

Imagine a world free of harmful chemicals. A place where man-made toxics no longer threaten our health and the environment around us. It is possible. We are working to make it happen.



Welcome to ChemSec






# CHEMSEC

## – working for a toxic free world

ChemSec, the International Chemical Secretariat, is a non-profit organisation working for a toxic free environment. To achieve this, we work to highlight the health and environmental risks of hazardous substances, make accurate, science-based information readily available, engage business and speed up legislative processes. This approach puts ChemSec in a unique position to promote open dialogue between authorities, business, science and civil society so that effective action is taken. While important steps toward the elimination of toxics have been taken in recent years, we are not there yet – a lot of work remains.

# A catalyst for change



Thousands of chemicals have been developed during the last decades. Many are used in everyday products – from toys, textiles and paints to shampoo, electronic equipment and building materials. The problem is that we know little about their short and long term effects on our health and on the environment. But we do know enough to understand that many of the chemicals in widespread use today are hazardous. ChemSec is working for the phase-out of these chemicals.

## TOXICS KNOW NO BOUNDARIES

Our bodies contain traces of hundreds of man-made chemicals some of which may cause cancer, disrupt hormonal systems or adversely affect reproductive functions. Hazardous chemicals go far beyond national boundaries, they are carried by the wind, the oceans and the products we manufacture and consume. The supply chain is long and complicated. Children and workers in the Global South are particularly at risk since they can be exposed to high levels of chemicals used in the production of goods. In every way, toxic substances are a global problem that requires a global solution.

## CHEMSEC TAKES THE STAGE

Recognising the need for an organisation dedicated to working with chemicals policy within the international arena, parts of the Swedish environmental movement formed ChemSec in 2002. ChemSec works closely with scientists at leading institutions and has established groundbreaking collaboration between business and civil society. Over the years, ChemSec has become known among NGOs, governments and other stakeholders on the international arena as an important and respected actor.

## SHARING KNOWLEDGE, BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

ChemSec is always looking to highlight positive examples and achieve innovative solutions. We strive to be a reliable resource and knowledgeable partner. All of our activities are geared to making informa-


tion easily accessible to increase awareness and stimulate debate, as well as bring about concrete action, among important stakeholders.

### **A TOXIC-FREE FUTURE**

In a toxic-free world, the levels of man-made hazardous substances in the environment are close to zero, with a negligible impact on the ecosystem. To achieve this goal, ChemSec is actively working to

- › Get a broader acceptance in society for the key principles Precaution, Substitution, Polluter Pays and Right to Know.
- › Promote legislation that builds upon these principles, while also helping to ensure that regulation is being effectively followed and enforced.
- › Encourage business actors to support and apply these principles – by showing that substituting hazardous chemicals with safer alternatives is both scientifically and economically feasible.
- › Support and build alliances with environmental NGOs to build a strong civil society in order to coordinate the effort to eliminate toxic uses.
- › Serve as an open and dynamic forum for all parties working for more effective chemicals control.

# Spurring Europe to better legislation



An increased understanding and awareness of the growing threat of toxic industrial chemicals led to a new legislative framework in the European Union called REACH. Adopted in 2006, this groundbreaking initiative represents a new era of chemicals control within the EU and has become a model for the rest of the world to follow. From the start, ChemSec has been working on many fronts to strengthen REACH and increase support among businesses for stricter chemicals control in Europe. Here are some of the ways ChemSec has made an impact on this bold regulation.

## HOW IT ALL STARTED

When the Environment Ministers of the European Union Member States met in Cardiff, United Kingdom, back in 1998, they acknowledged that European governments had failed to protect its citizens from the threat of toxic industrial chemicals. For decades, substances with devastating effects on human health and the environment had been allowed to spread throughout society. The Cardiff meeting became the starting point for a total overhaul of the EU's policy towards toxic chemicals.

