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International Network Welcomes UN Special Rapporteur's Call for Global Regulation of Pesticides

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) International welcomes the release today of the report on the use of agricultural pesticides by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food. Special Rapporteur Hilal today presented her report to the 34th session of the United National Human Rights Council. She noted the ongoing impacts of pesticides on people, the environment and human rights and the failure to hold the pesticide industry accountable for these effects and recommended that:

The international community must work on a comprehensive, binding treaty to regulate hazardous pesticides throughout their life cycle, taking into account human rights principles.

PAN unreservedly supports this recommendation and urges the international community to swiftly begin the process of negotiating a treaty. Such a mandatory treaty will generate policies to reduce pesticide use worldwide and develop a framework for the banning and phasing-out of highly hazardous pesticides and promoting agroecology.

In 2015, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), an international policy framework to promote chemical safety around the world, finally recognized highly hazardous pesticides as an 'issue of concern'. SAICM recommended replacement of pesticides with sustainable, low toxic approaches to agriculture, such as agroecologically-based practices.

The only global mechanism looking at comprehensive management of chemicals, SAICM is set to end by 2020 without having achieved any significant reductions in pesticide poisonings. The time is right for putting into practice the recommendation by the Special Rapporteur for a binding treaty to regulate hazardous pesticides throughout their life cycle.

Sarojeni Rengam, Executive Director of PAN Asia Pacific strongly supports the idea of a new binding treaty and said "SAICM ends in 2020. The need for a *binding* international treaty for management of pesticides is becoming very clear and is an urgent need for moving forward the work started through SAICM. This is critically needed to protect the human right to food and also to protect vulnerable populations like children, farm workers and others from the harmful impacts of pesticides used in conventional agriculture in much of the world".

Javier Souza Coordinator of RAPAL, PAN Latin America, said "the human right to food implies not only access to food but also an adequate quality of that food. The intensive use of pesticides and fertilizers together with the use of genetically modified seeds results in a loss of food quality. PAN International demands that at the global level binding mechanisms are set up that promote agroecological methods of food production for generating sustainable, viable and resilient agroecosystems."

PAN International has worked extensively on the issue of Highly Hazardous Pesticides or HHPs in agriculture and released a new version of a list of such HHPs in December 2016. Susan Haffmans from PAN Germany said "Highly Hazardous Pesticides are a big contributor to health and environmental harms around the globe. There is no "safe use" of hazardous pesticides. For the sake of future



generations the international community should act now and agree on a binding treaty to regulate and ultimately phase out hazardous pesticides and to promote agroecological alternatives.”

Having seen first-hand the successes of agroecology in promoting good health and a safe environment Abou Thiam, Director of PAN Africa added that “Agriculture around the world can no longer be dependent on a resource intensive, environmentally destructive paradigm that harms communities and produces lower quality food. Binding international mechanisms promoting agroecology have to be set up that protect human health and the environment and increase farm output, biodiversity and resilience.”

PAN UK has worked extensively to promote agroecological practices in a number of key crops in Africa and Latin America. Keith Tyrell, Director of PAN UK said “Today there are no excuses for continuing business- as-usual when it comes to agriculture. Food and fiber are being grown successfully without the use of HHPs around the world. The Special Rapporteur’s report unmask the forces that try to make resource intensive agriculture look like the acceptable norm. We must push forward the right to food that is cultivated safely and sustainably.”

Judy Hatcher, Executive Director of PAN North America summed up by saying “The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food highlighted the corporate control over the agricultural system around much of the globe. This corporate capture of the food system has resulted in devastation for communities around the world and led to artificial scarcity and poor quality foods. It is time to right this wrong and get a robust international mechanism in place that will truly protect our human right to food.”

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Pesticide Action Network, an international network with regional centers on five continents, has been working for over 35 years to bring attention to the problem of pesticide poisoning, and to spur international action to address the problem.