of toxic chemicals—a win for IPEN's campaign calling for controls on chemical groups rather than the protracted process of addressing each chemical individually.

Looking ahead to future Stockholm listing decisions, IPEN engaged with the Stockholm Convention's [POPs Review Committee \(POPRC-21\)](#),<sup>xvi</sup> which reviews chemicals proposed for listing, to help advance brominated dioxins as POPs that should be banned globally. IPEN connected NGOs with academic labs to publish [peer-reviewed research on brominated flame retardants](#)<sup>xvii</sup> - highlighting over 20 years of IPEN work documenting health threats from brominated dioxins linked to plastic recycling and plastic waste burning.



### *Tackling Toxic Plastic Waste*

The 2025 BRS COPs also saw IPEN making crucial steps to address the plastic waste crisis. After nine years of development, the COP adopted guidelines co-drafted by IPEN Advisors for cleaning up POPs-contaminated sites (e.g., plastic waste dumps). This is significant as there was previously no international guidance to enable countries to identify and remediate POPs-contaminated sites, which pose major public health hazards including polluted water and contaminated food sources.

**Gender, Toxics Exposures and the Right to a Clean, Safe, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment**

**Sonia BUFTHEIM**  
Senior Program Officer, Nexus3 Foundation & Co-Chair, IPEN Youth

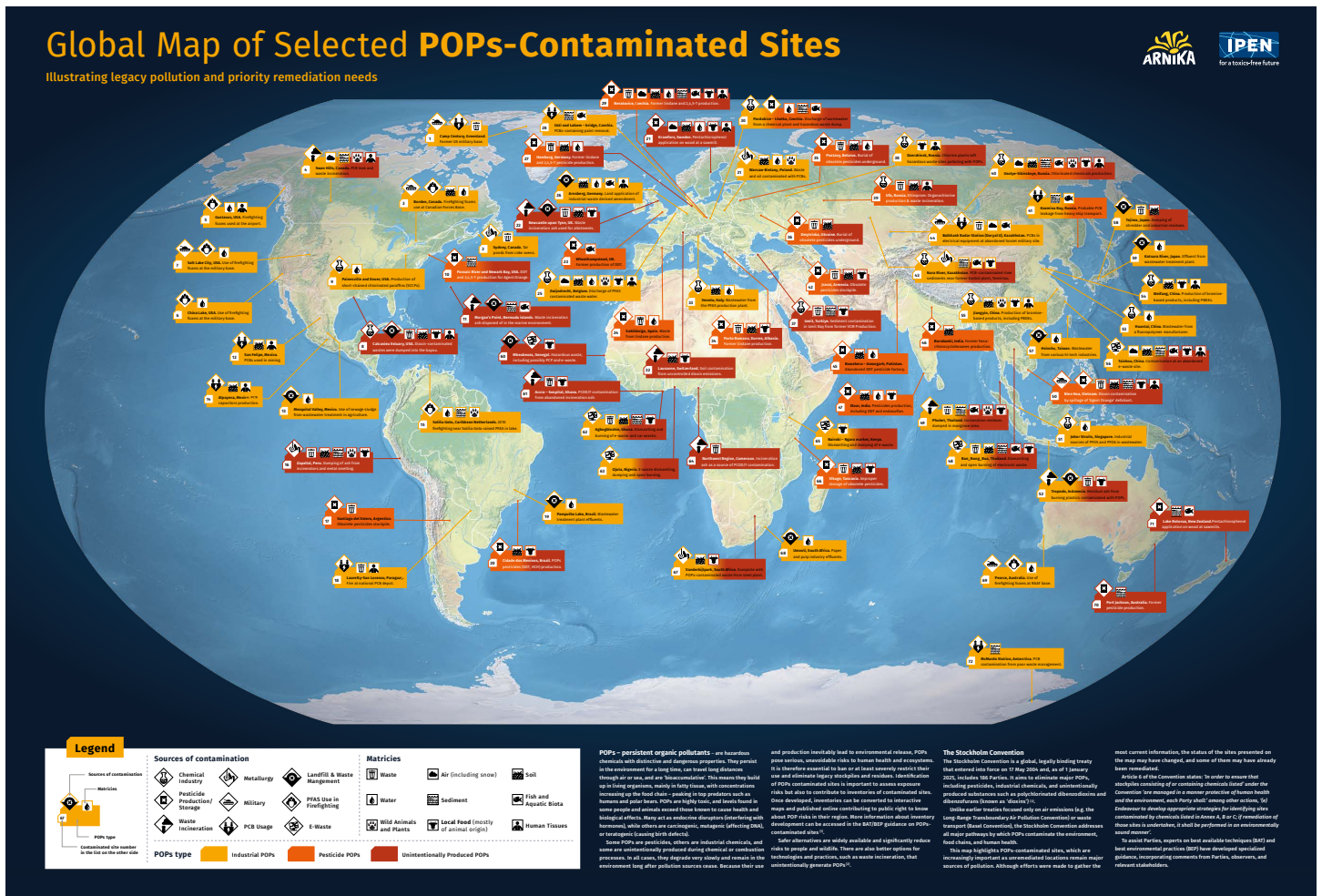
[tiny.cc/GEN29Apr25Gender](https://tiny.cc/GEN29Apr25Gender)

