

REVIEW AND UPDATE OF THE NATIONAL
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE
STOCKHOLM CONVENTION ON
PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS

(POPS)

Inception Workshop

Address by

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The Ravenala Attitude Hotel
Turtle Bay, BalACLava

Honourable Berenger, Junior Minister of Environment,
Solid Waste Management and Climate Change

Ms. Serumaga, UNDP Resident Representative

Mrs. Lan, Permanent Secretary of this Ministry

Mr. Seewoobaduth, Director of Environment

Dr. Roland Weber, International Consultant and Team
Leader for this project

Senior representatives of Ministries and Parastatal
Bodies, NGOs, UNDP and Private Sector

Participants from Rodrigues who are on line

Members of the press

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning.

It gives me great honour to be in your midst today, for
this Inception Workshop for the Review and update of
the 2005 National Implementation Plan (NIP), under
the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic
Pollutants (POPs).

Ladies and Gentleman,

At the very outset, allow me to extend my profound gratitude to the Global Environment Facility and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for their unwavering financial assistance and technical support for this NIP Update.

As you are aware, POPs has been recognized as global environmental problem since the early 90s due to their persistence, bioaccumulation, and long-range transport, in the environment, namely in air, water, soil, fish, birds, marine mammals as well as in humans. Extensive research shows that POPs exposure may cause developmental defects, chronic illnesses, and death. A study by the European Environmental Agency in 2023, has also shown that it is disproportionately

impacting vulnerable populations such as pregnant women, new borns and pose a severe threat to human health and communities living in contaminated environment.

As a Small Island Developing States (SIDS) with limited technical, technological and financial resources, POPs was long recognized to be one of the most serious challenges which require concerted global efforts to mitigate their impacts. It is in this perspective that this Government has, in 2001 signed the Stockholm Convention, to protect our population and environment. It was this Government in 2005 which took the initiative to finalize the first NIP to control the 12 identified POPs including DDT for vector control in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

Today, the list of POPs has expanded to 34 POPs and Mauritius has ratified 24 of them during period 2004 to 2017. I am pleased to inform that as far back in 2004, this Government had banned 17 of the 34 POPs from import under the Dangerous Chemical Control Act. Administrative control is being exercise for the 34 POPs through the Dangerous Chemical Control Board to ensure that no chemical declared as POPs enters the country.

In 2012, one of the main achievements was the successful collection and export of 5 tons of PCB containing oils, 138 tons of obsolete DDT, and 300 meter cube of DDT contaminated soil for eventual disposal at an approved facility in France.

Presently, my Ministry is spearheading the 'Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-chemical

Development in SIDS (ISLANDS) project to the tune of 4.5 M USD. One of its aims is to reduce emissions of POPs and its planned completion in March 2027.

At regional level, Government, is participating in Phase III of the Global Chemicals Monitoring Programme (GCMP) for the African region for period 2025-2029. The objective is to contribute to the effectiveness evaluation of the Stockholm Convention. As from this January, my Ministry is carrying out air sampling for POPs, including in ambient air.

It is to be pointed out that Phase III is a continuation of Phase I and Phase II implemented to generate data for 23 POPs in air and human milk among others. In 2022, the findings revealed that in general the level of POPs is very low and there is no concern in air and human milk collected in the island of Mauritius exception of

DDT. DDT has been detected in both air and human milk samples.

In view of concerns on current status of storage of the 5 metric tons of DDT which was initially retained for use as precautionary measure in case of Malaria Outbreak and the potential risk contamination, several national and international consultations have been undertaken. I am pleased to inform you that the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has requested my Ministry to discard the remaining 5 tons of DDT through the Interim Hazardous Waste Storage Facility at La Chaumière.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Further to the inventories carried out in 2003, there is a need to update our inventory. There is a requirement

under the Convention to submit an updated NIP after ratification of new POPs which have been done thrice in 2004, 2015 and 2017. I wish here to again thanks GEF for providing USD 250 000 for conducting an inventory and updating the NIP.

I am informed that the three-day workshop has been designed to enhance stakeholder engagement and equip participants with tools to initiate national discussions for the updating process. I rely on the active participation and support of key stakeholders in collection and sharing of data on the old and new POPs for the inventories. I wish to point out that quality data would play an instrumental role in providing the policy direction for crafting the national strategy and action plan for the NIP.

I am pleased to inform you that the consultancy firm Redsky Technologies LTD led by Dr Roland Weber who has updated 40 NIP including some 13 in SIDS, will provide his expertise in the updating of our NIP. I encourage you to take the opportunity to make the most of this platform by learning from the teams of experts, networking and engaging among peers.

Mesdames et messieurs

Tout ça pour vous dire que les Polluants Organiques Persistants sont un danger invisible qui nous concerne tous.

Ces polluants toxiques sont des menaces silencieuses qui peuvent s'accumuler dans notre environnement, dans l'air que nous respirons... et même dans notre corps.

Maurice a fait des progrès en interdisant et en contrôlant plusieurs de ces substances, mais le DDT – dichloro-diphényle-trichloro-éthane, est encore détecté dans l'air et dans le lait maternel. Cela signifie qu'il continue d'affecter notre santé et celle de nos enfants.

Nous sommes aussi concernés par un autre danger : l'utilisation des pesticides dans les fruits et légumes que nous consommons chaque jour. Sans compter, l'exposition directe des cultivateurs et résidents à ces substances.

Et aujourd'hui, alors que nous faisons face à des cas de chikungunya et de dengue, les opérations de fumigation, bien qu'indispensables, posent aussi la question de l'exposition aux produits chimiques.

Nous ne pouvons pas rester indifférents. Mon ministère, aux côtés des autres autorités compétentes, a le devoir et la responsabilité de contrôler et de

réduire ces polluants pour protéger notre santé et notre environnement.

Mais nous avons aussi besoin de la vigilance et de l'engagement de chacun. Ce combat est collectif, et c'est ensemble que nous pourrons préserver notre île et l'avenir de nos générations.

On this note, I am looking forward for your continuous and timely support in the implementation of the NIP project for its completion by end September 2025.

I wish you fruitful deliberation and thank you for your attention

I now declare this inception workshop open.

R.A.B