



## INTRODUCTION

We are delighted to deliver you a new REN Newsflash.

Highlights in this issue:

- National Capacity Building workshop in Myanmar;
- REN Annual Meeting planned in Shenzhen, China;
- Counting down....
- Several issues on waste and chemicals in Asia and the Pacific reported.

*REN Newsflash, a monthly newsletter, covers REN activities and achievements, highlights of partners' activities and general news on combating illegal transboundary movements of waste and chemicals, and synergies and linkages on chemicals/waste related MEA's.*

## REN Activities

### [REN National Capacity Building Workshop in Yangon, Myanmar](#)

On 24-25 October 2017, the National Capacity Building Workshop on the illegal trade in Chemicals and Waste was organized in Yangon, Myanmar. More than fifty enforcement officers from Customs and Police were trained on the enforcement of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. The implementation from these three Conventions in national law was explained by the national focal points from the national Environmental Conservation Department. This implementation is supported by the Norwegian Environment Agency which were present to support the workshop and introduce their project. The effects of illegally traded and used pesticides which were

discovered in several places in Myanmar was presented by the Pesticides Action Network for Asia and the Pacific (PANAP). They also raised the awareness on the link between illegally traded Chemicals and Waste and the gender equality and human rights aspects.



*Multi-Agency cooperation during exercise*

### [The Annual REN Workshop 2017](#)

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual REN workshop will be hosted by the Anti-Smuggling Bureau of China Customs in Shenzhen. The meeting is planned on 21-22 November 2017 and will be focused on an eventual future of the REN project. Invitations have been sent out recently.

### [The REN project is counting down \(2\)](#)

The project supporting the REN is scheduled to end in December 2017, and UN Environment is currently preparing a proposal for a strengthened and continuing network, subject to funding.

In the past five years many capacity building workshops were organized and more than one thousand front line officers are being trained on the enforcement of illegally traded Chemicals and Waste.

Training workshops were organized in Vietnam, China, Tonga, Laos, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Myanmar and India (planned). Besides that, the REN team co-organized and supported several Green Customs workshops, Border Dialogue meetings and train-the-trainer workshops on Ozone Depleting Substances in, for instance Korea, Afghanistan, Nepal and India.



## Partners' Activities

### [13th Meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee \(POPRC-13\)](#)

On Friday 20 October 2017, the thirteenth meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC-13) met in plenary session in the morning, and then convened in a contact group addressing the draft risk management evaluation on pentadecafluorooctanoic acid (PFOA).

POPRC-13 elected, by acclamation, Svitlana Sukhorebra, Ukraine, as Vice Chair beginning in May 2018. The Committee then adopted the draft decision and the risk management evaluation on dicofol, and the draft decision on perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), establishing an *ad hoc* working group to further review the proposal to list PFHxS and prepare a draft risk profile. POPRC-13 also adopted the workplan for the intersessional period, and agreed to convene POPRC-14 in Rome, Italy, from 17-21 September 2017

Read more: <http://enb.iisd.org/chemical/pops/poprc13/>

## Activities in Combating Illegal Transboundary Movement and Border Control of Waste and Chemicals or other related highlights

### [China moves to ban "foreign garbage," returns over 300 tons of waste back to U.S.](#)

China has started its reform plan on solid waste import management released earlier this year, saying that "foreign garbage" will be entirely banned from entering the country by the end of 2017.

Customs in different places across China are also stepping up efforts to crack down upon the illegal import of foreign trash and arrange the returns of the smuggled waste banned in the country.

"We require the companies to ship the trash back as soon as we found it, to prevent any environmental pollution it might bring to us," said Lianyungang Customs Inspections officer Li Rui.

China has looked into 146 cases of illegal import and processing of imported waste into the country in the first half of this year, which involved more than 260,000 tons of solid waste, according to Customs officials.

China used to be one of the largest importers of "foreign garbage", or technically known as "solid wastes" but some companies have illegally smuggled "foreign garbage" into the country for profit, damaging the environment and public health.

"The prohibited solid waste may bring hazardous impacts on production and people's lives during the

follow-up processing, to affect drinking water, underground water, and air, Tianjin Xingang Customs inspections Deputy chief Cao Wei.

China will gradually phase out imports of solid waste that can be replaced by domestic resources, by reducing the categories and amount of solid waste imports and raising the import threshold, according to the officials.

