

Reporting on Agricultural Sector meeting

FAO has been actively participating in IP3 this week but could not attend the final day due to other work engagements. The FAO has asked me, in my capacity as acting IOMC chair, to report back to plenary on the agriculture sector meeting which took place on Thursday at lunch time.

The FAO is very grateful for the interest received from the participants joining the agriculture sector meeting. Agrochemicals plays an key role in agricultural production and contributes to food security and nutrition as well as improvement of livelihood of farmers. However over use and misuse of agrochemicals poses risks to human health and the environment resulting in social, environmental and economic problems such as poisoning, degradation of landscape, losses of biodiversity, excessive residues in food and failure of trade of agricultural produce. Sound management of agrochemicals is crucial to achieve sustainable agriculture and UN SDGs.

The FAO took this opportunity to present their long-standing work in the area of agrochemicals and waste and held an open discussion on questions of main challenges, gaps, priorities and future direction of agrochemical management; collaboration of relevant stakeholders; and better engagement of agricultural sectors in SAICM program .

The presentation which was rich in information can be made available.

The main outcomes of the meeting were

- Large number of questions and comments were raised on Highly Hazardous Pesticides.
- It was agreed a global strategy on HHPs with concrete targets and roadmap is essential for phasing out these toxic pesticides.
- Promoting agroecology and integrated pest management, and developing innovative alternatives, in particular, biopesticides, are crucial for removing HHPs in agriculture.
- Data collection and better use of it issue was discussed as a better way to address risk reduction of pesticides.
- Concerns of Illegal trade were discussed with a link to International Double standards / national policy on production, use and exportation.
- Strengthening national capacity on pesticide management should be a priority.

- The cooperation was flagged as one of the issues to reinforce the importance for close cooperation between sectors and stakeholders including industry and NGOs as problems can only be addressed and solved by engagement and cooperation of all relevant stakeholders.
- Economic benefits should be taking into account as the feasible solution.
- Issues like soil health, biodiversity, and water pollution were pointed as important parts cross-cutting issues.

The meeting had a fruitful discussion due to the active involvement and contribution of all participants. The identified challenges and gaps, proposed valuable suggestions and proposals, recognition of importance of engagement of stakeholders, and agreement on closer collaboration between sectors and partners would definitely support future sound management of agrochemicals under SAICM framework and contribute to sustainable agriculture and SDGs.