BRS COPs CONVENTIONS | Make Visible the INVISIBLE | SIDE EVENT | IPEN | wecf | UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS | GENEVA ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

Furthermore, IPEN's influence at the Basel Convention supported the COP's decision to initiate new work toward tracking exports of textile waste—a key issue in the Global South. This past year, the IPEN South Asia, Southeast & East Asia, and Central, Eastern & Western Europe Hubs partnered to organize highly attended webinars focused on harmful chemicals in textiles, meeting the growing interest and concerns of stakeholders in their regions. Additionally, in the lead up to the BRS COPs, IPEN [made the case](#)<sup>xxviii</sup> for Basel Convention controls on textile waste and RDF, shedding light on these hidden plastic waste streams. IPEN has identified an opportunity to engage the Basel Convention working group to advocate for subjecting used and waste textiles to the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure. This would require countries to explicitly consent to receiving imports, helping to increase transparency on the true scale and movement of plastic waste while helping governments make more informed decisions on what they permit within their borders.



IPEN's advocacy also supported the Basel Convention in announcing a major working group meeting planned for 2026 on challenges in addressing the plastic waste trade. IPEN has identified this as an opportunity under the Basel Convention to establish a specific HS code (i.e., trade code) for RDF that would help prevent countries from unknowingly importing hazardous plastic waste disguised as a “green” fuel commodity. As the leading global network tackling plastic waste fuels, IPEN and its POs have been drawing [media attention](#)<sup>xxix</sup> to [the problems](#)<sup>xxx</sup> of [refuse derived fuel](#),<sup>xxxi</sup> with POs such as Ecoton and Nexus3 of Indonesia speaking to [The Guardian](#) on RDF use in tofu factories and the network sharing [RDF data from 17 countries](#)<sup>xxxii</sup> to ensure evidence-based decision-making. Notably, since IPEN's RDF campaign began, the Chief Executive of the UK Environment Agency has called for a ban on all UK waste exports, including RDF. The UK is the world's largest exporter of RDF at 1.7 million tonnes annually.



# ELIMINATING EXPOSURES TO TOXIC METALS

## BANNING LEAD PAINT

### *From Local...*

IPEN through its members is the only international network securing new lead paint bans and continues to drive the elimination of lead paint. In 2025, [lead paint activities](#)<sup>xxiii</sup> were conducted by 46 IPEN member NGOs in 35 countries, most targeted toward national regulations to ban lead paint. As a result of these efforts and IPEN members' long-term campaigns, lead paint regulations were adopted in three countries, China, Liberia, and Niger, and advanced in thirty other countries. Since this campaign's inception in 2007, IPEN members have tested over 5,000 paints for high lead content in over 50 countries—more than any other organization—leading to the adoption of bans or strong regulations on lead paint in over 30 countries.

Other member activities throughout International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week included elevating the heightened harms of lead on children's development and activating youth leadership on the issue. Some examples include Research Centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development in Vietnam organizing students in a communications campaign and public exhibition on lead hazards; in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Appui aux Initiatives Communautaire de Conservation de l'Environnement et de Développement Durable homed in on health harms to children in their campaign for transparent paint labeling, and Solidarité pour la Protection des Droits de l'Enfant held public awareness sessions at schools among other venues; and similarly, the Caribbean Poison Information Center in Jamaica and Western Media for Environment and Conservation in Uganda focused their policy campaigns on childhood lead exposure.

