

Opening speech by Ato Fikre Markos , Deputy Director for Animal and Plant Health Regulatory Directorate, at the opening ceremony of the “Environmental Hazard and Risk Assessment and Definition of Protection Goals Training workshop” 14-18 November 2011, Deberzeit, Ethiopia

Distinguished guests

Workshop participants

Ladies and gentlemen

It is my sincere pleasure to be here among you distinguished guests and stakeholders at this training workshop on **Environmental Risk Assessment and Definition of Protection Goals**. Let me also take this opportunity to welcome all the workshop participants to this training workshop. Special welcome is for guests who have travelled from Netherlands specifically coming from Alterra of Wageningen University Research Center and the Board for the Authorization Plant Protection Products and Biocides (Ctgb) to share their experience with us. We wish also to thank the same international personnel and local experts of the Pesticide Risk Reduction Programme who have been involved in planning and providing logistic support to make this event possible in a very conducive environment.

Dear workshop participants

Ladies and gentlemen

It is broadly acknowledged that the role of pesticides for enhanced agricultural production and improving human health has been phenomenal. Whereas there have been enormous gains through the application of pesticides, it was soon clear that the benefits of pesticides use could not be sustained if they continued to be used in non judicious way. Their injudicious use would cause negative effects on human beings , non target animals including fish, birds, natural enemies ,beneficial insects such us bees ,earthworms and on plants as well as on soil and water. For this reason, pesticides are among the most rigorously tested and regulated substances in the world to minimize their adverse effects to human health and the environment in general.

Ladies and Gentlemen

With increased awareness, the consumers now could demand for quality assurance so that the amount of pesticides remaining in the food chain is within acceptable limits. Moreover export commodities from developing to developed countries are primarily agricultural products. Their entries into international markets demands very stringent zoo-sanitary and phyto-sanitary requirements. Among these requirements is the maximum residue limits (MRLS) for pesticides which has been very challenging for certain export crops in the recent past.

Workshop participants

Ladies and gentlemen

It is apparent that the challenges posed by the continued use of pesticides are enormous and yet there has to be a way forward since life has to continue. One of the basic to sound pesticide management and pesticide risk reduction is to establish an effective pesticide registration and control system to ensure that only pesticides that are authorized in Ethiopia can be sustainably used and do not pose unacceptable risks to human health and the environment.

In view of these the new pesticide registration and control proclamation has been enacted in August 2010 by Ethiopian Government to lay a legal ground for sound pesticide management and the Ministry of agriculture is in the process of articulation a pesticide regulation for better implementation of the proclamation and internationally agreed pesticide registration procedures and guidelines including requirements for public health and environmental toxicological data that are critical to the decision making process of the registration of pesticides .

Moreover , the Ethiopian Government has initiated a national programme to improve pesticide management along the entire pesticide lifecycle with a financial and technical assistance from the Government of Netherlands, Food and Agricultural Organization of the united nations and Strategic Approach for International Chemical mnagement (SAICM) of UNEP.

To this end several work packages involving important registration and post registration activities have been elaborated under the pesticide risk reduction programme to be performed by Ministry of Agriculture and various stakeholders

Among the work packages considered in the work plan, one of them is dealing with development of a Scientific evaluation system for registration of agricultural pesticides and public health pesticides where issues with regard to pesticide hazard and risk assessment and definition of protection goals is considered.

Therefore, the primary objectives of this training workshop are :

1. To provide some general training to APHRD & EPA staff and various stakeholders on risk assessment methods, models and tools as well as on international criteria for environmental hazards or risks.
2. To define and prioritize the protection goals for the environment, in correspondence with existing legal national requirements and involving the responsible political level of Ethiopia, where needed. To start designing a risk assessment methodology for the most important protection goals.

These are the first steps towards the ultimate aim of improving the decision capacity of the Animal Plant Health Regulatory evaluation team for the environmental risk assessment.

In order to fulfill the above objectives, various topics in connection to environmental impact of pesticides will be covered during the workshop period.

Therefore, this training workshop will bring a good opportunity to you to entertain different environmental issues in connection to pesticide uses and meeting the workshop objectives through information sharing, exchange of views and ideas.

Finally, wishing you a successful deliberation I declare the workshop opened.

Thank you for your kind attention

