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International environmental policy and governance issues

Progress in the implementation of resolution 6/11 on highly hazardous pesticides

Report of the Executive Director

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides information on progress in the implementation of resolution 6/11 of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in paragraph 5 of which the Assembly requested the Executive Director of UNEP to support the work of the soon-to-be-established global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides.

II. Progress in the implementation of resolution 6/11

A. Overview

2. The implementation of resolution 6/11 represents a critical part of the broader efforts by UNEP to address the three planetary environmental crises of climate change, nature, land and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste. The resolution is closely aligned with the chemicals and pollution action thematic subprogramme of the UNEP medium-term strategy and with the UNEP programme of work, particularly in the areas of chemicals and waste management, food systems transformation and environmental governance. It also supports the objectives and targets of the Global Framework on Chemicals – for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste and of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, reinforcing the commitment of UNEP to systemic, science-based and inclusive approaches to chemical safety.

3. Between March 2024 and June 2025, substantial progress was made by advancing the establishment of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides, which included conducting broader stakeholder consultations, supporting the development of national regulatory frameworks and the improvement of pesticide monitoring systems, building capacity for safer agricultural practices, and promoting alternatives such as biopesticides and agroecological approaches. In addition, UNEP-led projects contributed positively to reducing pesticide-related risks by supporting countries in strengthening institutional capacities, raising public awareness and aligning national policies with international conventions.

* UNEP/EA.7/1.

4. However, significant challenges persist, especially in securing sustainable funding to strengthen regulatory enforcement, ensure long-term monitoring and scale up locally adapted alternatives.
5. The establishment of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides is expected to catalyse coordinated global action and provide a platform for sustained progress.
6. The sections below provide a more detailed overview of the progress achieved by the end of June 2025.

B. Advancing the operationalization of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides

7. At its fifth session, held in Bonn, Germany, from 25 to 29 September 2023, the International Conference on Chemicals Management adopted resolution V/11 on highly hazardous pesticides.¹ In the resolution, the Conference, among other things, endorsed the formation of a global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides as a voluntary multi-stakeholder initiative under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNEP and the World Health Organization (WHO), with the goal of taking effective measures to phase out highly hazardous pesticides in agriculture where the risks have not been managed and where safer and affordable alternatives are available, and to promote the transition to and make available those alternatives.
8. Pursuant to the mandate set out in resolution V/11, a task force was formed in November 2023 under the leadership of FAO and including experts from UNEP, WHO and UNDP. ILO, the secretariat of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) also participated as observers pending the further development of the alliance. Since its inception, the task force has convened regularly, meeting online at least once a month, to drive forward the process of establishing the alliance.
9. The task force began its work by reviewing the governance structures and operationalization of similar alliances and partnerships, such as the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership, the UNEP-WHO Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint and the FAO Global Soil Partnership. The review exercise yielded valuable insights into the essential elements to consider when establishing an alliance or partnership.
10. In January 2025, UNEP supported FAO in the organization of and hosted an in-person meeting of the task force, also attended by observers from ILO, the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the secretariat of the Global Framework on Chemicals and UNITAR. The discussions focused on defining key elements of an operational framework for the proposed alliance, including its goals and objectives, scope and application, organizational structure, public communication and financial resources. On the basis of the input gathered during that meeting and in previous online discussions, the task force developed a first draft of the operational framework.
11. To broaden stakeholder engagement, an initial consultation was held in April 2025 through a webinar entitled “Establishing a global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides”,² jointly organized by FAO, UNDP, UNEP and WHO. The event provided an update on the progress made in establishing the alliance and served as a platform for presenting and gathering initial feedback on the draft operational framework from a wide range of interested stakeholders.
12. The webinar attracted more than 500 registrants from 108 countries, representing 326 entities, including governments, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations and other entities, with the majority of participants from Europe and Africa. Among the registrants were representatives from 119 government agencies across 63 countries, primarily from ministries of agriculture, health and the environment; 98 civil society organizations, mostly from the environmental and development sectors; and 38 private-sector actors, including representatives from the chemical industry, advocacy groups, private universities and hospitals, and financial institutions.
13. Participants were invited to ask questions and share comments on the draft operational framework and the overall progress made towards establishing the alliance. Responses to the questions

¹ See document SAICM/ICCM.5/4, annex I.