## REACH – A GROUNDBREAKING PROPOSAL

Three years later, a blueprint for a new groundbreaking EU chemicals regulation was presented. This blueprint paved the way for the 2003 REACH proposal which introduced an obligation for manufacturers and importers of chemicals to inform authorities about any possible risks with their chemicals. Chemical manufacturers around the world were quick to sound the alarm that the EU was creating “outrageous” new restrictions. The environmental movement, on the other hand, saw the proposed legislation as a long-awaited initiative that could become a new paradigm in chemicals control. Europe braced itself for a major political battle that soon became the largest lobbying campaign ever seen in Brussels.

CHEMICALS



## NEW VOICES ARE HEARD

ChemSec was formed soon after the first REACH proposal. A main priority became to promote and strengthen this bold, new legislation. ChemSec cultivated support for a strong REACH regulation from diverse groups, in particular large commercial companies down the supply chain. In stark contrast to chemical manufacturers, these companies had not previously been engaged in the REACH discussions, even though the outcome of this legislation would affect them significantly. ChemSec organised an informal group of companies that spearheaded the chemical user's response to REACH. These companies publicly expressed "what we need from REACH" and presented their views of efficient, far-reaching legislation to support their business activities.

## EASY ACCESS TO INFORMATION

During the process that eventually resulted in the REACH regulation, ChemSec served as an important source of information for decision-makers. ChemSec also brought in scientists to help politicians better understand the threats posed by the unrestricted use of chemicals as well as to increase the understanding among regulators of what type of information on chemicals is needed for efficient decision-making.

In a clear, easy-to-understand way, we explained the scope of the new regulation, its predicted outcomes and the importance of far-reaching legislation. We accomplished this by organising stake-holder seminars, producing reports and publications, and developing an interactive "walk-through of REACH" website. One example is a study that ChemSec conducted on behalf of the European Parliament and together with researchers in France, South Africa and the US, looking at the implications of REACH for countries in the Global South. The report concluded that the costs of the new requirements would largely fall on large multinational corporations operating in these countries.

*“During the development of the new EU chemicals regulation (REACH), ChemSec actively contributed and gave voice to businesses in favour of a strong regulation. The ChemSec involvement in the REACH process played an important role in shifting the balance towards a more progressive chemicals regulation within the EU.”*

*– Margot Wallström, Vice-President, European Commission*

## MAKING AN IMPACT

REACH was finally adopted in 2006. Although some truly bold ideas were watered down in the final text, REACH definitely marks the beginning of a new era. By collaborating closely with large retailers and brand-names, ChemSec contributed to the fact that REACH now requires information about hazardous chemicals to be communicated throughout the supply chain. ChemSec also helped to strengthen the concept of

substitution of the most hazardous chemicals, the so-called Substances of Very High Concern, in the Authorisation procedure.

*“Surviving REACH” is an excellent report, it is one of the best publications on the REACH proposal that I have seen and I will recommend it to anyone who wants to understand REACH.”*

*– Catherine Day, 2005, former Director-General for DG Environment, European Commission.*


#### **CHEMSEC PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS ABOUT REACH DURING 2003-2006**

- › New chemicals policy in the EU – good or bad for companies? (2003)
- › REACH – a leap forward for industry (2004)
- › Cry wolf – predicted costs by industry in the face of new regulations (2004)
- › REACH – What does it cost? (2004)
- › Questions & Answers about REACH (2004)
- › Protecting our patients' health – supporting new legislation that will reduce exposure to hazardous chemicals (2004)
- › What we need from REACH – views on the proposal for a new chemical legislation within EU (2005)
- › Surviving REACH – A Guide for Companies that Use Chemicals (2005)
- › Implications of REACH for developing countries (2006)



# The SIN List

## – NGOs and business join forces



Why wait to phase out toxic substances in consumer goods? The REACH legislation is bold, but it is also slow and cumbersome. So far, only just a few chemicals have been put on the European Union Candidate List of high concern substances – just the first step to phasing out these chemicals. To get things moving, ChemSec, in collaboration with leading NGOs, developed the SIN (Substitute It Now!) List of hazardous substances. The aim of the SIN List is to push the REACH legislative process forward and provide a tool that business and other actors can use to substitute hazardous chemicals with safer alternatives – ahead of legislation.



