



**Statement at the Pesticide Action Network's 25th Anniversary:
Advancing Ecological Agriculture, Health and Food Sovereignty
December 2, 2007**

Marking its 25th Anniversary, the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) International returned to the city of Penang, Malaysia where it began. PAN, a global social force of more than 600 non-governmental organizations and institutions in over 90 countries is rooted in the struggles of peasants, farmers' and farmworkers' movements and organizations working with scientists and health professionals; environmental, consumer and development groups; community activists and faith-based groups; Indigenous and immigrant organizations; women's and children's organizations; labor organizations and trade unions, and many other sectors.

In 1982, civil society leaders from 16 countries met in Penang to share their concerns about pesticides. The group directly challenged the so-called "Green Revolution" vision of input-intensive agriculture as the solution to hunger and rural problems, challenged the growing global epidemic of pesticide poisonings, and the total lack of accountability from the corporations and governments that produce, sell and promote these poisons. They also recognized pesticides both as profitable products that are marketed by a powerful global industry, and as a symptom of unsustainable industrial agricultural production models threatening the health of people and the environment around the world.

Recognizing that addressing these problems would require coordinated actions and solutions at many levels, they launched the Pesticide Action Network International (PAN) so people around the world could join forces and work together "towards the day when we can live in a world free of hazardous chemical pesticides."

25 years later, PAN groups have won countless national laws and regulations that ban and restrict pesticide use, and that protect people and the environment from exposure. PAN's campaigns have helped forged four important international treaties and agreements, and more are in progress. With allies in other social movements, PAN participants have co-created new concepts and approaches including Prior Informed Consent related to chemicals, the Precautionary Principle, and Peoples Food Sovereignty. Our network is widely recognized for effective advocacy that links local struggles with global policy initiatives. PAN information resources, including databases and community monitoring reports documenting long ignored pesticide impacts, are widely used and respected around the world.

We recognize, however, that much work remains ahead before we realize our goals. We must intensify our resistance to corporate control of agriculture and hold accountable the corporations that aggressively promote these toxic chemicals. To do this, we must forge greater unity and more effectively confront economic and political globalization

strategies that create and entrench agrochemical dependency and inequalities in production and consumption.

PAN members have contributed to and are actively working on alternatives to chemical pest control, such as participatory integrated pest management, and agroecological strategies for sustainable solutions including those that go beyond organic agriculture. PAN supports farmers, communities and peasant organizations, incorporating their local knowledge, with the aim of building food sovereignty and global social movements.

The principle of solidarity is central to all of PAN's work. We believe our network is most effective when it honors and amplifies the voices of people most directly harmed by pesticides.

PAN is committed to inclusion of everyone affected by pesticides and globalized corporate agriculture and in addressing and solving the problems we all face. Thus PAN works across a range of constituencies and issues: from short and long term health problems, environmental contamination, and loss of biodiversity; to labor rights and occupational health; to genetic engineering, bio-piracy and the right to save seeds; to hunger and landlessness; to women's rights and gender equity; to community and Indigenous land rights; to children's health and nutrition; to global warming, climate change and sustainable energy production that does not threaten food sovereignty.

PAN's work is coordinated by five autonomous collaborating regional Centers in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and North America. The core principles of solidarity and respect for diversity within and among regions and cultures are all crucial as PAN participants cooperate to better understand our shared interests, recognize our differences and develop joint actions and plans to achieve common goals.

As we celebrate our accomplishments and prepare for our next 25 years of work, we honor the work and sacrifices for the struggle made by the people who are no longer with us, many of whom were killed defending their rights, we reaffirm our commitment to advance the ecological management of production systems and of pests¹ and to eliminate the production, trade and use of harmful pesticides, while advancing Peoples Food Sovereignty and sustainable production and consumption of energy. We reject the paradigm that the world can only be fed with pesticides, genetic engineering and extraction of resources that destroys people, animals, land, air and water, and that overheats our planet. We commit to strengthen peoples initiatives and struggles that advance human rights to safe food, land resources and a healthy environment. We pledge to support ecologically sound, socially just food systems that are controlled by and responsive to the communities that make them possible. And we demand that our collective call for justice and planetary health be heard, so as to protect the Earth's capacity to sustain those alive today, and those yet to come.

Adopted by the participants of the 6th Meeting of PAN International

¹ Pests include insects, diseases and weeds.

Penang, Malaysia
28 November – 3 December 2007

* PAN marks December 3rd as International Day of No Pesticide Use to commemorate the 1984 disaster at the Union Carbide (now Dow) pesticide factory in Bhopal, India.