

The Arusha Call for Action on Pesticides
Pesticide Politics in Africa Conference
Tropical Pesticides Research Institute (TPRI), Arusha, Tanzania
31 May 2019

Acknowledging that even by responsible and trained users, pesticides cannot be used safely, given the insufficient protection offered by personal protective equipment (PPE) under real conditions of use;

Seriously concerned about the increasing number of non-communicable diseases known to be related to chronic pesticide exposures (such as cancer, neurological diseases, cognitive & neurodevelopmental disorders, reproductive disorders, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, attention disorders in children);

Realising the serious negative effects of acute poisoning – including self harm;

Seriously concerned about the persistent contamination of soil, water, air and food produce, and the harm suffered by non-target organisms;

Realising the call from consumers for safe food;

Acknowledging the inadequateness of regulations, the widespread failure of enforcement, the high cost of control, and the porosity of borders;

Acknowledging the tremendous economic costs of public health and environmental externalities of pesticide usage;

We, participants to the Pesticide Politics in Africa conference, conclude that pesticides cannot be used safely, under real conditions of use.

Recognizing the role played by farmer organisations, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations in addressing the dangers of pesticide usage and seeking alternatives to synthetic pesticides;

Realising that the use of pesticides leads to serious human rights violations, especially affecting vulnerable communalities, such as small-scale holders, women, children and the elderly;

Realising the potential of agro-ecology to foster environmental and social justice, equal human dignity, resilience and to alleviate poverty;

We, participants to the Pesticide Politics in Africa conference, call the Commission of the African Union, the Conference of the Heads of State of the African Union, the Conferences of the ministers of Agriculture and Health of the African Union, international organisations (UN organisations, World Bank, IMF), and pesticide companies for action to protect the environment and human health from synthetic pesticides. This includes:

1. An immediate ban on highly hazardous pesticides (8 criteria of the FAO-WHO Joint Management of the pesticide Committee) shown to contribute to non-communicable diseases and reproductive disorders
2. Making publicly available all information on the toxicity of pesticides for human health and ecosystems, and data on pesticide residues in food products and the environment
3. Establishing effective surveillance systems of acute and chronic pesticide poisoning and environmental monitoring and pesticide residues in food, including the establishment of accredited laboratories
4. Ensuring training of health care providers on management of pesticide poisoning
5. Ensuring inter-ministerial cooperation for pesticide poisoning prevention
6. Harmonizing regulatory systems within Africa and the effective implementation of the international conventions, agreements and protocols related to pesticides to which they are party

7. Implementing, monitoring and strict enforcement of pesticide regulations
8. Making pesticide producers, importers and promoters accountable for the effects of their products on human health and the environment, and obliging them to put in place a system to collect empty pesticide containers, based on incentive mechanisms
9. Phasing out subsidies and tax regimes that favour pesticide use
10. Promoting agro-ecological farming, training and extension, as well as research on alternatives to synthetic pest control, supported by accredited laboratories and direct farmer support with mechanical alternatives.

This will contribute to the protection of the rights of people in Africa to equal dignity, social and environmental justice, and the right to live in safe environments.

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