### THE RIGHT TO KNOW

The SIN List was launched in Brussels in the autumn of 2008. As of October 2009, the SIN List 1.1 includes 356 chemicals that have been identified as Substances of Very High Concern based on the official criteria established by REACH. These chemicals are currently being used in products from detergents and paints to computers and toys – even though they might cause cancer, disrupt hormonal systems or adversely affect reproductive functions. The SIN List highlights a broad range of chemicals that should be included on the official REACH Candidate List, which would at

*“There will be a steady and substantial increase of substances of very high concern on the candidate list over the coming years. Initiatives taken by stakeholders, like the SIN list, that draw the attention of the public and industry to the most hazardous chemicals that should be a priority for substitution are important to drive the process forward.”*

*– Stavros Dimas, European Commissioner for the Environment*

least give consumers the right to know if any of these substances are present in a product.

### AN ONGOING COLLABORATION

The SIN List was developed by ChemSec in close collaboration with leading NGOs in the EU and the US. Companies in the ChemSec Business Group have also played an important role and have been actively involved in the development of the list. This combined effort of public interest groups, businesses, scientists and technical experts is based on credible, publicly

available substance information from existing databases, scientific studies and new research. The SIN List is an ongoing project that is continuously updated as new information on hazardous chemicals becomes available.

### BUSINESS TAKES THE LEAD

Leading companies are increasingly using the SIN List in their corporate social responsibility and sustainability efforts, as it provides them with a helpful indicator of hazardous chemicals to avoid in their

products. Major retailers such as Carrefour are using the SIN List to guide their suppliers and the ChemSec Business Group, which includes consumer product firms like Boots, Sara Lee and Sony Ericsson, is helping to lead the way. By taking action ahead of legislation, these companies are setting inspiring examples for others to follow.

### A POPULAR MESSAGE – SUBSTITUTE IT NOW!

Businesses, local and national governments and NGOs are identifying new ways to put the SIN List to use –

apply it and push legislation forward. The EU Member States are taking notice of the SIN List and hopefully it will not be long before the EU and other regulatory processes take action on all of the SIN List chemicals, so that they no longer pose a serious risk to our health and the environment.

The SIN List is also receiving a great deal of attention outside of Europe. Just to name a few examples, the State of California, the US. Department of Defence and the Korean Institute of Science and Technology all see the SIN List as an inspiring guide and a useful tool.

#### **THROUGH THE SIN LIST PROJECT, CHEMSEC STRIVES TO:**

- › Influence the official REACH Candidate List and encourage European authorities to adopt the SIN List and prioritise these substances in the Authorisation procedure of the EU chemicals regulation REACH
- › Provide credible, publicly available and comprehensively researched data on the most hazardous chemicals
- › Illustrate the importance of a proper Authorisation procedure that ensures the substitution of the most hazardous chemicals and their replacement by safer alternatives
- › Provide early guidance regarding high concern chemicals to companies (mainly downstream users), consumers and regulators.

*“Chemicals play a vital role in almost all consumer goods and it is essential that we become more knowledgeable about any associated health or environmental problems as well as the properties that make them useful. ChemSec through its SIN list is playing an important role in identifying chemicals that should be replaced by safer and greener alternatives.”*

*– James Clark, Professor, University of York*

**THE SIN LIST PROJECT WAS DEVELOPED BY CHEMSEC IN CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MADE UP OF NINE NGOS WORKING WITH ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH, AND CONSUMER ISSUES.**

