



Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the adverse effects of the illicit movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes on the enjoyment on human rights

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Address of the Special Rapporteur on Adverse effects of the illicit movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes on the enjoyment of human rights to the workshop organized by ITC, 29-30 May 2006, Sonora, Mexico

Dear participants,

As you already know, I am unfortunately unable to attend this conference, as I originally intended. First of all, let me thank you for the information that you have forwarded me concerning the effects of the use of pesticides on lands and territories of the Yaqui nation. In my capacity as Special Rapporteur, I have asked the Government of Mexico to react on these allegations and I am continuing to review the information that I am receiving in that regard. It will be shared with you for your comments and remarks.

As you know, the mandate entrusted to me is to undertake a comprehensive analysis of existing problems and new trends in the illicit trafficking and dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes, with a view to making concrete recommendations on adequate measures to control, reduce and eradicate these problems.

I have focused my last report on the impact on human rights of chronic, low-level exposure to hazardous chemicals, including pesticides. As I stated in this report, the insufficient regulation and unsound management of chemicals, including pesticides, adversely impact on the effective enjoyment of human rights by individuals and communities exposed to such chemicals, in spite of their real and potential benefits to human development. A large number of chemicals in use have not been adequately assessed for risks to human health, wildlife or the environment, particularly with regard to their long-term and/or accumulative risks, leaving individuals and communities unable to make informed choices about products and ignorant about the risks such products may pose. In many countries – including developed countries - the unsound management of chemicals continues to affect negatively human health and the natural resources upon which people depend for their livelihoods, in some cases further aggravating conditions of poverty.

Human exposure to toxic chemicals like these is known or suspected to be responsible for promoting a wide range of potentially life-threatening medical conditions, including cancer, kidney and liver dysfunction, hormonal imbalance, immune system suppression, musculoskeletal disease, birth defects, premature births, impeded nervous and sensory system development, reproductive disorders, mental health problems, cardiovascular diseases, genital-urinary disease, old-age dementia and learning disabilities.

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An important part of my work is based on the information that I receive from the victims, relatives of victims and non governmental organizations. It is therefore important that I receive the most up-to-date and accurate information and testimonies in order to engage in constructive dialogues with States.

To publicize and to speak out on the violations that individuals and communities are subjected to is of utmost importance. To seek redress, it is vital that the violations are brought to the attention of national agencies and the international community

I am confident that this workshop will allow a wide range of discussions and that valuable information will come out of it. I would therefore urge you to collect and forward to me any information that you consider useful to enable me to follow-up with the situation of the communities in regard to use of pesticides on lands and territories of the Yaqui nation.

I send you all my best wishes for the work that you will complete in the days to come.

Sincerely yours,


Okechukwu Ibeanu

Special Rapporteur on the adverse effects of the illicit movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes on the enjoyment on human rights