[Read more: https://www.untvweb.com/news/china-moves-ban-foreign-garbage-returns-300-tons-waste-back-u-s-2/](https://www.untvweb.com/news/china-moves-ban-foreign-garbage-returns-300-tons-waste-back-u-s-2/)

### **Basharat Bukhari for action against dealers selling spurious pesticides**

Minister of State for Horticulture, Priya Sethi and Vice Chairperson of the State Horticulture Development Board Abdul Salam Reshi was also present in the meeting. Horticulture Minister Syed Basharat Bukhari today directed officials to work in close coordination with farmers for successful conduct of elections to Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMC), besides organizing awareness camps to promote use of new technologies and better farming practices.

Bukhari said this while interacting with deputy commissioners and chief horticulture officers of all districts via video conferencing to take detailed review on the Horticulture Census, election to APMCs, implementation of ban on the sale of Ethepon, besides surprise inspections to check quality of pesticides and fungicides across the state and organizing mass awareness among growers.

*Read more:*  
<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/business/basharat-bukhari-for-action-against-dealers-selling-spurious-pesticides/260750.html>

### **Chinese import ban concerns aired at WTO meeting**

Five members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) have called on China to issue more information on which materials will be affected by its proposed import ban on certain types of solid waste by the end of 2017.

At a meeting of the WTO's import licensing committee, the USA, the EU, Australia, Canada and South Korea underlined the importance of receiving such clarification as this was an issue 'of great interest to their business sectors', according to a statement released by the WTO.



The USA voiced its concerns about the changes to import licensing surrounding China's implementation of an existing import ban on plastic and paper scrap. China was asked by the USA whether it was planning to extend the measure to ferrous and non-ferrous scrap and, if so, when this would be implemented and under what procedures. 'The US requested China to adhere to notification obligations, particularly for ferrous and non-ferrous scrap, noting that this constituted a multi-billion market for US stakeholders,' the WTO notes.

*Read more:*  
<https://www.recyclinginternational.com/recycling-news/10869/other-news/global/chinese-import-ban-concerns-aired-wto-meeting>

### **Police discard seized items the green way**

The Penampang police headquarters has become the first district police station in the state to implement environmentally friendly methods to dispose of confiscated items.

Its officers disposed of over 700 seized items, including computers and gambling machines, through the electronic disposal (e-waste) method during the launch here yesterday.

The "green" disposal method was carried out under the Environmental Quality (Scheduled Waste) Regulations 2005 of the Environmental Quality Act 1974. Sabah Deputy CID chief (Investigation and Legislation) ACP Jauteh Dikun said they would dispose of items confiscated between 2000 and 2014 through the e-waste method.

E-waste are old or discarded electronic devices such as computers, television sets, handphones and washing machines. Re-usable products from these discarded items are processed and recycled by factories or facilities that specialise in converting such waste into re-usable components. These processes help to reduce reliance on landfills to house discarded electronic products.

*Read more:*

<http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2017/09/21/police-discard-seized-items-the-green-way/#2Q6LtZCkvS6WrcSH.99>

### **Chinese agricultural chemical imports to Australia surge**

Australian imports of Chinese agricultural chemicals surged more than 40 per cent last year, to a record \$324 million. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade figures show the flood of imports from China, Malaysia and other countries grew from \$354 million in 2012 to \$603 million in 2016. The massive wave of imports comes amid European Police warnings that organised crime is cashing in on the international trade in counterfeit and illegal agricultural chemicals.

In July Europol's Operation Silver Axe seized 122 tonnes of illegal and counterfeit pesticides, most of it produced in China. Europol has warned the chemicals used could be dangerous, a risk to human health, could pollute the environment and damage crops.

The United Nations estimates up to 15 per cent of the global trade in agricultural chemicals involves illegal products that are obsolete, banned, unauthorized, fake or illegally repackaged or relabeled.

*Read more:*

<http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/agribusiness/cropping/chinese-agricultural-chemical-imports-to-australia-surge/news-story/4bdaa86aa484b205150094461cfc9b78>

### **Testing of pesticide in imported vegetables ineffective**

The government's plan to test all edible stuff entering the country from India every day at the eastern border point is yet to be implemented. Food test machines have been

stranded at Kakkarbhitta and Birtamod, and the authorities are blaming the lack of human resources for not being able to make the best use of them. Few years ago, the government had decided to establish food testing centers at the border points when Indian vegetables were prohibited in the capital city. But the plan is still waiting to be implemented effectively.

Usually, Nepal imports huge quantities of vegetables every day. The festive season has added pressure to the food market. Not only vegetables but fresh meat is also imported from India on daily basis. However, these foodstuffs are never tested properly although they were found to contain high levels of pesticide.