² See <https://www.unep.org/events/webinar/establishing-global-alliance-highly-hazardous-pesticides>.

were provided in real time during the webinar and subsequently shared with all registrants. The draft operational framework was also circulated to all participants, along with a survey designed to gather stakeholder feedback and suggestions for improvement. That initial engagement process served to initiate dialogue with and map stakeholders interested in the issue of highly hazardous pesticides and to identify those interested in joining the global alliance.

14. A revised operational framework was presented at the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Global Framework on Chemicals, held in Punta del Este, Uruguay, from 24 to 27 June 2025, during a dedicated workshop on the global alliance. Led by FAO, with support from UNDP, UNEP and WHO, the workshop aimed to deepen stakeholder engagement by sharing information on progress to date, gathering further input on the operational framework and proposed focus areas, and fostering inclusive dialogue on the structure and priorities of the alliance. Stakeholders were also invited to express interest in participating in interim arrangements before the establishment of the alliance and to participate in defining mechanisms for developing the action plan of the alliance.

15. Moreover, in preparation for the meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Global Framework on Chemicals, an information document on the establishment of the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides (UNEP/GFC/OEWG.1/INF/14) was prepared under the leadership of FAO, with support from UNDP, UNEP and WHO.

16. It is anticipated that the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides will be formally established in 2025 and officially launched at the first session of the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals, to be held in 2026.³

17. Like other organizations, UNEP has continued to play a steady and important role throughout the process of establishing the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides. From actively contributing to task force meetings and facilitating strategic face-to-face discussions to co-organizing stakeholder consultations and supporting the development of the draft operational framework, UNEP has consistently made significant contributions to the process. That ongoing support reflects the broader commitment of UNEP to advancing chemical safety and sustainable development through effective multilateral action.

C. Initiatives tackling the challenges of highly hazardous pesticides

1. Broader perspective of the United Nations Environment Programme

18. The global food system is one of the main drivers of the three planetary environmental crises; in addition, it fails to deliver equitable outcomes for human health and sustainable livelihoods.

19. UNEP developed a food systems strategy that focuses solely on the environmental elements of food systems and is designed to enable strategic, systemic changes in the agricultural sector, providing decision makers with the tools and guidance necessary to meet the objectives and targets outlined in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Global Framework on Chemicals.

20. According to the strategy, the management of nutrients, agrochemicals and antimicrobial resistance are important interconnected areas of action that can address the three planetary environmental crises and bolster ecological resilience to shocks. One of the strategic focus areas is aimed at providing knowledge and information in order to build enabling conditions for reducing the impacts of agricultural inputs and waste, with the successful application of that knowledge and information being reliant on nature-based solutions and practices. The aim is to minimize and phase out the use of highly hazardous pesticides while promoting safer and affordable alternatives whenever available.

2. International cooperation

21. UNEP has accepted an invitation to be part of the FAO-WHO joint programme for the sound management of pesticides.⁴ A memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the joint programme is under development. In the meantime, UNEP continues to actively attend as an observer and

³ Once the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides has been established, details on how to join it will be broadly disseminated across multiple platforms, including the official websites of FAO, UNEP, WHO and UNDP, to ensure wide visibility and accessibility.

⁴ See <https://fao.org/unfao/govbodies/gsb-subject-matter/statutory-bodies-details/en/c/396/>.

contribute to the work of the FAO-WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticide Management,⁵ ensuring that environmental dimensions are captured in the development of guidelines facilitating the implementation of individual articles of the International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management.

3. Global Framework on Chemicals Fund

22. Out of the 105 applications received in the first funding round of the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund, nine explicitly mentioned pesticides in the project title, while several other applications included outputs or activities focused on highly hazardous pesticides and the promotion of safe alternatives, highlighting the importance of the topic. In the first round, the Executive Board has approved or conditionally approved four projects, two of which focus specifically on highly hazardous pesticides. The outcomes of the first round of applications are posted on the web page of the Global Framework on Chemicals.⁶

4. Special Programme to support institutional strengthening

23. With financial support from the UNEP Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the Global Framework on Chemicals, ongoing projects in Armenia, El Salvador, the Gambia, Mongolia, Morocco and the Republic of Moldova are focused on improving chemical safety and management, including activities related to hazardous substances and highly hazardous pesticides. Armenia is raising awareness of the health and environmental impacts of various hazardous chemicals, including highly hazardous pesticides. El Salvador is enhancing inter-agency coordination to implement international conventions and manage hazardous substances, including highly hazardous pesticides, through new electronic monitoring systems. In the Gambia, capacity-building efforts are targeting pesticide users, importers and women gardeners, and promoting safer practices such as composting. Mongolia is strengthening national capacity through training and data collection to minimize risks related to highly hazardous pesticides. Morocco is aligning its pesticide regulations with the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions and the Global Framework on Chemicals, strengthening national pesticide control systems and raising awareness in order to reduce health and environmental hazards. The Republic of Moldova is emphasizing pesticide waste and packaging management and public education through community outreach and awareness campaigns.

