

## **SAICM IP 4.2**

### **Intervention of WECF CRPs presented in Plenary February 28**

WECF, **Women Engage for a Common Future**, strongly supports the African CRP on a Global Alliance on HHPs.

HHP not only causes unintentional poisoning and thousands of death worldwide and in Africa, HHP also especially impacts women's health and the health of future generation. We know that a high number of workers being involved in pesticide application on commercial farms and plantations are women, also during pregnancy and lactation. In our case studies undertaken e.g. in Nigeria Kenya, and Tunisia we found amongst others high levels of pesticides in breastmilk. Many pesticides e.g. have endocrine-disrupting properties and are strongly linked for example to developing breast cancer, fertility problems. This has to be stopped. Thus, also from a gender perspective we urgently support the implementation of a Global Alliance on HHPs.

WECF welcomes CRP.10 proposing the development of an International Code of Conduct on Chemicals and Waste Management Establishing basic national chemicals management systems. We are convinced that such a Code of Conduct is an important step to contribute to the right to a healthy environment and will be a benefit for the health of all people, including the most vulnerable groups such as women, children, indigenous people, workers in the informal sector, where the proportion of female workers is increasing.

We also want to express our support for CRP.12 on targets relating to transparency, access to information on chemicals in products and materials. The right to know on what chemicals we are exposed through products we are consuming and their impact on our health is crucial. Different gender phases different exposure routes, including different consumptions behavior and different roles in the workplace. Transparency, and easy and understandable access to information is a fundamental principle to protect all people from harmful chemicals in products and materials and needs to be implemented under the Beyond 2020 framework.

Finally WECF also supports the CRP from the labor sector in general and also from an eco-feminist perspective. Some sectors and professions with high risks of exposure to chemicals are dominated by female workers. Occupational health and safety risks for women are often underestimated because tests and standards are mainly based on men. This is one reason why protective measures for women are inadequate or missing.

In many sectors we also face the problem of missing transparency - there is no information provided about the health hazard of chemicals that women are exposed to.

This is why women are not aware of potential health effects at all, and so often do not associate their health problems with the exposure to toxic chemicals at their workplace.

A section in the Beyond 2020 framework with a specific reference to 'a safe and healthy working environment' as a fundamental principle and right at work will be a benefit for all workers, including female workers.