



Media Release

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants

Milestone for an environmentally friendly fight against malaria

Geneva, 7. Mai 2015 – The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants agreed on the roadmap initiated by Biovision in 2013 to foster an environmentally friendly fight against insects which pass on malaria and other deadly diseases.

This decision is another milestone on the way to eliminating the environmental pollutant DDT. At the same time, it recognises the strategy for fighting malaria which Biovision supports and creates the framework to broaden the use of the successfully tested approach of “Integrated Vector Management” (IVM).

In his welcome address, Achim Steiner, Director-General of the United Nations environmental programme (UNEP), emphasised the urgency of promoting alternatives to DDT in order to get rid of this poisonous chemical for good.

Sam Adu-Kumi, delegate from Ghana and speaking for all of Africa, stated: “The Roadmap aims to strengthen the capacities of these countries at national and local levels for Integrated Vector Management (IVM), based on alternative strategies, methods and products, as a response to the alarmingly diminished susceptibility of vectors to insecticides and lessened impacts of major vector control strategies.”

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has been recommending the use of DDT indoors („Indoor Residual Spraying“) since 2006, despite the fact that it harms people and the environment and that the insects who carry the diseases develop resistance, making the poison ineffective. For the WHO, the use of DDT is a cheap solution to a problem. However, follow-up costs are not being taken into account. In addition, the poison is almost exclusively used in the homes of poor people. The risk of abusive use of DDT is great, with grave consequences for the population. In addition, there are alternatives to DDT, as examples from Kenya, Mexico and Vietnam show.

The nature-orientated and inclusive IVM-strategy promoted by Biovision offers the countries affected the urgently needed escape from the dilemma. It is presumed that the signatories will enact a complete ban on DDT if the roadmap is successfully implemented, as there would be safe, effective, affordable and environmentally friendly alternatives.

By agreeing to the roadmap, the resolution builds on an idea from a discussion paper which was agreed by representatives from governments, international bodies, the civil society and business at a convention organised by Biovision at the last Stockholm Conference in March 2013.



To fight malaria with IVM

In Africa alone, each year almost one million people die from malaria, transmitted by mosquitoes. In projects of Biovision Foundation, the dreaded tropical disease is successfully being fought with environmentally friendly methods. With IVM, the problem is tackled at its roots. The first step is to explain the reason for the illness to the affected population. With this knowledge, they can become active themselves by eliminating breeding sites of the mosquitoes and by protecting themselves with bed nets and mesh screens for doors and windows. With this method, malaria infections among children under 14 years of age in Malindi, Kenya, were reduced by 70 per cent.

At another level, there is the need to provide better access to medical services, as malaria is only deadly if the illness is not treated properly, particularly for young children and pregnant women.

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