In Thailand and India, having succeeded in advocating for lead paint regulations in 2017, IPEN and local POs EARTH (Thailand) and Toxics Link (India) continued their efforts by pushing for adherence to the lead paint standards. In 2025, POs released compliance monitoring reports ([India](#),<sup>xxiv</sup> [Thailand](#)<sup>xxv</sup>) which showed a need to strengthen enforcement of regulations after having identified paints labeled “lead free” that actually contained high levels of lead content.

In line with IPEN's work to ensure safe paints in local markets, the IPEN-developed, third-party run [Lead Safe Paint® Certification Program](#)<sup>xxvi</sup> also continued to expand its reach, with [seven companies](#)<sup>xxvii</sup> in the Philippines now having attained certification. This certification program is used by paint companies representing more than 80% of the paint market in the Philippines.

### *...to Global*

Throughout 2025, IPEN and its POs called for the listing of lead chromates, the main lead ingredient in paint, under the Rotterdam Convention. Should lead chromates be listed, exporting countries would be required to seek formal approval from countries to accept imports of lead chromates and lead paints—creating transparency and offering a clear mechanism for countries to reject these toxic compounds and paints containing them. IPEN's [analysis](#)<sup>xxviii</sup> indicates that the EU and many countries which have banned lead paint and lead chromates domestically are nevertheless exporting these additives to other countries. In most LMICs, lead paint is either imported or produced locally using imported lead chromates.

With support from local POs on preparing submissions to the Rotterdam Convention, Cameroon, Morocco, Switzerland, and Australia submitted notifications of final action on lead chromates to the Rotterdam Convention. This triggered global action as now that two regions have notified the Secretariat, the formal consideration process for adding the lead compounds to the Convention begins. In the meantime, POs around the world have been building support by urging their own governments submit nominations with campaigns from Pesticide Action Nexus Association in Ethiopia, Gamarjoba in Georgia, Land and Human to Advocate Progress in Jordan, Centre for Environment Justice and Development in Kenya, Consumers' Association of Penang in Malaysia, Center for Public Health and Environmental Development in Nepal, Foundation in Support of Civil Initiatives in Tajikistan, Association on Environmental Education for Future Generations in Tunisia, and many others.



Since 2007, IPEN members in more than 50 countries have tested over 5,000 paints for high lead content—leading to strong regulations that protect millions of children in over 30 countries from lead paint.




## ENDING MERCURY POLLUTION: GROWING CALLS TO AMEND THE MINAMATA CONVENTION


Ahead of the [Minamata Convention COP-6](#)<sup>xxix</sup> in November, IPEN released [mercury biomonitoring data](#)<sup>xxx</sup> showing high mercury levels in Indigenous women in six Latin American communities impacted by artisanal small-scale gold mining (ASGM), the leading source of global mercury pollution. IPEN is ramping up our work to close the “gold traders” loophole in the Convention in order to ban the global trade

Minamata COP-6 Online Event

**Strengthening the Minamata Convention: A New Approach to the Global Mercury Trade and Use in ASGM**



**Lia ESQUILLO**  
Program Director, IPEN | Moderator



14 October 2025 | 16:30–17:30 CEST | Online (Webex) >>> [tiny.cc/GEN14Oct25](https://tiny.cc/GEN14Oct25)



of mercury and set a 2032 phase-out date for mercury use in ASGM. IPEN and its POs began laying the groundwork for this campaign in 2025 by developing 20 national situation reports on the import, trade, and use of mercury in strategic ASGM countries and delivering over a [dozen interventions](#)<sup>xxxi</sup> at COP-6 and its associated regional meetings.

For COP-6, IPEN held two well-attended events on ASGM and mercury trade: one on [strengthening the Convention](#)<sup>xxxii</sup> and another on [health interventions](#)<sup>xxxiii</sup> that engaged the UN Special Rapporteur on Toxics, the WHO, INTERPOL, OHCHR, Indigenous leaders, and national governments.

After the COP, IPEN PO Colnodo in Colombia and IPEN experts presented IPEN views on the need for amendments at a virtual meeting with the Colombian government. Further outreach to strategic governments on amending Minamata is set to take place throughout 2026 to encourage nations to submit draft amendments for consideration at Minamata COP-7.

# ADVANCING STRATEGIC INTERNATIONAL POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

## GLOBAL FRAMEWORK ON CHEMICALS AND PHASING OUT HIGHLY HAZARDOUS PESTICIDES

In June, the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC) held its first Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) meeting. IPEN initiated a GFC outreach group—a collaboration with global networks in gender, agriculture, labor, health, and environment that together reach millions of members worldwide—and together the group released a [Common Statement](#) at the meeting during an event co-hosted with Uruguay and UNEP officials calling for NGOs worldwide to join in actions to implement the GFC.

