

Urgent need for a global phase-out of Highly Hazardous Pesticides

FACTS AND FIGURES

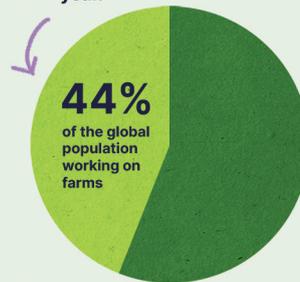
Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs) are a special group of pesticides which cause the most severe harm to human health and the environment. HHPs make up a relatively small share of all registered pesticides. Yet, they pose particularly high levels of acute or chronic hazards.

Each year, almost half of the global farming population or 385 million farmers and farmworkers are poisoned by pesticides, resulting in around 11,000 deaths. Because they are highly toxic, HHPs are responsible for a large number of these acute poisoning incidents.

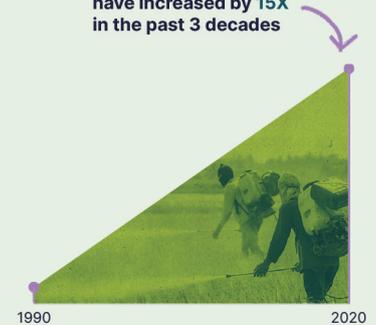
HHPs cannot be used safely, especially in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMIC). Often, Personal Protective Equipment is not used because they are inaccessible or too uncomfortable to wear by small-scale farmers in hot climates.

385 million

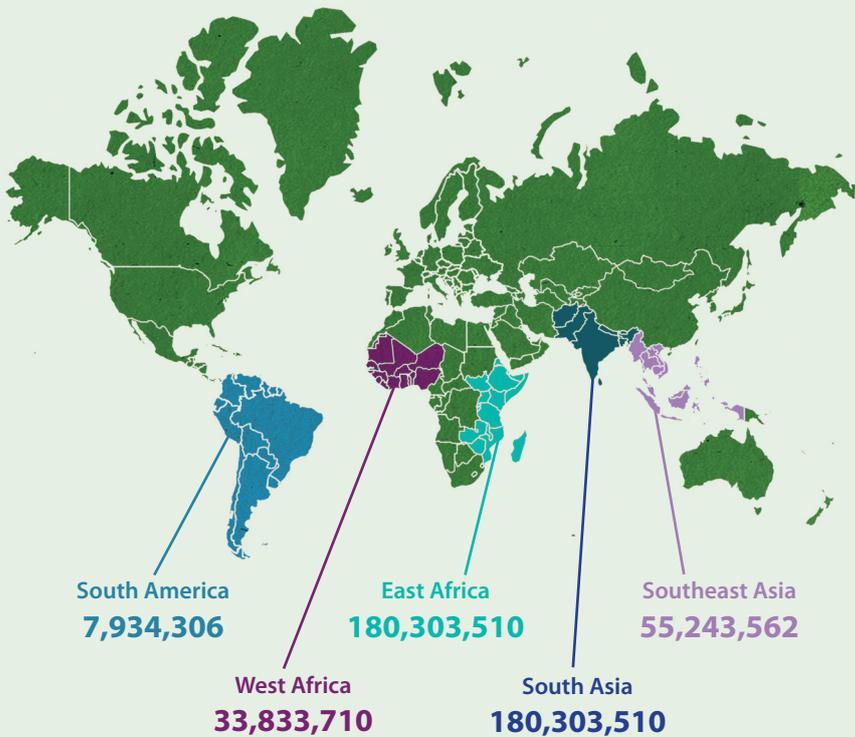
farmers and agricultural workers suffer from acute pesticide poisoning every year.



Pesticide poisonings have increased by 15X in the past 3 decades



More than 95% or the vast majority of pesticide poisonings are in the Global South.



Pesticide use has increased disproportionately in LMICs. Between 1990 and 2017, the worldwide tonnage increase in pesticide use includes a 484% increase in South America and a 97% increase in Asia, compared to a decrease in Europe of 3%.

One reason is that many HHPs that have already been banned in their countries of origin continue to be exported to the Global South, violating the human rights of millions of food producers, including the right to a clean and healthy environment.

HHPs are recognised by the World Health Organization as a “major public health concern.” Exposure to HHPs, including through consumption of residues in food and water, is linked to long-term and irreversible health harms such as cancer, damage to fertility and the unborn child, disruption of hormonal systems, and various chronic illnesses.