- › The Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)
- › The European Consumers' Organisation (BEUC)
- › The European Environmental Bureau (EEB)
- › Friends of the Earth Europe (FoEE)
- › Greenpeace European Unit
- › The Health and Environmental Alliance (HEAL)
- › Instituto Sindical de Trabajo, Ambiente y Salud (ISTAS)
- › WWF European Policy Office
- › Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF)

# ChemSec Business Group leading the way



In 2004, ChemSec laid the foundation for close collaboration with industry by forming the ChemSec Business Group. The aim was to find common ground between ChemSec's pursuit of a toxic free environment and the ambition of companies to be both successful in their markets and more sustainable in their operations. Critical for achieving legislative progress, ChemSec's engagement with business gathers and coordinates the voice of downstream users of chemicals, a voice which speaks against the prevalent misconception that all industry is generally opposed to regulation.

## DRIVING THE DEBATE, SPREADING THE MESSAGE

The ChemSec Business Group brings together progressive companies from diverse product sectors and industries, but with a shared goal: the development of effective corporate practice in the substitution of hazardous substances. As a platform for public activities and partnership opportunities, the ChemSec Business Group aims to promote a better understanding of emerging chemicals issues – and help to provide solutions for them. For example, the group was actively involved in the development of the SIN List, and its activities overall drive the debate and encourage engagement in chemicals related issues.

## NETWORKING KNOWLEDGE ON SAFER ALTERNATIVES

Switching to safer substances can be a challenging task. Many companies are struggling to find alternatives that both fulfil the required function and are economically feasible. ChemSec gathers and highlights positive business substitution case studies and creates platforms for dialogue about the art of delivering toxic-free products.

ChemSec has organised numerous business-focused activities and events highlighting progressive chemicals policies. These include seminars in the European Parliament, business-to-business conferences as well

*“Since 2005 Skanska AB has been an active supporter of ChemSec because of its unique position in the European debate about improved regulation and transparency concerning chemicals. This activity and the cross-sector group of companies that work with ChemSec provide vital insights into the evolving debate in the EU and elsewhere. Skanska is proud to have helped ChemSec launch the SIN List and during the REACH negotiations explain to senior EU officials the complex issues around chemicals as they relate to our sector.”*

– Noel Morrin, Senior Vice President Sustainability & Green Construction, Skanska

as producing a number of publications demonstrating the business sense of sustainable chemicals policies in industry.

### A BUSINESS SUCCESS FACTOR

As new information emerges on the potential dangers of hazardous chemicals, more and more companies are waking up to the associated risks and opportunities for not only their brand image but also their overall competitiveness. A growing number of companies are running toxics reduction programs, inspired by international environmental agreements and their

customers' concern for safer products as well as new business opportunities. They are setting inspiring examples by engaging in the chemicals policy debate and demonstrating proactiveness that benefits their stakeholders – from consumers and employees to policy-makers and media.

*“ChemSec has keenly identified stakeholders that have not previously been heard from in the discussion of increased chemical safety. ChemSec’s support has, for example, enabled parts of industry producing consumer goods to have a stronger voice in the democratic processes expressing their support of stricter chemicals regulations.”*

*– Ethel Forsberg, Director-General, Swedish Chemicals Agency*

#### **THE CHEMSEC BUSINESS GROUP INCLUDES:**

##### **Participants**

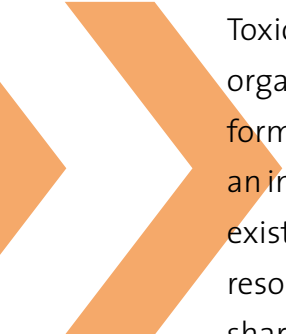
- › B&Q
- › Boots Ltd. U.K.
- › Dell
- › L’Oréal
- › Nokia
- › Sara Lee
- › Skanska
- › Sony Ericsson