IPEN’s Science Advisor serves as the elected Public Interest Groups representative on the GFC Bureau, where she helps to shape its global agenda, in particular on the Global Alliance on HHPs. Additionally, IPEN’s Women’s Caucus advocated for a strong GFC gender action plan, and IPEN members participated in the measurability and indicators workstream to ensure robust evaluation of the GFC’s efficacy. Many POs are also working together with support from Regional Hubs to access project funding from the GFC Fund to support regional work on HHPs.

## PLASTICS TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

IPEN’s success in the Plastics Treaty has effectively reshaped the narrative and discussion, from a focus solely on addressing plastic waste to protecting human health from toxic plastic chemicals.

Throughout 2025, global attention centered on the Plastics Treaty negotiations. Ahead of INC-5.2 in August, IPEN launched an outreach campaign to strategic countries identified by our regional coordinators to urge them to join the [94 countries](#)<sup>xxxiv</sup> at INC-5 in supporting a Plastics Treaty with clear, legally binding obligations to phase out the most harmful plastic products and chemicals of concern in plastics. POs reached out to dozens of officials to continue pushing chemicals to the forefront of negotiations—speaking with their Plastics Treaty INC focal points, national environmental ombudspersons, and activating Aarhus Convention and Escazú Agreement focal points to their relevance in the Plastics Treaty proceedings.

At [INC-5.2](#),<sup>xxxv</sup> 79 IPENers from 36 countries attended, sharing our [Plastics Treaty Scorecard](#)<sup>xxxvi</sup> and [highlighting deficiencies in the draft text](#)<sup>xxxvii</sup> to remind delegates that “Our Health is in Your Hands.” IPEN provided critical support at the meeting, moving quickly to offer real-time analyses and guidance on new draft text and other developments as they were announced during the highly variable schedule.



As negotiations appeared to stall, IPEN [urged delegates](#)<sup>xxxviii</sup> to avoid giving in to a weak treaty on ineffectual waste management merely for the sake of coming to an agreement by the end of the two weeks and to maintain ambitions on protecting health. In a strong signal that IPEN’s education efforts on plastic chemicals has resonated with delegates, the Switzerland-Mexico proposal at the INC that called for global controls on identifying and eliminating harmful plastic chemicals (“chemicals of concern”), with measures for transparency and traceability of chemicals in plastic products was introduced with 65 countries co-signing and peaked at 90 countries supporting—demonstrating IPEN’s success at shaping the treaty around chemicals and convincing countries who have learned from and trust IPEN’s data and guidance on toxic plastic chemicals.

This widespread agreement on controlling toxic plastic chemicals represents a significant milestone, and IPEN will continue to advocate for a meaningful treaty and working with POs to produce new national data on toxic plastic chemicals to bring to future INCs. IPEN’s work and views on the Treaty were covered by major media before, during, and following the INC, furthering the need for a health-protective, meaningful agreement and noting the need to end the reliance on consensus that has left the talks stalled.

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


## IPEN AROUND THE WORLD: STRENGTHENING THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR A TOXICS-FREE FUTURE

In 2025, IPEN welcomed 25 new Participating Organizations (POs)—rounding out the network at more than 700 Participating Organizations across 133 countries. Throughout the year, POs worked to protect human health and the environment both at home and abroad; their efforts captured media attention, prompted policy changes, and empowered local communities. Some highlights include:

**Africa:** Numerous POs in Africa have long engaged with their governments on mercury-tainted cosmetics and helped to build political momentum resulting in the [Libreville Declaration in Gabon](#),<sup>xxxix</sup> where ministers from throughout Africa adopted a declaration calling for the elimination of mercury-added skin lightening products.

**Southeast Asia:** POs throughout southeast Asia consulted with their governments and contributed substantive inputs on draft language resulting in the [ASEAN Declaration on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment](#),<sup>xl</sup> adopted at the 47th Association of Southeast Asian Nations Summit. This declaration emphasizes the urgent need to address global and transboundary environmental challenges, particularly the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental pollution.


