 

**Regional Workshop**

**20 March 2015**

**“Dvin” Hall, Ani Plaza Hotel, Yerevan**

**SAICM - a global international tool for the promotion and development of chemical safety goals**

A regional workshop entitled "SAICM – a global international tool for the promotion and development of chemical safety goals" was organized in Yerevan, March 20, 2015. The workshop brought together 35 representatives of state and public sectors from 4 EECCA countries.

The event was held within the framework of the GGF - supported project "Through Toxic - Free Products to Healthy Generation", implemented by the NGO "Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment". The aim of the project is to promote the involvement of civil society in the implementation of the national policy to reduce the risks of exposure to heavy metals and other toxic chemicals.

Welcoming the participants, the Head of the NGO "Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment" Elena Manvelyan noted that "the issues of chemical safety are an integral part of the national security strategy. At risk is the health of tens of thousands of people. The pollution of food, drinking water supplies, increased soil degradation, declining biodiversity, wasteful use of natural resources, not fully realized constitutional rights of Armenian citizens to a healthy environment still remain as issues requiring solutions. This is only a small part of the national chemical safety issues that require more attention from the government and public participation."

The workshop participants shared their experiences and results of the projects implemented in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia. Also were presented the results of monitoring of heavy metals in food and the environment. The participants also discussed the ways to reduce the risk of contamination by heavy metals and toxic waste.

Studies have shown the need for a broad information campaign in all regions of the EECCA countries to reduce risks to people living in the contaminated areas.

Inna Konyukhova, an expert of the NGO "Independent Ecological Expertise", noted in her speech, that so far, the NGOs working in the field of chemical safety are uncoordinated, but the experience of work through national and international networks showed the effectiveness of such cooperation by the example of cooperation with the IPEN.

The participants of the meeting received information materials about risk reduction to human health from toxic chemicals. Olga Tsygulyova, Head of the chemical program “MAMA-86” (Ukraine), noted that in the world, more than 25% of diseases are caused by environmental factors, including the adverse effects of chemicals. Therefore, the non-governmental organizations in Ukraine, who are concerned about the chemical safety of the population, implement campaigns to make the government take decisive actions to reduce the risks from chemicals. They also inform the public about the dangers and the availability of alternatives. Her colleague Denis Pavlovskyi said, "Widespread initiatives and campaigns in Ukraine, organized by non-governmental organizations for the collection of waste batteries, the enthusiasm of the population and the intent of domestic business for the organization of logistics and recycling give hope to address the problem relating to this part of the e-waste in the country."

Participants discussed recommendations for the integration of chemicals management into national development strategies.

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