



Press statement
15th May 2025

Kenya's Pesticide Management Reforms: A Landmark Decision to Ban 50 Harmful Pesticide Products

Civil society applauds bold pesticide ban but urges full implementation, stronger regulatory oversight, and farmer-centered alternatives for a toxic-free food system.

Nairobi, Kenya. We, the undersigned, commend the Government of Kenya, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, for the bold announcement to ban over 50 pesticide products from the Kenyan market on 7th May 2025, by Hon. Mutahi Kagwe, EGH, Cabinet Secretary for Agriculture and Livestock Development.

If effectively implemented, this historic commitment marks a decisive step towards safeguarding human health and biodiversity and Kenya's ecological integrity, aligning with global best practices, as stipulated by the FAO/WHO International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management. This is a crucial step towards a safer, more sustainable food system.

Legal Reforms to Address Chemical Double Standards

We further applaud the enactment of the **Business Laws (Amendment) Act, 2024**, Section 12(2) of the Standards Act (cap 496), gazetted on 13th December, 2024. This legislation introduces a provision addressing the issue of double standards in chemical regulation, whereby hazardous substances banned or severely restricted in exporting countries have continued to be imported and used in Kenya. The Act provides a robust legislative foundation to support and enforce the announced ban of 50 pesticide products.

Parliamentary Momentum and Oversight on Pesticide Regulation

In April 2025, the National Assembly's Committee on Implementation reignited parliamentary momentum on oversight of pesticide regulation. The committee reviewed the long-standing inaction on a **2019 parliamentary petition** to review the withdrawal of hazardous pesticides. The findings revealed deep regulatory flaws. The committee reaffirmed the urgent need to prioritize protecting human health, biodiversity, and environmental sustainability over corporate interests.

We remain deeply concerned that several pesticide products, previously flagged for phase-out and scheduled to be withdrawn from the **Kenyan market by 31st December 2024**, remain openly available and in circulation. The continued presence and sale of these hazardous products undermines **human health** and **environmental safety** and erodes public confidence in regulatory enforcement mechanisms. It is essential that past withdrawal deadlines are respected and that



previously identified hazardous pesticides are entirely removed from the market to ensure regulatory integrity.

Persistent Advocacy for the Phase-Out of Highly Hazardous Pesticides

For years, civil society, researchers, farmers' organizations, and public health advocates have been deeply engaged in advocating for the phase-out of Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs) in Kenya. Through rigorous research and evidence generation, we have consistently highlighted the acute and chronic risks these pesticides pose to farmers, consumers, pollinators, and aquatic ecosystems.

We are hopeful that the list of 50 pesticide products targeted by the ban will be **made public** and will include the highly hazardous and widely used active ingredients long identified as a priority for regulatory action. These include **Mancozeb, Paraquat, Glyphosate, Carbendazim**, and several synthetic pyrethroids such as **Lambda-cyhalothrin, Cypermethrin, Deltamethrin** and others. These pesticides are extensively applied across Kenya's staple and export-oriented crops and have repeatedly been documented to pose significant acute and chronic effects.

Call to action:

Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development and the regulatory agency PCPB

We urge the Ministry to ensure that the process reflects lessons learned from the past reviews of the PCPB and aligns fully with international best practices for pest management such as FAO, WHO, EU Regulations and CODEX Alimentarius, among others. Specifically, we recommend that the PCPB:

- Prioritize active ingredients with the **highest combination of intrinsic hazard and exposure likelihood**;
- Base recommendations on **comprehensive risk assessments, international precedents, and local exposure data**;
- Ensure that banned substances are those linked to **demonstrable adverse effects** on human health and our biodiversity/ecosystems.

Our Recommendations for Strengthening the Pesticide Withdrawal Process

To ensure that Kenya's pesticide regulatory reform maximizes benefits to human health, the environment, and agricultural resilience, we recommend:

1. Formation of an Independent Expert Advisory Panel

We advocate for establishing a multidisciplinary advisory panel of independent toxicologists, ecotoxicologists, agronomists, public health experts, farmers' representatives, and civil society organizations. The mandate of the panel will be:

- **Review pesticide data,**
- **Assess regulatory proposals** and



Resources Oriented Development Initiatives

- **Provide evidence-based, conflict-free recommendations** to PCPB or a future Authority in its place.

Such an independent body would mitigate risks of regulatory capture and ensure decisions reflect public health and environmental priorities rather than narrow commercial interests.