**Sri Lanka:** Centre for Environmental Justice won a years-long scientific and legal effort to hold corporate owners accountable for pollution when a national supreme court ordered a \$1 billion judgment against the companies responsible for damage from the X-Pearl container ship, the vessel responsible for [the worst plastic and chemical spill in history](#).<sup>xli</sup> The story was covered by [national](#)<sup>xlii</sup> and international media.




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### \$1 Billion Fine for X-Press Pearl Disaster

August 18, 2025



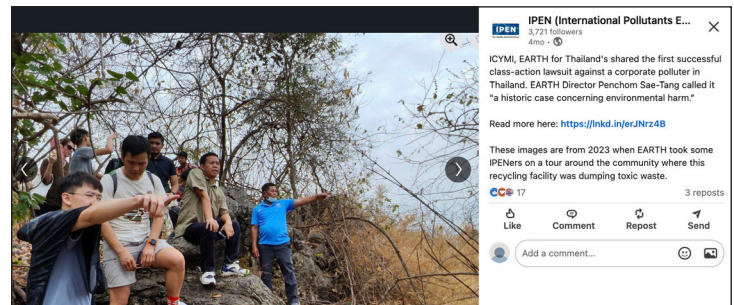
The Supreme Court of Sri Lanka has found the owner, operator, and local agent of the container ship X-Press Pearl liable for environmental and economic damage caused by the 2021 fire and sinking of the vessel.

The ship's registered owner, EOS Ro Pte. Limited, along with others, has been fined \$1 billion under the polluter pays principle.

The Singapore-flagged vessel had 1,486 containers on board at the time, 81 of which were identified as containing hazardous. It arrived in Sri Lankan territorial waters of Sri Lanka with a container already leaking nitric acid and caught fire on May 20, 2021. It sank on June 2 approximately 9.5 nautical miles from the Port of Colombo.

(Photo: Sri Lanka Air Force)

**Thailand:** EARTH was at the forefront in supporting and advancing a [successful lawsuit](#)<sup>xliii</sup> brought by villagers from Ratchaburi Province seeking damages from a polluting waste and recycling firm. This landmark ruling marks Thailand's first successful ecological class action to secure compensation from a corporate polluter.



**Kyrgyzstan:** IPEN POs Door Media and Union of Photojournalists, coordinating with the Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Europe Hub, succeeded in prompting [government action](#)<sup>xliv</sup> to clean up 80 tons of hazardous chemicals that have been improperly stored for decades at a long-defunct chemical plant where residents have raised concerns about health threats from chemicals leaching into the environment.

**Bolivia:** PROBIOMA's technical advice to legislators was [pivotal](#)<sup>xlv</sup> in the [Senate's passing of a law promoting agroecological development](#).<sup>xlvi</sup>

**Georgia:** Ecovision's awareness campaign on the scale of plastic pollution in the country and education on alternatives prompted the government's decision to adopt a national ban on many single-use plastic products. The campaign attracted significant [media coverage](#)<sup>xlvii</sup> bringing awareness of the concerns to the public and policymakers.

**India:** Toxics Link's findings on the presence of microplastics in salt and sugar resulted in the [creation of a panel by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India](#)<sup>xlviii</sup> that recommended methods for monitoring microplastics in food items and bottled water.

**Mexico:** RAPAM generated extensive media coverage on their work with Nayarit University on a study documenting "double-standards" in regulations on highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs). The study showed that many HHPs authorized in Mexico are banned in other countries. Their work was covered by [national media](#),<sup>xlix</sup> [agricultural news](#),<sup>l</sup> and raised by the press during the [daily presidential news conference](#).<sup>li</sup>

**Philippines:** EcoWaste Coalition [tested and notified the FDA](#)<sup>lii</sup> of illegal mercury-containing skin-whitening creams, which have resulted in the country's FDA issuing consumer warnings and product bans.

## PARTNERSHIPS

IPEN continued to initiate and build on strategic multi-sectoral partnerships—bridging academics, medical professionals, and civil society. In 2025, IPEN:

- Officially launched the GFC Outreach Coalition—a collaboration with global networks in environment, agriculture, labor, health, and gender: Pesticide Action Network International (PAN), Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF), Health Care Without Harm (HCWH), and International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). The Group is now developing joint projects, for example, testing for chemical exposures to workers in each sector, demonstrating collaborative activities under the GFC.
- Co-authored a [Bulletin of the World Health Organization editorial](#)<sup>liii</sup> with health experts including Dr. Tracey Woodruff, a co-author of [The Lancet](#)<sup>liv</sup> monitoring system on human and planetary health and plastics.



