

Media release 27 September 2006
Pesticide Action Network Aotearoa & Safe Food Campaign

WHO irresponsible promoting DDT

The World Health Organisation (WHO) is being irresponsible promoting DDT, a harmful pesticide, according to the Pesticide Action Network Aotearoa and Safe Food Campaign. The two groups are urging the New Zealand Government to make representations to WHO condemning any increased reliance on a pesticide with proven damaging effects on humans and the environment. DDT was deregistered from the New Zealand market in 1989.

DDT is being vigorously promoted for malaria control by the controversial new head of WHO's global malaria programme, Dr. Arata Kochi. A broad coalition of health and toxics experts from several continents denounced the move at the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety in Budapest, Hungary, yesterday.

"Decades of scientific evidence counter the claims of DDT promoters that its use for malaria control is harmless", stated Dr Meriel Watts, Co-ordinator of Pesticide Action Network Aotearoa, currently at the forum in Budapest. "DDT has been linked with human reproductive disorders, including undescended testes, poor sperm quality, premature delivery, reduced infant birth weights and reduced breast milk production, as well as developmental delays and breast cancer."

"Increased use of DDT could well result in raised levels of the pesticide in foods coming into New Zealand", maintained Ms Alison White, Co-convenor of the Safe Food Campaign. "It would also add to the burden of toxins in our environment - something we don't need and we don't want. Promoting DDT also undermines the international agreement on limiting toxins, the Stockholm Convention."

As Henry Diouf of Pesticide Action Network Africa points out: "Malaria is a disease of poverty, and addressing poverty is the long term solution. In the short term, safer and more effective approaches like bed nets, rapid identification and treatment of malaria cases and local education about mosquito control are needed- not more DDT."

ENDS

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