

PAN Africa Responds to DDT Promotion in Wall Street Journal

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With reference to your editorial “DDT and Population Control” of April 24, it is shocking for me and my colleagues from Africa to read the sheer misinformation and misrepresentation by your newspaper of the efforts of environmental and public health NGOs to advocate for effective and safe strategies for malaria control. By painting NGOs like Pesticide Action Network, with the same brush as the Malthusian Messrs. Ehrlich and Hardin you do a great disservice to the thousands of grassroots organizations and citizens groups that are part of Pesticide Action Network (PAN) in Africa and whose priorities and demands are what lead to the advocacy for safe, sustainable malaria solutions. PAN strongly supports the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants’ call for the ultimate elimination of DDT, while allowing short term use of this persistent and bio-accumulative pesticide in countries that demonstrate an immediate need.

When you quote DDT pushers like Richard Tren of Africa Fighting Malaria you advance their not-so-hidden objective of cynically using DDT as a tool to further their anti- regulatory agenda. Tren and his allies have always been at this game- defending tobacco interests, denying climate change and now using DDT as an issue to sow doubt and fear about government regulations and movements for corporate accountability. Let’s be clear- Africa Fighting Malaria is not for Africans.

Pesticide Action Network and our allies in Africa, Asia, Latin America, North America and Europe will not be cowed down by such tactics. We are here to advocate for the safest, most effective and sustainable malaria control solutions, not ‘silver bullet’ strategies like DDT that have solid scientific evidence from independent reviews backing evidence of grave human health harm. Communities in Africa who are suffering from malaria deserve the best, most modern protection that science can lay at their service- not antiquated toxic solutions like DDT.

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