

Women Major Group statement on Waste Management - 6 May 2010

The Women's Major Group would like to focus your attention on the issue of obsolete pesticide storage and the remediation of contaminated areas which is a big problem for developing countries and economies in transition. Pesticide overconsumption has resulted in huge amounts of obsolete and banned pesticides stored in different countries. In Russia alone, this toxic legacy amounts to more than 40 000 tons of obsolete and banned pesticides. Yet while these pesticides are no longer useful for agriculture, they continue to contaminate soil and water, while the structures built to contain them are literally collapsing. Stocks of obsolete and banned pesticides, especially under poor storage conditions, therefore represent a major global environmental and health threat.

The overwhelming majority of women living nearby pesticide storage facilities and dumps report reproductive disorders, while the environmental pollution problems from obsolete pesticide stockpiles are well known.

A few weeks ago a real environmental tragedy happened in Armenia when a pesticide burial site was significantly damaged and obsolete pesticides were spread on the soil surface. Non-governmental organizations, mainly women organizations, were the first to raise the alarm.

Civil society groups often play the leading role in addressing the problem of hazardous waste, such as obsolete pesticides. We call upon all governments to eliminate this toxic legacy, using the appropriate technologies which do not lead to the emissions and releases of new toxic chemicals.