



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization



## International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management

### Guidelines on Highly Hazardous Pesticides



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## ACRONYMS

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GHS	Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals
HHPs	Highly Hazardous Pesticides
HIC	High Income Countries (previously developed countries)
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IVM	Integrated Vector Management
JMPM	FAO and WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticide Management
LMIC	Low and Middle Income Countries
LIC	Low Income Countries (previously developing countries)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
SAICM	Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

## DEFINITIONS

**Active ingredient** means the part of the product that provides the pesticidal action.

**Banned pesticide** means a pesticide all uses of which have been prohibited by final regulatory action, in order to protect human health or the environment. It includes a pesticide that has been refused approval for first-time use, or has been withdrawn by industry either from the domestic market or from further consideration in the domestic approval process, and where there is clear evidence that such action has been taken in order to protect human health or the environment.

**Co-formulant** means a non-active ingredient component of a formulated product.

**Exposure** to pesticides means any contact between a living organism and one or more pesticides.

**Formulation** means the combination of various ingredients designed to render the product useful and effective for the purpose claimed and for the envisaged mode of application.

**Hazard** means the inherent property of a substance, agent or situation having the potential to cause undesirable consequences (e.g. properties that can cause adverse effects or damage to health, the environment or property).

**Highly Hazardous Pesticides** means pesticides that are acknowledged to present particularly high levels of acute or chronic hazards to health or environment according to internationally accepted classification systems such as WHO or GHS or their listing in relevant binding international agreements or conventions. In addition, pesticides that appear to cause severe or irreversible harm to health or the environment under conditions of use in a country may be considered to be and treated as highly hazardous.

**Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** means the careful consideration of all available pest control techniques and subsequent integration of appropriate measures that discourage the development of pest populations and keep pesticides and other interventions to levels that are economically justified and reduce or minimize risks to human and animal health and/or the environment. IPM emphasizes the growth of a healthy crop with the least possible disruption to agro-ecosystems and encourages natural pest control mechanisms.

**Integrated Vector Management (IVM)** means the rational decision-making process for the optimal use of resources for disease vector control. It aims to improve efficacy, cost-effectiveness, ecological soundness and sustainability of disease vector control interventions for control of vector-borne diseases.

**Pesticide** means any substance, or mixture of substances of chemical or biological ingredients intended for repelling, destroying or controlling any pest, or regulating plant growth.

**Pesticide management** means the regulatory and technical control of all aspects of the pesticide life cycle, including production (manufacture and formulation), authorization, import, distribution, sale, supply, transport, storage, handling, application and disposal of pesticides and their containers to ensure safety and efficacy and to minimize adverse health and environmental effects and human and animal exposure.

**Risk** is the probability and severity of an adverse health or environmental effect occurring as a function of a hazard and the likelihood and the extent of exposure to a pesticide.

**Severely restricted pesticide** means a pesticide virtually all use of which has been prohibited by final regulatory action in order to protect human health or the environment, but for which certain specific uses remain allowed. It includes a pesticide that has, for virtually all use, been refused for approval or been withdrawn by industry either from the market or from further consideration in the domestic approval process, and where there is clear evidence that such action has been taken in order to protect human health or the environment.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The understanding that some pesticides are more hazardous than others is well established. Recognition of this is reflected by the World Health Organization (WHO) Recommended Classification of Pesticides by Hazard, which was first published in 1975. The document classifies pesticides in one of five hazard classes according to their acute toxicity. In 2002, the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) was introduced, which in addition to acute toxicity also provides classification of chemicals according to their chronic health hazards and environmental hazards.

Broad international concerns about health and environmental hazards led to the establishment of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade. The Stockholm Convention agrees on the phasing out of persistent pesticides and other chemicals listed under its Annex A. The Rotterdam Convention promotes shared responsibility and cooperative efforts in the international trade of certain hazardous chemicals in order to protect human health and the environment. It facilitates information exchange on final regulatory actions taken by countries and on severely hazardous pesticide formulations that have been reported to cause problems under conditions of use in low or middle income countries.

In 2006, the FAO Council endorsed FAO participation in the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and noted that the International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides<sup>1</sup> was to be considered as an important element of the SAICM process. The Council suggested that the activities of FAO could include pesticide risk reduction, including the progressive banning of Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs)<sup>2</sup>. This request resulted in the formulation of criteria that define HHPs by the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Management (JMPPM)<sup>3</sup> and also led to a definition for HHPs and specific references in the International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management (further referred to as the Code of Conduct) when it was revised in 2013. The criteria and definition encompass a broader range of pesticides than those addressed by the Conventions. HHPs then became a special focus area in the programme of work for the FAO Pest and Pesticide Management Group.

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