More than 70 percent of vegetables and fruits are imported from India to the agricultural market of Birtamod. Nepali agricultural officials have said that pesticides were found in Indian vegetables. But no step has been taken so far to test foods properly.

*Readmore:*

<http://www.myrepublica.com/news/28287/>

### **Environment in rural areas seriously polluted, but poorly treated**

There are many reasons behind the pollution in rural areas - outdated customs and habits, the lack of running water, a lack of land fund to relocate cattle sheds, and cemeteries.

A report shows that up to 5 percent of households, especially in the Northern Mountains, Central Highlands and the North Central Coast, do not have toilets, and 12 percent of households, mostly in the southern part of Mekong Delta, have latrines on fish ponds.

The pollution is getting more serious because of the unreasonable use of plant protection chemicals.

Only a small percentage of pesticides are used for appropriate purposes or to kill pestilent insects, while the remaining either evaporates into air or absorbs into the earth, polluting underground water.

A report from the Plant Protection Agency showed that Vietnam every year imports 70,000-116,000 tons of plant protection chemical products. The packaging of the products, accounting for 10 percent, or tens of thousands of tons, is left everywhere, from canals to country lanes, polluting surface and underground water, the air and threatening community health.

Read more:

<http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/environment/187133/environment-in-rural-areas-seriously-polluted--but-poorly-treated.html>

### [Govt to crack down on illegal chemical trade](#)

The Nepal Bureau of Standards and Metrology (NBSM) has begun work to launch a policy to control trade in chemicals used in refrigeration which are known to cause depletion of the ozone layer.

The guidelines are expected to control illegal imports of such refrigerants and regulate the market for devices that use these chemicals amid a thriving illegal trade.

Refrigeration devices used in Nepal mainly use hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), one of the ozone-depleting substances which are responsible for global warming.

Ozone depletion destroys the earth's natural filter against harmful ultra-violet radiation that leads to an increase in the incidence of cancers.

Based on the Montreal Protocol adopted in 1987, the developed countries agreed to phase out production and consumption of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and other substances, while Third World countries were given time to switch to ozone-friendly chemicals.

Nepal has signed an accord to completely ban devices that use CFCs and HCFCs.

Read more:<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2017-10-03/govt-to-crack-down-on-illegal-chemical-trade.html>

### [Mumbai's army of waste recyclers dumped in aftermath of fires](#)

Shalini Kamble misses the stench of garbage. For the last 30 years, this mother of two has spent every day inside the

Deonar dumping ground sifting through mountains of waste to find anything that can be sold to the scrap dealer down the road. But tightened security at Mumbai's biggest landfill has now made it difficult for Kamble and hundreds of others like her to do one of the planet's most critical jobs - recycling.

Kamble, a ragpicker, belongs to an invisible community, which forms an extraordinarily efficient recycling network. They are the people who, year after year, transform the city's daily detritus into functional use and reduce the burden of solid waste currently giving both civic officials and housing societies jitters. "We consume garbage. We are the ones lowering pollution," says Mumtaz Shaikh, a fellow worker from the neighbourhood, "If there are 20 trucks of garbage coming in to the land fill, thanks to us, five go out." She describes it as a chain in which ragpickers sell to scrap dealers who further sort and sell to wholesale merchants who eventually sell to factories that convert plastic into diesel or cement.

Yet, while BMC fumbles its way to better waste management, and citizens ponder over their wet garbage, this army of informal recyclers - despite being significant stakeholders in the waste management ecosystem--are voiceless. Following the fires in Deonar last year which billowed toxic fumes into the city for days, the landfill has been off bounds to them. Many continue to find their way inside after negotiating with the guards. They hide behind garbage piles to avoid being spotted.

Read more :

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/mumbais-army-of-waste-recyclers-dumped-in-aftermath-of-fires/articleshow/60964139.cms>

### [Pesticide poisoning kills 32 farmers in Maharashtra, three firms in dock](#)

The agriculture department found a highly toxic and expensive pesticide was being sold to unsuspecting farmers in a bid to earn profits.

Three pesticide companies find themselves in the dock after at least 32 farmers from Vidarbha died of poisoning in the past few days. The Maharashtra government registered a police complaint against the firms and Krishi Seva Kendras or agro-input centres for selling pesticides not recommended for the region.



Yavatmal district lost 19 farmers — the highest toll so far — but deaths also were registered in Akola, Amravati, Buldana, Nagpur and Bhandara.