The image shows a screenshot of a World Health Organization (WHO) Bulletin article. The title is "Negotiating the plastics treaty to protect health and the environment". The authors listed are Nicholas Chartres, Quinn Grundy, Fiona A Miller, Björn Beeler, and Tracey J Woodruff. The article is dated 2025 Jul 1;103(7):414-414A. The WHO logo is visible in the top right corner of the article header.

- IPEN Science Advisor served as a reviewer for an upcoming UNEP-WHO State of the Science report on EDCs, slated for release in 2026.
- Continued collaborating with medical professionals and scientists including the Endocrine Society, [Project TENDR](#)<sup>lv</sup>, and the Scientists' Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty. IPEN Science Advisors co-authored a [scientific publication](#)<sup>lvi</sup> on how fish are impacted by chemicals leaching from recycled plastic and another [paper](#)<sup>lvii</sup> on the impact on marine plankton from spilled plastic pellets from the 2021 shipping container disaster in Sri Lanka.



## NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

In 2025, IPEN financially or administratively supported over 160 IPENers from nearly 40 countries to attend UN policy meetings, including the BRS COPs, Plastics Treaty INC-5.2, Minamata Convention, POPRC, Science-Policy Panel, GFC, and UNEA-7. Beyond support for global policy meetings, IPEN's South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa hubs held regional meetings which brought together POs in the region to exchange knowledge, develop regional campaign strategies, and engage in capacity building sessions.

IPEN's General Assembly elected a new co-chair Gohar Khojayan (Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment, Armenia) upon the completion of Pamela Miller's (ACAT, Alaska, USA) two terms. Gohar joins Co-chair Yuyun Ismawati (Nexus3, Indonesia) in leading IPEN and brings over 30 years of work in advocating for chemical and waste policies. With her decades of experience as an IPEN leader, Pam Miller remains a valuable and wise voice within IPEN, including in the Women's Caucus, the Plastic Treaty talks, and the Stockholm Convention, in which she has been active since the first international talks to develop the Convention and has contributed to the deliberations of the Convention's POPs Review Committee (POPRC) since its inception.

The IPEN Secretariat welcomed Belyn Wodehouse to the new role of Project Manager to support IPEN projects with POs. IPEN also successfully transitioned our Latin America and the Caribbean Hub.

Following a two-year process including a full network survey, in-person planning meeting with Executive and Steering Committee members, and consultation with the eight Regional Hubs, IPEN completed and approved its 2030 strategic plan.

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH: 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

IPEN and its POs produce original science - often providing the only data on specific chemical pollutants from the regions where POs work. In 2025, some research highlights included:

- IPEN's Science Advisor was a co-author on a [paper](#)<sup>lviii</sup> published by Cambridge Prisms: Plastics on toxic plastic chemicals and the flaws in plastic recycling. The review was nominated by the journal for its Paper of the Year.
- IPEN's Science Advisors co-authored a [published study](#)<sup>lix</sup> showing that chemicals in a recycled plastics can threaten zebrafish larvae, a species used to model the potential for human health threats.
- IPEN PO Arnika produced a [global map](#)<sup>lx</sup> of sites contaminated by toxic POPs chemicals, providing an impetus for global solutions to clean up pollution that threatens waterways, air, food and human health.
- Led by Arnika, a [published study](#)<sup>lxi</sup> co-authored by several IPEN POs showed that free-range chicken eggs from five continents were contaminated by high levels of globally banned flame-retardant chemicals and brominated dioxins, chemicals being considered for global controls. The study demonstrates the need for the Stockholm Convention to take strong action to protect health, the food chain, and the environment from brominated dioxins.

