

POPs, a major concern for environment and health

CSIR-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI) has organized a two-day International Workshop on “**Management of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in India: Need and Gap Analysis**” on 17-18 July 2019. The workshop was inaugurated by Dr. L. Ramakrishnan, Member of Advisory Board on Special Directorate of POPs and Lead Assessor, QCI NABET. Dr. Hemant Purohit, Senior Most Scientist, CSIR-NEERI; Dr. A. N. Vaidya, Chief Scientist and Head, Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Division; and Dr. Kanchan Kumari, Scientist were also present on this occasion.

While addressing the participants, Dr. Ramakrishnan informed that he was involved in mitigation of chlorinated hydrocarbons in 1980s, much earlier than India ratified and acceded to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants in 2005. Highlighting the importance of qualitative and quantitative analysis of persistent organic pollutants, he said that the detection and measurement of POPs is a major challenge, which needs to be addressed. In managing POPs, comprehensive approach to social and economic assessment is required, including human health, environmental and social impacts. Addressing managerial issues, Dr. Ramakrishnan said that ideas should effectively be implemented at ground level. He urged the scientists to explore potential alternatives that can perform a function equivalent to the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).

Earlier, in his welcome address, Dr. H J Purohit, Senior Most Scientist, CSIR-NEERI informed that CSIR-NEERI as “Stockholm Convention Regional Centre for Asia on POPs” has taken up many initiatives to minimize and manage POPs for environment and health protection. But still challenge lies in understanding persistency and life cycle assessment of POPs, he said. He stated that there is a need to study cumulative and synergistic effects of POPs. Dr. Kanchan Kumari, Scientist, CSIR-NEERI briefed about the workshop and Dr. A. N. Vaidya, Chief Scientist and Head, Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Division proposed the vote of thanks.

On first day, five technical sessions were organized, in which various National and International Experts presented significant aspects as regards emerging pollutants and upcoming POPs: challenges and way forward for Indian industries by Mr. S. Ganesan, Chairman, Indian Chemical Council (ICC); POPs and circular economy by Dr. Anupam Khajuria, United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD); dioxins and furans by Dr. Neeta Thacker, Ex. Chief Scientist, CSIR-NEERI; inventory for new listed POPs by Dr. Roland Weber, Environmental Consultant, Germany; capacity building for identification and management of chemical wastes by Mr. R K Bansal and K P Nyati, Recycling and Environment Industry Association of India (REIAI), Mr. Piyush Mohapatra, Toxic Links and Shri Prashant Kumar Banerjee, Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM); overview of chemicals under Stockholm Convention: challenges and way forward by Dr. Suneel Pandey, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), Sumathi N, MSME Development Institute, Prof. Munish Chandel, IIT Bombay, Dr. J K Sharma, UNEP and Dr. Tanushree Mondal, Department of Health & Family Welfare.

On second day, Ms. Ligia Noronha, Director, Economy Division, UN Environment launched the website of Stockholm Convention Regional Centre (SCRC) and inaugurated the analytical facility on POPs. Ms. Noronha said that UNEP Special Program on Chemicals and Waste supports developing countries and countries with economies in transition in strengthening their institutional capacity for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) at the national level. In the concluding session, the experts formulated strategies for the management of POPs in India. This workshop provided excellent platform to exchange knowledge and identify opportunities for taking forward this agenda.



Dr. L. Ramakrishnan inaugurating the workshop



Dr. L. Ramakrishnan delivering inaugural address



The dignitaries releasing a souvenir



Ms. Ligia Noronha, UNEP visiting analytical facility on POPs



Ms. Ligia Noronha, UNEP and other dignitaries at Harit Sangrahalaya



A view of the meeting