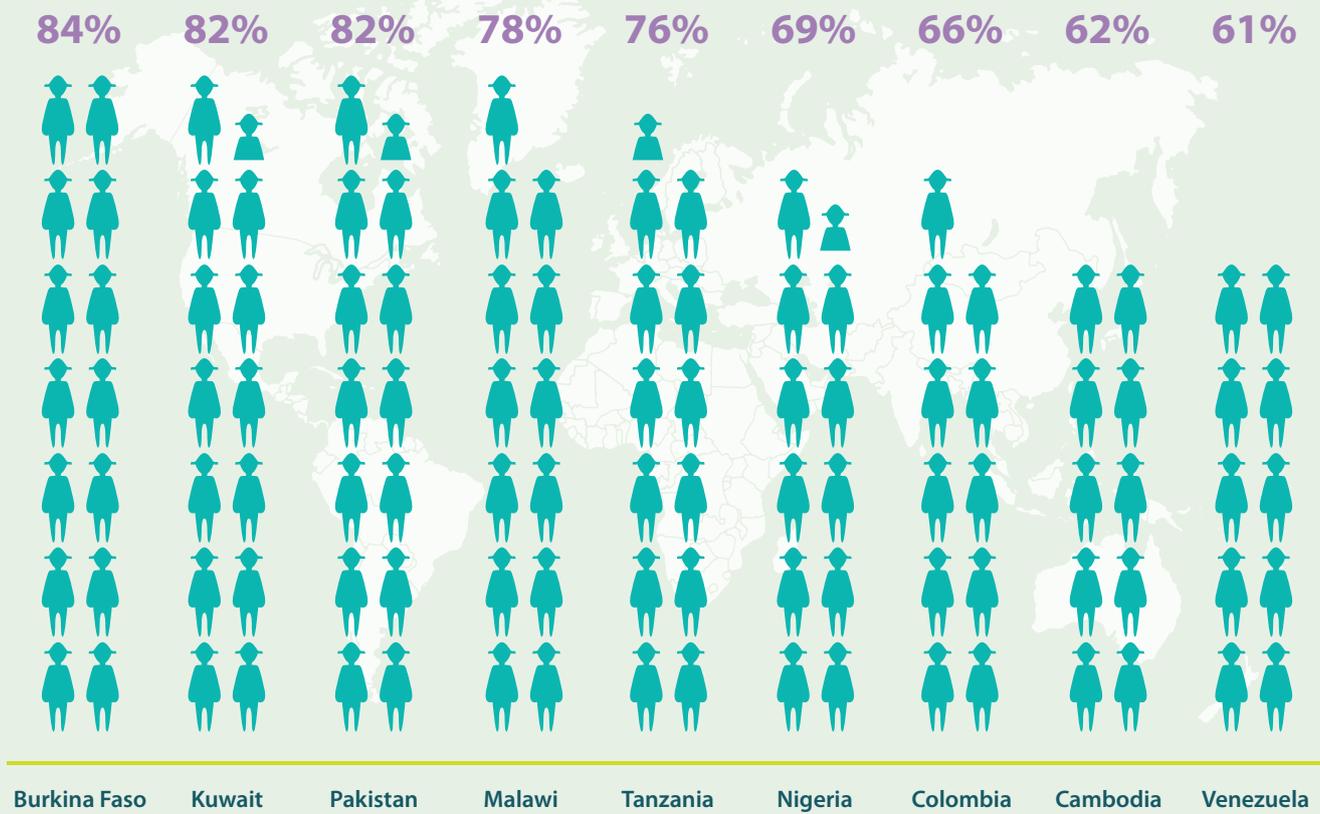
Widespread use of HHPs is also a major driver of biodiversity loss and chemical pollution. HHPs are persistent in soil and water, accumulate in the food chain, and are highly toxic to bees and other non-target organisms that are crucial to the healthy functioning of ecosystems and agricultural productivity.



11,000 deaths/year

from unintended pesticide poisonings. Nearly 60% of which occur in just one country, **India**

Percentage of farming population poisoned (non-fatal) globally



The International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) play a crucial role in eliminating harms caused by HHPs. Other international policy forums and frameworks have made significant targeted political commitments on major crises that pose existential threats to humanity and the planet. However, the #ToxicCrisis caused by HHPs have remained largely unaddressed.

The ICCM 5 held in 2023 must implement ambitious targets and corresponding delivery mechanisms and activities to phase out HHPs. We call on all SAICM stakeholders to:

- Include in the new SAICM Beyond2020 framework a global target to phase out Highly Hazardous Pesticides in agriculture by 2030;
- Include a target for all countries to prohibit the export of substances that they have prohibited nationally, many of which will be HHPs;
- Include a target for all countries to implement policies and programs to support safer and more sustainable non-chemical alternatives to HHPs, especially agroecology; and

- Support the proposal of African governments to establish a Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides working to phase out HHPs.

Decisive global action on HHPs is necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including substantially reducing the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals, and air, water and soil pollution and contamination by 2030.

HHPs have been phased out in agriculture in a number of countries without affecting agricultural productivity. When governments took measures to phase out certain HHPs, socio-economic and health benefits to farmers were recorded, and none led to a decline in agricultural productivity.

Scan for more information:



Boedeker, W., Watts, M., Clausing, P. et al. (2020) *The global distribution of acute unintentional pesticide poisoning: estimations based on a systematic review.* *BMC Public Health* 20, 1875.

UNEP (2023). *Guidelines on Highly Hazardous Pesticides.*

SAICM UCT, UB FAO (2022). *The potential key role of SAICM national focal points in reducing harm from Highly Hazardous Pesticides.*