5. Collaboration with academia and non-governmental organizations

24. The UNEP Chemicals and Health Branch is working closely with the Centre for Pesticide Suicide Prevention⁷ at the University of Edinburgh, which currently operates in developing countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, to quantify pesticide-related exposure and suicides and the pesticides involved, and to support regulatory measures aimed at significantly reducing harm to people, while also protecting the environment.

25. On 2 May 2025, on the margins of the meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, UNEP took part in a side event on accelerating the transition from highly hazardous pesticides to biopesticides and agroecological alternatives,⁸ co-organized with Biovision – Foundation for Ecological Development, Pesticide Action Network International, the Centre for Pesticide Suicide Prevention, FAO, WHO, the Environmental Protection Authority of Ethiopia, the Ministry of Agriculture of Sri Lanka and the Agroecology Coalition. The event drew strong participation, with around 90 in-person attendees and 60 joining online, and explored the impacts of highly hazardous pesticides on environmental and public health, as well as pathways to advancing biopesticide initiatives and agroecology-based solutions. It also addressed the benefits, adoption challenges and policy options for scaling up the use of biopesticides and implementing agroecological approaches, with a focus on chlorpyrifos.

⁵ See <https://www.fao.org/pest-and-pesticide-management/guidelines-standards/faowho-joint-meeting-on-pesticide-management-jmpm/meetings/en/>.

⁶ See <http://unep.org/global-framework-chemicals/gfc-fund>.

⁷ See <http://centrepssp.org/>.

⁸ See <http://brsmeas.org/2025COPs/Sideevents/tabid/10110/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

D. Project-specific activities

1. Stockholm Convention implementation plans

26. The UNEP Chemicals and Health Branch is currently supporting 32 countries in updating their national implementation plans under the Stockholm Convention. As part of that effort, UNEP is assisting countries in developing and reviewing their inventories of pesticides containing persistent organic pollutants, which are also classified as highly hazardous pesticides, and in formulating national action plans in that regard. This has included the provision of targeted training, guidelines and tools to support informed decision-making and risk reduction.

2. DDT-related activities

27. The Chemicals and Health Branch actively participated in and provided technical input to the third meeting in the intersessional process of consultations with Parties to the Stockholm Convention in the DDT register, held in Geneva from 4 to 6 June 2024. Insights on linkages with the work under the Global Framework on Chemicals and the FAO-WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticide Management, as well as on the ongoing initiatives and strategic priorities of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), were provided during the discussions.

28. The UNEP Chemicals and Health Branch participated in the tenth meeting of the DDT expert group, which was organized by the secretariat of the Stockholm Convention from 5 to 7 November 2024 in Geneva. At the request of the expert group, UNEP provided information about ongoing GEF-funded interventions related to DDT, along with information on GEF as an institutional entity entrusted with the operation of the financial mechanism to support the implementation of the Stockholm Convention.

29. Thanks to the support of the Biovision Foundation, a Switzerland-based non-profit organization, the UNEP Chemicals and Health Branch supported the establishment of national road maps on the development of alternatives to DDT in two pilot countries in Africa, namely Namibia and Uganda.

30. UNEP served as the GEF implementing agency for the AFRO II project, executed by the WHO Regional Office for Africa, to demonstrate alternatives to DDT for malaria control in six Southern African countries. Launched in 2017, the project supported the development of harmonized national integrated vector management strategies in 13 countries and strengthened reporting capacities in line with the Stockholm Convention. Seven countries established mechanisms for regular reporting of DDT use, and tailored community outreach materials were developed for 72 sentinel sites. The participating countries collectively reduced DDT use by a total of more than 300 metric tons compared to 2017. The project, supported by a GEF grant of \$9.55 million, has now been completed.