Read more: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/32-farmers-die-of-poisoning-three-pesticide-firms-in-dock/story-p1yVW6XHhARxCJG3MvCxol.html>

### **Selling unregistered pesticides illegal**

A number of farms in the Western division are using unregistered pesticides to control pests on their farms. This was revealed by a recent field survey by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji officials on crop farms.

In a statement, the Ministry of Agriculture said selling or using unregistered pesticides in Fiji is illegal.

"Individuals who wish to import pesticides into Fiji or manufacture pesticides in Fiji must first apply to register the pesticide with the Registrar of Pesticides; the identified unregistered pesticides however are being used in contrary to this," it said.

Read more: <http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=419675>

### **MNCs sell pesticides without safety info**

The chairman of Vasant Rao Naik Shetkari Swavalmban Mission (VNSSM), which is the Maharashtra government's special task force to tackle agrarian crisis, has alleged that multinational companies have been selling pesticides without sufficient safety information.

"This amounts to violation of conditions laid down by the Central Insecticides Board and Registration Committee (CIBRC) as well as Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) code of conduct on pesticide management," Kishore Tiwari, the VNSSM chairman, said on Monday.

In a statement, Tiwari blamed companies, such as Swiss agrochemicals firm Syngenta and US multinational Monsanto, for the 39 deaths and thousands taking ill after spraying pesticides. "These two, along with United Phosphorous, have the major market share in the pesticide business. There are several other smaller Indian players who manufacture same formulations and conduct their businesses in an unethical manner," said Tiwari.

Read more:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/mncs-sell-pesticides-without-safety-info/articleshow/61109843.cms>

### **Undeclared goods including 9 dogs seized from 2 foreign fishing vessels**

Customs Officers from the Maritime Compliance Team of the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service have seized undeclared goods that included live dogs, cigarettes, liquor and R22 gas cylinders from two foreign fishing vessels at the Suva wharf.

The R22 gas is an ozone depleting substance.

Revenue and Customs CEO Visvanath Das says these fishing vessels were profiled as high risk by their officers and upon arrival were searched for smuggled items. Das says their officers notified Biosecurity Authority of Fiji regarding the undeclared dogs and handed over the R22 cylinders to the Department of Environment.

Other undeclared items have been detained by Customs.

Read more: <http://fijivillage.com/news/Undeclared-goods-including-9-dogs-seized-from-2-foreign-fishing-vessels-ksr952/>

## [Exporters catch 'pneumonia' over China import ban](#)

The plastics recycling industry had become 'insanely dependent' on China and so its recently announced import ban has left suppliers in other parts of the world not so much with a cold but rather with 'pneumonia', argued Surendra Borad Patawari of Gemini Corporation at the latest BIR Convention in New Delhi.

China and Hong Kong together imported 10.2 million tons of plastics scrap in 2016 - but this figure is likely to nosedive next year, he warned.

According to a report submitted by Dr Steve Wong, executive president of the China Scrap Plastics Association, officials in China have confirmed that plastic scrap import licences will be issued for 2018.

However, these are likely to be handed only to those consuming factories boasting clean records and full compliance with environmental regulations.

As a result, imports into China could fall to 30-40% of normal levels next year, leaving overseas suppliers to find alternative outlets for perhaps 6 or 7 million tons of plastics scrap, Borad Patawari indicated.



The value of certain materials shipped in containers have crashed to zero - and beyond - in some instances; conversely, plastic scrap prices within China have soared as much as 20-30% on the back of shortages, it was reported.

The import ban has also led to the transfer of scrap processing capacities to other countries in the region such as Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam.

*Read More:*

<https://www.recyclinginternational.com/recycling-news/10901/plastic-and-rubber/asia/exporters-catch-039-pneumonia-039-over-china-import-ban>

## [Supplier convicted of applying false trade description to pesticides](#)

A supplier was convicted today (October 25) at Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts for applying a false trade description to pesticides in the course of trade, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO). The supplier was fined \$21,000 and the seized pesticides were confiscated.

Hong Kong Customs earlier received information alleging that a supplier put labels with a false trade description of ingredients and pesticide registration numbers on 36 bottles and 50 bags of pesticides. After investigation, it was found that the supplier had the product in possession for sale. All the pesticides were seized by Customs. Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO..

*Read More:*

[http://7thspace.com/headlines/538176/supplier\\_convicted\\_of\\_applying\\_false\\_trade\\_description\\_to\\_pesticides.html](http://7thspace.com/headlines/538176/supplier_convicted_of_applying_false_trade_description_to_pesticides.html)

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