## COMMUNICATIONS, OUTREACH, AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

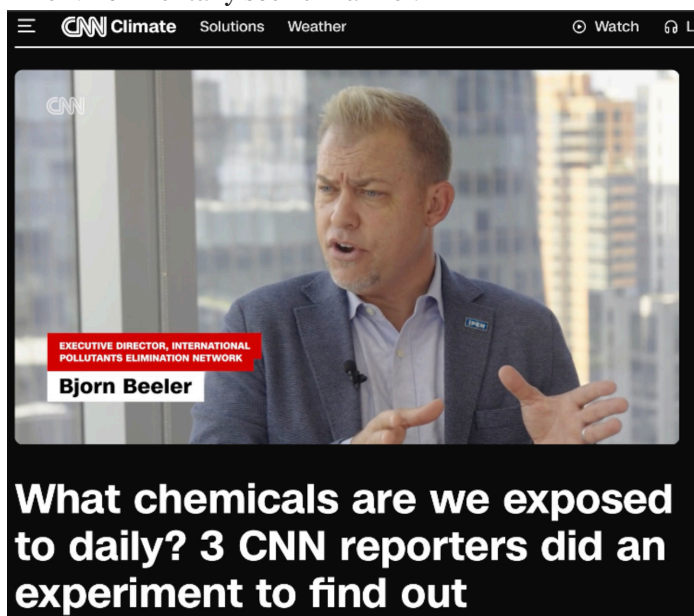
IPEN and its POs have increased engagement with journalists, earning coverage in outlets around the world as recognized experts on toxic chemicals. The Plastics Treaty negotiations continue to serve as a key platform for IPEN to expand its reach and messaging, with IPEN members and staff sought by journalists as key voices before, during, and after the INC (see full coverage of IPEN at the Plastics Treaty INC-5.2 [here](#)).<sup>lxv</sup>

Most prominently, a [global CNN story](#)<sup>lxvi</sup> in 2025 featured IPEN's work demonstrating toxic threats from "everywhere and everyone" phthalates, a large group of toxic plastic chemicals. The story followed months of IPEN research and coordination with CNN reporters in New York, London, and Hong Kong who wore wristbands to capture their workplace exposures to toxic plastic chemicals.

Other select media coverage from 2025 includes:

- New York Times: IPEN is quoted [in this story](#)<sup>lxvii</sup> at the conclusion of the Plastics Treaty INC-5.2 on the need for an end to the reliance on consensus.

- A researcher from IPEN PO Centre for Environmental Justice in Sri Lanka and IPEN's Science advisor were co-authors with University researchers on a [published study](#)<sup>lxviii</sup> showing potentially harmful impacts from chemicals in burnt plastics on plankton following the 2021 X-Press Pearl shipping disaster off the Sri Lankan coast. Plankton make up the basis of the marine food web, create oxygen, and help reduce atmospheric carbon.
- A [published study](#)<sup>lxix</sup> co-authored by a former IPEN Co-chair and Director of Pesticide Action Nexus Association of Ethiopia found that training farmers in organic, agroecological practices helps to protect them from pesticides while increasing their income.
- Working with the science-based sustainable development nonprofit Grid Arendal, IPEN's Science Advisor produced a [scientific review](#)<sup>lxxiv</sup> showing that certain plastic polymers cannot be recycled in an environmentally sound manner.



- The Guardian: An IPEN Science Advisor and our Regional Coordinator from Latin America are quoted in a [series of stories](#)<sup>lxviii</sup> on hazardous waste shipped from the US to Mexico.
- Agence France Presse/France24: IPEN Co-Chair Pamela Miller [describes](#)<sup>lxix</sup> the flaws in the INC5.2 process.
- Reuters: IPEN Co-chair Yuyun Ismawati [discusses](#)<sup>lxx</sup> dangers of refuse derived fuel and Danone's failed plastic credits scheme in Indonesia.
- CBS National News (US): IPEN's International Coordinator Bjorn Beeler [outlines](#)<sup>lxxi</sup> the issues around the Plastics Treaty negotiations.
- Mongabay: IPEN's study showing high mercury levels in Indigenous women living near ASGM operations in Latin America is featured in [this story](#).<sup>lxxii</sup>
- The Guardian: IPEN is quoted in [this story](#)<sup>lxxiii</sup> about plastic pellets polluting the oceans.



IPEN Participating Organizations also made news around several projects conducted with IPEN support, including:

- Thai PO EARTH's success in advocating for legislation establishing a pollution register was highlighted in the [Bangkok Post](#)<sup>lxxiv</sup> and [Thai PBS World](#).<sup>lxxv</sup>
- Cameroonian PO CREPD was quoted in [Radio France Internationale](#)<sup>lxxvi</sup> (in French) on the African regional position at the Plastics Treaty negotiations.
- Bangladeshi PO ESDO penned an op-ed the Bangladeshi paper [The Daily Star](#)<sup>lxxvii</sup> on the Plastics Treaty negotiations.
- In Kenya, a study by IPEN PO CEJAD on toxic chemicals in plastic toys was covered in the national [Daily Standard](#).<sup>lxxviii</sup>
- In Uruguay, PO Rapal Uruguay sat down for an interview on toxic cosmetics in Latin America in the industry-focused outlet [Personal Care Insights](#).<sup>lxxix</sup>
- Several PO campaigns on the impacts of EDCs on women garnered local press, such as [Bio Vision Africa](#)<sup>lxxx</sup> in Uganda, [ARECO](#)<sup>lxxxi</sup> in Rwanda, [HEAD](#) in [Lebanon](#),<sup>lxxxii</sup> [Bolygo in Hungary](#),<sup>lxxxiii</sup> and many others.

