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The Stockholm Convention POPs Review Committee (POPRC) admits endosulfan as POP

The pesticide was declared POP at the fifth meeting of the convention held in Geneva (11 – 16 October, 2009) to decisively reflect on candidates to the convention. During the meeting, participants concluded that **endosulfan** requires global action. The next step of evaluation is to involve assessment of risk management options and alternatives. In addition, the POPRC left the Risk Profile open for additional information on human health effects to be added, because of India and China's complaint that there were gaps in the scientific data.

Other pesticides examined included HBCD and the SCCPs. HBCD is a commonly-used flame retardant in polystyrene building insulation. The POPRC concluded the HBCD met the screening criteria and moved it to the next evaluation stage (Risk Profile).

For their part, the SCCPs were held over for yet another year since the Committee could not take precautionary action. The obstacle is uncertainty over toxicity which the industry and various governments have used as a reason for inaction, in contrast to the Convention's precautionary mandate.

The Convention's review commission on POPs agreed on a procedure to assess alternatives and substitutes for its own evaluation and also recommended its use by all Parties (more than 160 countries) and Observers including the private sector. The guidance could be useful more broadly to NGOs interested in policies to implement safer substitutes.

At the Fourth Conference of the Parties (COP4), an exemption was created that permits recycling of plastics, foam, and other items containing commercial PentaBDE and OctaBDE until 2030. This continues exposure to these POPs and undermines the integrity of the Convention. The COP tasked the POPRC with the responsibility to develop a technical paper on this issue and at the meeting the POPRC approved terms of reference for it.

Also, during the same COP4, the **Perfluorooctane Sulphonate** (PFOS) was unfortunately listed in Annex B with numerous acceptable purposes (no time limit) and exemptions (5 year limit). As a result, the POPRC approved an outline for a comprehensive technical paper on PFOS alternatives.

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