

**Open letter to Mr. Han Chang-fu,
Minister of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China**

**Stop export of Paraquat produced by Syngenta
and others in China!**

**Honourable Mr. Han Chang-fu,
Minister of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China,**

We welcome the suggestion of the Agricultural Ministry of China on 9 May 2016 to re-classify the toxicity of the pesticide Paraquat from “medium toxic” to “extremely toxic”ⁱ as well as the decisions taken by your ministry to ban the use of all Paraquat formulations in China.ⁱⁱ Further, we appreciate that the Institute for the Control of Agrochemicals (ICAMA) correctly stated that Paraquat has "no specific antidote, that accidental application is dangerous, and that illness duration is long and painful, and could be life-threatening".ⁱⁱⁱ

However, we are strongly concerned that the Agriculture Ministry of China on April 24 2012,² and again on May 9 2016,¹ officially allows production of Paraquat for export to be used in other parts of the world, harming the health of agricultural workers, farmers and the environment in these countries.

Syngenta is a main producer of some of the most toxic pesticides globally, including Paraquat. ChemChina represents the largest portion of the Chinese agrochemical industry, which already exports massive amounts of toxic agrochemicals, including Paraquat, to the world market.

After learning that the Chinese government announced that the use of Paraquat will be banned in China, Davor Pisk, Chief Operating Officer of Syngenta, expressed to the media in 2009: "Regarding the issue of Paraquat, we do not consider the policy of the Chinese government appropriate, but we will respect the discussions we had, and fully implement the decision"^{iv}. Instead, Syngenta announced in 2015 that its Nantong plant in China was increasing Paraquat production capacity for export from 6,000 tons to 10,000 tons.^v

We are concerned that if ChemChina successfully merges with Syngenta, this can further consolidate the harm to global mankind caused by China's export of the most toxic agrochemicals, including export of Paraquat.

The Agricultural Ministry of China invites the Paraquat producers in China to comment on the above-mentioned suggestions. However, farmers, farm workers or scientists, being the most important stakeholder with regard to the use of paraquat and its safety and health issues, are not invited for comments. It seems rather obvious that Syngenta and other producers of Paraquat in China will oppose the re-classification of Paraquat.

This decision should be discussed publicly and widely, as a final decision on the classification of Paraquat in the People's Republic of China might affect the decisions regarding the merger of Syngenta with ChemChina.

Most importantly, we are very concerned that despite all these acknowledgements of Paraquat's toxicity, the production in China for the export to other countries is not considered for a ban. This is potentially harming the people of other nations and is a crime against humanity. China's decisions in this matter have a huge global importance.

We therefore urge you to reconsider your decision in that matter and to work towards complete banning the production of Paraquat and other extremely toxic pesticides and to review the intention of ChemChina to acquire Syngenta for the sake of the health of the people and the environment in China as well as around the world.

Yours sincerely,

The undersigning organisations and people

ⁱ Agricultural Ministry Office: Official Letter Inviting Comments on Restriction Measures for 2,4-D-butyl ester and Other Pesticides, http://www.moa.gov.cn/govpublic/ZZYGLS/201605/t20160511_5124532.htm (2016-05-09)

ⁱⁱ Agricultural Ministry Office; Industry & Informationization Ministry; State Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine Bureau: Public Notice No.1745, http://www.moa.gov.cn/govpublic/ZZYGLS/201204/t20120427_2613538.htm (2012-04-24)

ⁱⁱⁱ Agricultural Ministry Office; document issued by ICAMA (Institute for the Control of Agrochemicals): Official Document Ref. No.2012-23, Notice for Carrying Out Implementation of Public Notice No.1745, <http://www.agronet.com.cn/News/730968.html> China Agriculture Network (2012-06-15)

^{iv} World Agrochemical Yellow Pages Online, Interview Syngenta: Why refuse Monsanto? After Paraquat is banned in China, how is Syngenta going to react? <http://cn.agropages.com/News/print---10384---.htm> (2015-09-09)

^v Syngenta Nantong Crops Protection Co., Ltd, Technical renovation project environment report, http://www.netda.gov.cn/files/103972/1512/42345_11e41e6b5.pdf (July 2015)