

STATUS OF CHEMICAL MANAGEMENT IN TANZANIA

By

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tanzania is among the developing countries in Africa. The country has a population of about 34 million (Tanzania census, 2002), with its per annual growth rate of 3%. At least 80% of the population lives and works in rural areas with approximately 90% of the adult population being farmers (Ngowi, 2002). This suggests that the agricultural sector is the main embankment of the Tanzanian economy. This sector accounts for 73.8% of the net domestic production and 46% of the total export (Ngowi and Macha, 1993). As such, the Tanzania government exerts much effort to promote the agricultural sector. This includes promotion of safe use chemicals such as pesticides, herbicides in farms and plantations to boost up the quantity and quality of the agricultural products.

Tanzania is facing a serious threat of obsolete chemicals i.e. pesticides. Initially these chemicals have been used in various pest control activities. Certainly, contribution of pesticides in agricultural backup and reducing plant diseases is well appreciated in Tanzania. Moreover, agricultural development has been accelerated for a number of years in parallel with farm inputs to boost both quality and quantity of harvests. However, the consideration of harmful effects on man and environment has only recently gained attention (Ngowi, 2002).

There has been an annual increase in importation of pesticides from Europe and Northern America (Ngowi, 2002). According to the country report on inventory of persistent organic pesticides (Division of Environment, 2003), 80% of the stock was imported through subsidies and donations. Unfortunately, the management of these

imports was not efficient enough. Poor documentation systems resulted into limited information of the pesticides amounts imported into the country. Hence, the magnitude of the problem is only approached with reference to the presence of obsolete stockpile of pesticides. During the inventory year 1997 and 1998 a total of approximately 1000MT agro obsolete and 200 veterinary products were recorded (Meijer, 1998).

2. MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS IN TANZANIA

Policy Framework

The National Environment Policy for Tanzania Mainland (1997). have provisions for control of toxic chemicals from importation to end use and disposal of waste chemicals. The objectives stipulated in the Mainland Policy are:

- Promotion of the use of environmentally sound technologies that sustainable manner, recycle more of their waste and products and handle wastes in a more acceptable manner.
- Review of laws, rules and regulations governing importation, manufacture, transportation, handling, use storage and disposal of toxic chemicals, and dangerous products, hazardous waste and hazardous substance as appropriate

However, though the national policy addresses the general statement on chemical management, Tanzania lacks a specific policy framework on management of chemicals. Worse enough, there is inadequate sectoral collaboration and coordination towards chemical management in the country. As such, this situation hinders the effective management.

Legal Framework

The National Environmental Management Act (EMA) (2004) is a core legislation for all environmental issues in the country. This act among others covers management of chemicals, toxic substances. It is a framework law which sets the institutional responsibilities of various actors and directs the management of the environment. Hence various sectoral laws need review to take into account provisions of EMA. The Act establishes environmental coordinators at all levels and their functions. It requires

the relevant organization to provide annual reports on the related environmental issue. The Act also empowers the Minister of Environment to make regulations on chemical and hazardous waste. Examples of provisions in the Environmental Management Act include: section 77 which stipulates the powers of the Minister to make regulations on persistent organic pollutants (POPs). Moreover, section 78 of EMA asserts on Prior Informed Consent (PICs) procedures for certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides.

Private sector participation

Tanzania is experiencing a significant development of the private sector. The huge non efficient public sector is at the same time being privatized. The trade and business liberalization has contributed to the growth and consolidation of the informal sector.

The distribution of the chemicals, just like their production is done mainly by private sector. However, these activities are inadequately regulated as far as management of chemicals is concerned. Moreover, The private sector on the other hand lacks the expertise and training in chemicals handling, they in general invest far less in training of personnel and users in safe use of chemicals and the importance of protective gears. Additionally, investment in chemicals infrastructure such as laboratories and appropriate transportation is very low. Worse enough, chemical storage facilities, for both transit goods and in depots for sales/distribution are poor. There is often repackaging of chemicals in unsuitable containers or packets. Further, self regulation and protection of human health and the environment is very low as a consequence not only is the public at risk but also the environment can potentially be polluted

Civil society participation

There is however an emerging number of Non-Government Organizations which deal with environmental issues. These however are still young, with little expertise and experience. They are more effective as a pressure group and in disseminating of information to the public. In fact these organizations are voluntary, under funded, young and inexperienced. However, it is likely that their effectiveness in terms of practical management of chemicals can be substantial in the near future. The only important thing is to strengthen their resource capacity.

Existing Efforts

The following projects/activities are on-going:

- Regular review of a national infrastructure for management of chemicals which points out the existing weakness and strengths, and recommends follow up;
- Training of industrialists to build their capacity on cleaner production techniques;
- Training of chemicals handlers under the Plant Protection Act (1997) and the Industrial and Consumer Chemicals (2004) on management of respective chemicals.
- Development of National Implementation Plan for Persistent Organic Pollutants and
- Promotion of safe use of mercury in small scale gold mining

Planned Efforts

- Formulation of regulations on chemicals management under the Environmental Management Act (EMA) (2004).
- Formulation of guidelines on environmental management of chemicals and waste
- Development of a national waste management strategy and action plan.

3. CONCLUSION

Environmental management of chemicals in Tanzania is still a challenge. There is a need for institutional strengthening in this area through training, provision of facilities and equipments. Also, the role played by the civil society and private sector towards environmental management of chemicals should be promoted to enhance research, monitoring and enforcement for compliance with existing legislation.

4. REFERENCES

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