

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING FOR SOUND MANAGEMENT OF PESTICIDES

REPORT OF A WORKSHOP

22–26 November 2010

Rabat, Morocco



**World Health
Organization**

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1. INTRODUCTION

A workshop on capacity strengthening for sound management of pesticides, jointly organized by the WHO Pesticide Evaluation Scheme (WHOPES) and the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, was held at the Golden Tulip Farah Hotel in Rabat, Morocco, on 22–26 November 2010. The workshop was part of the activities of the WHOPES/Gates Project on reducing health risks through sound management of pesticides. Of the 13 countries participating in the project, 5 (Cameroon, Gambia, Madagascar, Morocco and Oman¹) participated in the workshop. The workshop was also represented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and CropLife International as well as WHO consultants and a secretariat from WHO's headquarters and regional and country offices (Annex I).

Dr Morteza Zaim, Coordinator, WHO Vector Ecology and Management, welcomed participants and thanked the Government of Morocco and the Ministry of Health for agreeing to host the meeting in Rabat; he also thanked the WHO Representative to Morocco for logistic support. He noted that the workshop is the continuation of the needs assessment carried out in participating countries to further identify gaps and challenges, opportunities and actions for sound management of public health pesticides.

Mr Rachid Wahabi, Ministry of Health of Morocco, welcomed participants on behalf of Her Excellency the Minister of Health, noting the importance and relevance of the subject to Morocco. A national committee has been established in the Ministry of Health to oversee and plan such activities within the country. He thanked the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and WHOPES for providing the support that had led to the development of the national action plan for the sound management of public health pesticides in Morocco.

The WHO Representative to Morocco, Dr Saïd S. Youssouf, welcomed participants to the workshop and read the message of WHO's Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Region, Dr Hussein Gazeiry, to the meeting.

In his message, Dr Gezairy referred to the huge burden of vector-borne diseases in countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region and that pesticides remain one of the tools available to combat such diseases. To ensure that control programmes achieve the maximum benefits from the use of pesticides, it is important that countries have the capacity not only to apply the pesticides in a timely and good manner but also to create an enabling environment that spans manufacturing, registration, procurement, storage, application, quality control facilities and disposal of products. This requires the availability of appropriate policies, strategies and guidelines at the country level – including the capacity to implement them. Of the 12 countries in the region, 10 are endemic for vector-borne diseases; these countries are now implementing integrated vector management (IVM). The challenges and constraints faced by participating countries in managing public health pesticides include registration, post-registration monitoring and evaluation, as well as enforcement of regulations.

Mr Harold van der Valk, WHO consultant, was appointed as the facilitator of the workshop and Mr Soo Hian Tan, WHO consultant, as its rapporteur.

The general objective of the workshop was to strengthen the capacity of Member States in sound management of public health pesticides within a broader context of pesticide management. The specific objectives were:

¹ Invited to participate in selected activities of the project.

1. To identify strategies and key actions to further streamline and harmonize registration of public health pesticides and to promote information exchange and work-sharing among the registration authorities;
2. To identify key actions to be undertaken for sound management of public health pesticides during their life-cycle, including the implementation of the principles of IVM, and monitoring and evaluation of vector control interventions;
3. To identify actions to prevent trade in substandard and counterfeit public health pesticides in the market.

The workshop was held in plenary and working group sessions (Annex II).

2. PESTICIDE REGISTRATION

2.1 Presentations and plenary discussions

Mr Harold van der Valk presented the background, objectives and scope of the Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides¹ (Code of Conduct). The Code of Conduct establishes voluntary standards of conduct for all public and private entities engaged in or associated with the distribution and use of pesticides, particularly where there is inadequate or no national legislation to regulate pesticides. It describes the shared responsibility of many sectors of society in working together so that benefits to be derived from the necessary and acceptable use of pesticides are achieved without significant adverse effects to human health and the environment.

The Code of Conduct is designed for use within the context of national legislation as a basis whereby government authorities, pesticide manufacturers, those engaged in trade and any citizens concerned may judge whether their proposed actions and the actions of others constitute acceptable practices.

Referring to its 12 articles, the following specificities of the Code of Conduct were noted:

- comprehensive coverage (that is, including all types of pesticides and pesticide uses, such as agricultural, public health, household and veterinary);
- promotion of pesticide use as part of IVM and management of pests;
- adoption of the life-cycle concept to address all major aspects related to the management of pesticides; and
- wide international consensus (that is, adoption by the 190 members of the FAO conference; endorsement by major pesticide industry associations (CropLife International and AgroCare) and civil society associations (such as the Pesticide Action Network); and support/acceptance by other intergovernmental organizations (including WHO, the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Labour Organization and the World Bank).