2. Institutionalize Transparent and Inclusive Public Participation Processes

The responsible authorities and PCPB should establish **clear, regular, and transparent** mechanisms for stakeholder engagement throughout pesticide review processes. Relying solely on website-based notifications is inadequate and excludes broad sections of the public. Meaningful consultation requires proactive dissemination of information through multiple accessible channels, national newspapers, radio, community platforms, and direct outreach to farmer organizations and civil society groups.

Furthermore, PCPB should ensure that comprehensive documentation- such as **risk assessments, exposure data, usage statistics, and regulatory justifications**- is made publicly available in a timely and accessible manner. Consultation timelines should be clearly communicated, and structured opportunities should be provided for substantive input from farmers, consumers, researchers, health professionals, and advocacy groups.

Embedding these practices will enhance transparency, strengthen public trust, and ensure that regulatory decisions are informed by the diverse perspectives and lived realities of all segments of Kenyan society.

3. Develop Regulations to Operationalize the Double Standards Clause in Pesticide Control

We call on the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development to formulate specific regulations to implement the **double standards** provision introduced under the **Business Laws (Amendment) Act, 2024**. Clear and enforceable regulatory guidelines are critical to ensure this legal safeguard translates into meaningful protection for Kenyan farmers, consumers, and ecosystems.

The regulations should explicitly:

- **Define the scope** of double standards as it applies to pesticide registration, specifying the criteria for identifying products banned, withdrawn, or severely restricted in their countries of origin;
- **Establish robust screening protocols** for rejecting pesticide products that do not meet these criteria, ensuring that Kenya does not become a dumping ground for hazardous agrochemicals banned elsewhere and

- **Ensure consistent enforcement** aligned with international conventions, such as the **Rotterdam Convention** on Prior Informed Consent and the **FAO/WHO Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management**.

4. Support for Safer Alternatives

Recognizing the agricultural dependency on certain pesticides, we advocate for a **withdrawal strategy combined with the promotion of safer, effective alternatives**—including **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)**, **biopesticides**, and **agroecological approaches**. Supporting registration and approval of safer alternatives is critical to ensure farmers access quality alternatives.

We welcome the **Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development to adopt the *Farmers' Resource Guide: Achieving Food Production without Toxic Pesticides* (RTFI, 2024)**, which provides **practical, farmer-friendly solutions** to reduce pesticide dependency while maintaining crop productivity. The guide outlines **non-chemical pest management strategies**, highlights **locally adaptable agroecological practices**, and offers a roadmap for transitioning towards safer pest control methods in staple and horticultural crops.

By aligning the pesticide withdrawal process with dissemination and training based on this farmer's guide, Kenya can ensure:

- **Minimal disruption** to farmers,
- **Prevention of substitution** with even more harmful chemical products and
- **Sustained agricultural productivity** while safeguarding **human and environmental health**.

We strongly encourage the integration of this guide into extension services, farmer field schools, and cooperative networks to maximize its reach and impact.

5. Enhance Institutional Capacity and Budgetary Support for PCPB

We recommend that **the National Assembly**, National Treasury and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development strengthen the capacity of all institutions mandated to **regulate**, **surveil** and **enforce** pesticide management decisions as recommended by the Departmental **Committee of Health Report on Public Petition 70 of 2019**. Despite its central regulatory role, PCPB remains underfunded, understaffed, and not formally categorized as a state corporation, thus undermining its ability to enforce pesticide regulations effectively. The stalled construction of the **national pesticide residue laboratory**, initiated in 2018 and yet to be completed due to lack of funding, represents these systemic challenges.

We, therefore, welcome the Cabinet's recent approval of a bill to transform PCPB into a full-fledged regulatory authority, and we are hopeful that this legislative reform will address the



governance, budgetary, and operational gaps that have historically undermined the Board's effectiveness.

Signed:

- **Harun Warui, PHD**, Programm lead, [The Route to Food Initiative](#) (RTFI)
- **Anne Maina**, National Coordinator, [Biodiversity and Biosafety Association of Kenya](#) (BIBA Kenya)
- **Eustaus Kiaire**, Executive Director, [Kenya Organic Agriculture Network](#) (KOAN)
- **Alice Kemunto**, Chief Executive Officer, [Consumer Grassroots Association](#) (CGA)
- **Easter Bett**, Executive Director, [Resources Oriented Development Initiatives](#) (RODI)
- **Asenath Wacera**, Executive Director, [Community Organization & Training for Risk Reduction](#) (COTTR)
- **Gloria Michira**, Program Manager, [Kenya Parliamentary Human Rights Association](#) (KEPHRA)
- **Fredrick Onyango**, Programme Officer, HHPs Program, [Centre for Environment Justice and Development](#) (CEJAD)