



Pesticide newsletter

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Civil Society Activities



United Nations: Report on the right to science in the context of toxic substances

The annual thematic [report](#) of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights implications of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous chemicals and wastes, Marcos Orellana (who was the clerk of the [Monsanto Tribunal](#)), is entitled: Right to science in the context of toxic substances. This report, published in July 2021, was presented on September 21 to the Human Rights Council. It focuses on the human right to science in relation to the risks and adverse effects associated with the life cycle of hazardous products and wastes, including the dynamics and interdependence of scientific advances, the dissemination of scientific information and the science-policy interface.

The report recalls that science informs the international community of the risks and hazards of certain products to human health and the environment. Public policies based on scientific knowledge should be able to deal with the facts.

The need to build bridges between scientists and public policy makers is strongly reaffirmed. The report deplores that "political and ideological stakes, lack of transparency, protection of economic interests or other conflicts of interest hinder the few mechanisms intended to serve as an interface between science and policy".

According to the new report, scientific misinformation plays an important role in the exposure of individuals or groups of people to hazardous products and wastes. The use of manufacturing doubt for profit is strongly denounced. The report reminds us that the companies using disinformation strategies are most often "manufacturers of deadly substances" producing "hazardous materials". Furthermore, it is emphasized that the charges against science are not only about scientific data, but also about the scientists themselves.

The report is a comprehensive study of the "right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications" or "right to science". This right is guaranteed by [Article 27](#) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and further developed in the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#). It is also enshrined in regional human rights instruments as well as in a number of national constitutions.

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