The main actors addressed by the Code of Conduct include not only governments and the pesticide industry (e.g. manufacturers, formulators, distributors/retailers) but also intergovernmental organizations; public interest groups/nongovernmental organizations

¹ The International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides (revised version) was adopted by the 123rd Session of the FAO Council in November 2002 and is available on the FAO web site at <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/Y4544E/y4544e00.htm>.

(e.g. consumer groups, trade, unions); application equipment industry; food industry; and pesticide users).

Mr van der Valk then presented the principles, organization and process for registration of pesticides, emphasizing the key principles of the FAO/WHO guidelines for the registration of pesticides.¹ Pesticide registration is a process whereby the responsible national government or regional authority approves the sale and use of a pesticide following the evaluation of comprehensive scientific data demonstrating that the product is effective for its intended purposes and does not pose an unacceptable risk to human or animal health or to the environment. The responsibilities of governments in the registration of pesticides, as stipulated in the Code of Conduct, are:

- to establish a legal system for the registration of pesticides;
- to create the technical and administrative infrastructure to manage registration;
- to maintain a dialogue with the applicant on all matters related to registration;
- to grant or refuse registration in a timely and transparent manner;
- to set up systems that allow for appropriate checks and balances in decision making, including appeal procedures;
- to conduct risk evaluations and make risk management decisions;
- to establish and maintain a system for monitoring of pesticide use under actual conditions ("post-registration surveillance");
- to establish a re-registration procedure to ensure the periodic review of pesticides & conduct unscheduled review of registered pesticides;
- to cooperate with other governments in the establishment of harmonized pesticide registration requirements, procedures and evaluation criteria; and
- to comply with the requirements of relevant multilateral agreements.

The responsibilities of the pesticide industry under the Code of Conduct are:

- to apply for registration, supplying all information as specified by the responsible authorities;
- to provide an objective pesticide data assessment, together with the necessary supporting data on the product;
- to provide the responsible authorities with any new or updated information of a pesticide that may have a bearing on the registration;
- to refrain from putting any product, subject to registration, on the market prior to approval;
- to strictly comply with the conditions, as specified in the registration;
- to provide draft labels and other forms of information, such as safety data sheets, which are fully consistent with all registration requirements and legislation; and
- to take voluntary corrective action when problems occur and, when requested by governments, help find solutions to problems.

The principles of pesticide registration as recommended in the FAO/WHO guidelines include:

- comprehensive, harmonized and clear registration requirements and criteria;
- use of all available information and mutual acceptance of data;
- transparency and exchange of information;
- science-based assessment to determine whether precautionary approaches are warranted;

¹ http://www.who.int/whopes/recommendations/who_fao_guidelines/en/index.html.

- consideration of hazard;
- risk assessment and mitigation based on the local situation;
- risk–benefit analysis, taking into consideration the availability of alternatives;
- post-registration monitoring and evaluation;
- mechanisms for periodic and unscheduled review in order to respond to new information that may affect the regulatory status; and
- protection of intellectual property rights of the application.

The data requirements for registration of pesticides differ according to the nature of the pesticide, intended use pattern, active ingredient or formulation, new or generic active ingredient, large-scale use or minor use, or low-risk pesticide.

The complexity of pesticide assessment and the large amount of human and financial resources that are required for the assessment of pesticides warrant the urgent need for regional and international coordination and collaboration.

Dr Zaim presented the work of WHOPES, and described its mandate, process and procedures for the testing and evaluation of public health pesticides. WHO established the scheme in 1960 following the approval of the World Health Assembly. Since then, WHOPES has evolved; its current objectives are two-fold: (i) to facilitate the search for alternative pesticides and application methods that are of low hazard and cost effective; and (ii) to develop and promote policies, strategies and guidelines for the selective and judicious application of pesticides for public health use, and to assist and monitor their implementation by Member States. He also presented the vision, strategies and priority activities of the scheme, and informed the participants of the availability of guidance documents to support the sound management of pesticides by Member States and other stakeholders.¹ Dr Zaim informed the meeting about the scope of the WHOPES recommendations on the use of public health pesticides. A significant number of countries and major institutional buyers require WHOPES recommendations to procure and use public health pesticides. In using WHOPES recommendations and quality standards to facilitate registration and trade, the pesticide industry has seen investments of time and cost-savings, and the number of

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