##### **Associated Participants**

- › Eureau
- › Swedish Construction Federation



# Going global – bridging knowledge and politics



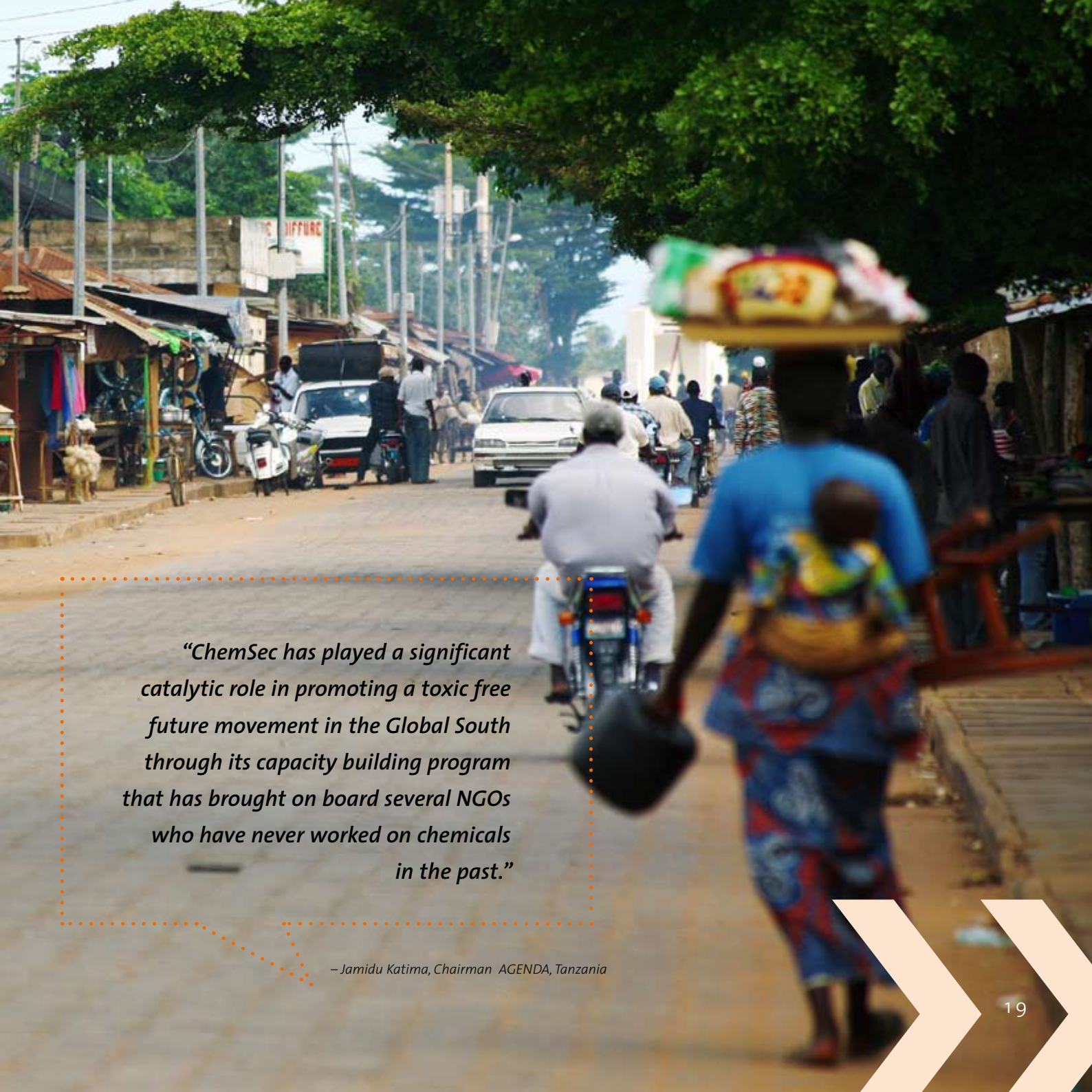
Toxic substances are a global problem that demands global action. Fortunately, organisations around the world are actively networking, sharing knowledge and forming strategies towards a toxic free environment. This concerted effort is having an impact. New international agreements on chemicals are being implemented and existing ones are being strengthened. ChemSec participates in this work, providing resources and expertise on chemicals policy. One of ChemSec's areas of focus is to share the knowledge and experiences gained in Europe during the REACH process to support organisations in other parts of the world.