31. The ongoing UNEP-GEF project entitled “Demonstration of non-thermal treatment of DDT wastes in Central Asia” is aimed at supporting the environmentally sound management of at least 5,000 tons of buried DDT waste and contaminated soil in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. It has also strengthened national and regional capacities for the environmentally sound management of hazardous waste, in line with the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. The project is supported by a GEF grant of \$15.12 million.

32. By the end of 2024, the Chemicals and Health Branch had implemented GEF projects related to the global monitoring plan for persistent organic pollutants in 42 countries across four regions, strengthening national capacities to monitor substances such as DDT in air, water, human milk and other relevant matrices.

33. UNEP is the implementing agency for the “African ChemObs” project, executed by the Africa Institute with a \$10.5 million GEF grant. Launched in 2017, the project supports the creation of joint health-environment chemical observatories to inform evidence-based policies and investments. Nine countries conducted chemical and waste assessments contributing to national reports on the cost of inaction, visualized using the MapX platform. In Ethiopia, more than 400 tons of DDT waste have been disposed of safely, and some 420 tons have been safeguarded and repackaged for export.

34. The Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in Small Island Developing States (ISLANDS) child projects, financed by GEF, are aimed at preventing the accumulation and ensuring the sound management of harmful chemicals, including persistent organic pollutants such as DDT and mercury, in small island developing States. Of the three projects, two are being implemented by UNEP and one by UNDP. The Caribbean child project (\$11 million) and the Pacific Child Project (\$20 million), both led by UNEP with regional partners, are advancing efforts to

manage and dispose of legacy persistent organic pollutants, including the safe repackaging and destruction of DDT stockpiles.

35. The project entitled “Development and promotion of non-POPs alternatives to DDT” is being implemented in India by UNIDO and UNEP with a \$10 million GEF grant. The aim of the project is to promote eco-friendly biological and botanical alternatives to DDT to support the phased elimination of its use, to improve food safety and to protect health and the environment. The results of the project have included training modules, a gap analysis and an action plan for legal measures to support the life cycle management of DDT alternatives.

3. Financing Agrochemical Reduction and Management programme

36. UNEP is also leading the Financing Agrochemical Reduction and Management (FARM) programme, which was launched in March 2024 and is being implemented through six child projects in partnership with the Asian Development Bank, FAO, UNDP and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). UNEP is implementing two of the child projects. The aim of the programme is to help reduce the harmful use of persistent organic pollutants, highly hazardous pesticides and plastics in agriculture in countries, including Ecuador, India, Kenya, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, the Philippines, Uruguay and Viet Nam. More recently, UNEP joined forces with the UNDP-led FARM+ programme in a child project in Benin, and the programme is now being developed after concept approval in December 2024.

E. Progress, gaps and opportunities

37. The collective efforts undertaken by UNEP and its partners have already yielded meaningful progress in addressing the challenges posed by highly hazardous pesticides. The results have included the development of national regulatory frameworks, enhanced inter-agency coordination, improved pesticide monitoring systems, capacity-building for safer agricultural practices and the promotion of alternatives such as biopesticides and agroecological approaches. Projects supported through the UNEP Special Programme to support institutional strengthening and GEF are contributing to the reduction of pesticide-related risks in dozens of countries, particularly by strengthening institutional capacities, raising public awareness and aligning national policies with international conventions.

38. However, despite those advances, significant gaps remain. Funding availability is still limited in relation to the scale of the issue, and many countries – especially developing ones – lack the long-term resources and technical infrastructure needed to sustain progress. Critical areas such as regulatory enforcement, long-term monitoring, and the development of locally adapted alternatives remain underfunded.

39. Once established, the global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides, as a voluntary multi-stakeholder initiative under the auspices of FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNEP and WHO, will be well positioned to address those gaps. By fostering coordination, mobilizing resources and aligning technical support with national priorities, the alliance can serve as a catalyst for systemic change, ensuring that efforts to eliminate highly hazardous pesticides are inclusive, adequately resourced and responsive to the needs of the communities most affected.

III. Recommendations and suggested actions

40. The Environment Assembly may wish to:

- (a) Reiterate the importance of addressing highly hazardous pesticides throughout the agrifood sector;
- (b) Consider that such a sectoral approach would address the use of pesticides (including fungicides) in farming, and of pharmaceuticals in aquaculture and animal farming, which, among other effects, contribute to the environmental drivers of antimicrobial resistance.