## CHALLENGES

In 2025, the world saw increasing threats to multilateralism and to inclusive practices that create openings for civil society to participate in global policy development. IPEN continued to insist on open, transparent policy forums for protecting health and the environment from toxic pollutants, and this aspect of IPEN's work will continue to be critical in the years ahead.



In our digital media outreach, for International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, IPEN created a social media kit with graphics and social posts translated into all UN languages that were shared widely across the IPEN Network and by other ILPPW partners. For International Women's Day, IPEN's Women's Caucus created social posts that were used by network members across the world, to promote awareness of the links between women's rights and chemical health threats. During the Plastic Treaty INC-5.2, videos featuring [IPEN voices](#)<sup>lxxxiv</sup> on social media described the need for a meaningful Treaty across the world. Finally, in 2025, IPEN began a significant project to fully redesign its website, for launch in 2026.



Additionally, as IPEN had anticipated, with Member States at an impasse during the Plastics Treaty INC-5.2, negotiations are set to continue in 2026. In the aftermath, IPEN has worked to shape media coverage of the negotiations, sharing the message that "consensus is dead," which was picked up by the [Associated Press](#),<sup>lxxxv</sup> [Reuters](#),<sup>lxxxvi</sup> and others. This framing helps lay the groundwork to potentially move to a voting process and build the narrative that the Oil States' veto power could soon end.

# TOWARD A HEALTHY, TOXICS-FREE FUTURE

During the development of the UN mandate for a Plastics Treaty, most of the world looked at plastics as a problem of ocean pollution—litter caused by consumer behavior and a lack of plastic recycling. But since the first INC, IPEN has boldly turned attention to the health threats posed by toxic plastics and the global crisis from plastic chemicals that are known to make people sick.

Through media briefings, educating delegates, producing original science, and sustained messaging focused on plastics as an existential threat to a healthy, toxic-free future, IPEN has consistently worked to broaden the Treaty talks and the public conversation about how to address the root causes of the plastics crisis: overproduction and the use of toxic chemicals.

This work has proven wildly successful. At the start of the Treaty talks, very few countries mentioned health in their submissions to the INC. Today, the EU and most African, Latin American and Small Island States have declared that a Plastic Treaty must include global controls on chemicals of concern to protect human health. As the EU President and Minister of the Environment from Denmark stated at INC-5.2, “Global controls on plastic chemicals are needed.”

As learned through more than 25 years of experience in other multilateral environmental agreement negotiations, IPEN understands more deeply than most how this process requires a marathon mindset. The road to global action to end the plastics crisis will be long, and IPEN is poised to

leverage its membership’s place-based expertise, citizen-science capacities, policy advocacy, and moral authority as members of communities deeply impacted by plastics for meaningful solutions toward a toxics-free, plastics-free future.

IPEN also sees progress through the Global Framework on Chemicals as critical over the next several years. The goal to eliminate highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs) globally is one that IPEN has championed for more than a decade and having that commitment through a global collaboration is now a force that IPEN will leverage to ensure the 2035 deadline for eliminating HHPs is met. IPEN also continues to promote eliminating large groups of toxic chemicals through the Stockholm Convention and aims to end the use of mercury in ASGM globally in the coming years.

IPEN and its POs remain the leading force for strong national and global policies to protect health and the environment from hazardous chemicals. The growth of the IPEN network together with IPEN’s strategic partnerships with other leading science, health, Indigenous Peoples, and human rights groups demonstrates the ongoing and urgent need for this work. Through its 2030 strategic plan and beyond, the IPEN network will continue to provide a platform for those most impacted by hazardous chemical threats, toxic plastics, harmful metals, and other chemicals that put our health at risk. Together, IPEN aims to forge a healthy, toxics-free future for all.

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for a healthy toxics-free future

[www.ipen.org](http://www.ipen.org)

[ipen@ipen.org](mailto:ipen@ipen.org)

[@ToxicsFree](#)