## MONITORING GLOBAL AGREEMENTS

ChemSec supports the development of stronger global agreements to combat toxic pollution and monitors global chemical legislative processes, such as SAICM and the Stockholm Convention. The UN-led SAICM (Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management) aims to provide an overarching framework for global action on chemical hazards and enable governments and other stakeholders to collaborate more effectively on reducing toxic risks. The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) is a legally binding treaty and has been signed by 162 countries.

## ENHANCING CAPACITY AMONG NGOS

ChemSec recently co-organised, together with SSNC, a major program to enhance capacity among NGOs in the Global South, focusing on hazardous chemicals issues. Between 2006 and 2008 ChemSec cooperated with and gave support to NGOs based primarily in Africa. The aim was to strengthen these NGOs in their work with problems related to chemicals from a poverty and human rights-based perspective. The program provided support to activities and projects that focused on preventing and reducing effects of toxic chemicals and promoting safer chemicals management, primarily within the field of industrial chemi-



*“ChemSec has played a significant catalytic role in promoting a toxic free future movement in the Global South through its capacity building program that has brought on board several NGOs who have never worked on chemicals in the past.”*

*– Jamidu Katima, Chairman AGENDA, Tanzania*

*“IPEN is heavily invested in the Stockholm Convention, SAICM and other international chemical safety policies. In order to shape robust NGO positions, IPEN needs input from our partners from across the globe. In this effort, ChemSec is a strategic partner for IPEN to advance our shared vision of a toxics-free future for all.”*

*– Björn Beeler, IPEN International Coordinator*

cals and chemicals in products. In 2008, ChemSec also co-organised an NGO skill share on Heavy Metals together with the environmental organisation AGENDA in Tanzania, gathering participants from 14 countries, including Kenya, Rwanda, Mozambique, Indonesia, the Philippines and the US.

### CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT IN EASTERN EUROPE

During 2005-2007, ChemSec worked closely with environmental NGOs in Eastern Europe for safer chemicals management. These organisations were

mainly Mama-86 in the Ukraine, FRI in Belarus and Eco-Accord in Russia. The project, “A Toxic-Free Europe”, included surveys of existing chemicals legislation in these countries as well as recommendations for improving chemicals management and strengthening legislation. One of the concrete outcomes of the project was a database listing environmentally and economically feasible technologies in chemical management, the first of its kind in the Russian language. The project culminated in a NGO training workshop that focused on finding new ideas and solutions for some of the chemical problems in these countries.

## IPEN – THE POWER OF MANY

Started by a group of NGOs in 1998, IPEN's (International POPs Elimination Network) original aim was to promote a global legal instrument to control and eliminate Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). This initiative was part of a process that led to the Stockholm Convention on POPs, which came into force in 2004.

Since then, IPEN has continued to evolve, expanding its mission to integrate chemicals management into

the sustainable development and poverty eradication agenda. Today IPEN's global network includes more than 700 NGOs in over 100 countries. As a collaborating partner, ChemSec works closely with IPEN which provides a dynamic link to NGOs outside of Europe, particularly in the Global South.

