

Stockholm Convention

October 4, 2022

In news—The 18th meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP) Review Committee (POPRC-18) to the Stockholm Convention was concluded recently.

About the convention-

- Stockholm Convention is an **international environmental treaty that aims to eliminate or restrict the production and use of POPs** or the substances that persist in the environment and pose risk to our health.
- The Convention entered into force on May 17, 2004.
- It aims to protect human health and the environment from chemicals that remain intact in the environment for long periods, become widely distributed geographically, accumulate in the fatty tissue of humans and wildlife, and have harmful impacts on human health or on the environment.
- The Stockholm Convention has listed 31 chemicals as of December 2020.
- This list is likely to expand further amid evidence pointing towards the health burden of hazardous chemicals and pesticides.
- Under the convention, for intentionally produced POPs, parties must prohibit or restrict their production and use, subject to certain exemptions such as the continued use of DDT.
- The Stockholm Convention also requires parties to restrict trade in such substances.
- For unintentionally produced POPs, the Stockholm Convention requires countries to develop national action plans to address releases and to apply “Best Available Techniques” to control them.

Some of the characteristics of POPs-

- They are toxic.
- They have the potential to accumulate in unhealthy quantities in humans and animals.
- They are stable and thus resistant to natural breakdown.
- They can be transported over long distances through the atmosphere and oceans.
- **POPs have been shown to adversely affect human health and the environment.**
- **They have been linked to cancer, damage to the nervous system,** reproductive disorders, and weakening of the immune system.

Note:

- During the POPRC-18 the United Nations Environment Programme's **proposal to list chlorpyrifos as POP was resisted by India.** Still, chlorpyrifos got nominated as Persistent organic pollutants.
- Chlorpyrifos was registered under the Insecticide Act of 1968 since 1977 and Anupam Verma Committee recommended its review for continued use in 2015.
- **Chlorpyrifos, also known as Chlorpyrifos ethyl, is an organophosphate pesticide that has been used on crops, animals,** and buildings, and in other settings, to kill a number of pests, including insects and worms.
- **China and India are among the largest producers of chlorpyrifos.** Nearly 48 per cent of chlorpyrifos or 24,000 tonnes was produced in India. Globally, some 50,000 tonnes of chlorpyrifos is being used annually.
- In India, Chlorpyrifos was approved for agricultural use in 2021, which includes its use as a pesticide against pests affecting Bengal gram, rice and cotton.
- India had also opposed the decision to list flame retardant dechlorane plus.