### **THE SMALL-GRANT FUNDING PROGRAM, WHICH CHEMSEC CARRIED OUT JOINTLY WITH THE SWEDISH SOCIETY FOR NATURE CONSERVATION, SUPPORTED THE FOLLOWING NGOS DURING 2008**

- › AGENDA, Tanzania
- › BAN Toxics!, Philippines
- › Centre for Public Health and Environmental Development (CEPHED), Nepal
- › Day Hospital Institute for Development and Rehabilitation (DHIDR), Egypt
- › EcoAccord, Russia
- › Envirocare, Tanzania
- › Environmental Management Trust (EMT), Tanzania
- › iLima, Kenya
- › National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE), Uganda
- › Pro-Biodiversity Conservationists of Uganda (PROBICO), Uganda
- › Red de accin en agricultura alternativa (RAAA), Peru
- › Research and education centre for development (CREPD), Cameroon
- › Tanzania Association of Environmental Engineers (TAAE), Tanzania
- › Toxics Link, India
- › WAHLI, Indonesia



# Looking ahead

ChemSec will continue to work for a toxic free environment and act as a catalyst for change by encouraging dialogue between policy-makers, science, civil society and business. In the upcoming years, we believe that scientific results regarding the impact of hazardous chemicals will influence the public debate to a greater extent than before. Therefore, we will continue to work to highlight the problems with hazardous chemicals so that awareness of this issue is one day on par with the problems of climate change.

## PHASING OUT HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS IN EUROPE

Within the European Union we see the implementation of REACH and the revision of the RoHS Directive as two very important issues for the next couple of years. One of our goals is therefore to work to significantly extend REACH's Candidate list. In addition we are aiming for a broader acceptance of the SIN List within the business community so that it is regarded as *the* list of hazardous chemicals to be avoided and substituted. We also believe that nanotechnology and pharmaceuticals in the environment are increasingly important issues that will need special attention.

## STRENGTHENING GLOBAL AGREEMENTS

ChemSec will continue its efforts to support new and existing global agreements. For example, the ongoing work to establish a treaty that focuses on mercury pollution is vitally important – and we want to help ensure that it is realised. Another area of focus is the Stockholm Convention. Quite simply, it needs to become a more relevant and sharper tool for phasing out hazardous substances that are in use today. ChemSec is also committed to supporting the Strategic Approach to International Chemical Management (SAICM) process. After all, it has enabled countries to tackle the problems they are facing with toxic chemicals in a structured way for the first time ever.

# ChemSec at a glance

## MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

ChemSec was formed in 2002 by four Swedish environmental organisations:

- › World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
- › Swedish Society for Nature Conservation
- › Friends of the Earth
- › Nature and Youth

These NGOs are currently the ChemSec member organisations and are represented on the ChemSec board.

## OFFICE AND STAFF

ChemSec is based in Gothenburg, Sweden. The ChemSec team represents a combination of chemists, political scientists, business experts and communications specialists.

## FUNDING

ChemSec operates through support from a broad spectrum of society. A main contributor is the Swedish Government, but ChemSec also receives financial support from charitable foundations and other NGOs.

## **SINCE 2003, CHEMSEC HAS RECEIVED FUNDING FROM THE FOLLOWING:**

More than 50 000 EUR

- › Swedish Government
- › John Merck Fund
- › Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
- › Swedish Chemicals Agency

Less than 50 000 EUR:

- › German Environmental Protection Agency
- › European Parliament Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union
- › Sigrid Rausing Trust, through Chemical Reaction
- › Mistra/NewS
- › Marisla Foundation
- › Panta Rhea
- › Greenpeace International
- › World Wildlife Fund
- › Swedish Society for Nature Conservation



ChemSec is a non-profit organisation working for a toxic-free environment. To reach this goal, we work to highlight the health and environmental risks of hazardous substances and to make accurate, science-based information readily available. ChemSec is a dynamic, wide reaching organisation, able to move quickly and work in a positive and active way to achieve concrete results. We are actively engaging business and working to influence and speed up legislative processes – within the EU and around the world. This approach puts ChemSec in a unique position to promote open dialogue between authorities, business, science and civil society so that effective action is taken. Examples of this are the development of the SIN (Substitute It Now!) List of hazardous chemicals and the ChemSec Business Group, a collaboration with companies that are committed to phasing out toxic chemicals from their products. Imagine a world that is free of harmful chemicals. We are working to make it happen.

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