



## 2011 / 2012 Post Graduate Diploma on Pesticide Risk Management

in South Africa  
28 March ~ 8 April 2011



Participants in the inaugural Postgraduate Diploma in Pesticide Risk Management are photographed with convenor, Dr Andrea Rother (front, second left) and DVC, Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo (front, third left).

The Faculty celebrated the launch of the inaugural Postgraduate Diploma in Pesticide Risk Management on Thursday, 31 March 2011, convened by Dr Andrea Rother, Health Risk Management Programme Leader in the Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health Research. The course brings together students from countries as diverse as Fiji and St Lucia in the Caribbean, as well as a wide range of African countries including Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo officially welcomed the 18 students, who will be on campus for two weeks, before returning to their home countries to complete the coursework online, making use of the University's Vula distance learning platform system. They will then return at the end of 2012 to write final examinations and graduate. Prof Nhlapo explained that this type of programme is seen as being very important within the framework of the University's academic plan as Afropolitanism remains a University-wide strategic priority. "People who are assets in our countries don't have to go abroad to study the issues of Africa, and we are not sitting in South Africa, isolated from the rest of Africa and its issues," he said. A course focusing on pesticides is a faculty first.

Dr Rother acknowledged the role of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, who approached her two years ago to initiate

the course around the UN Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, which covers issues around the regulation of pesticides, the health effects of pesticide use, and toxicology and ecotoxicology training. The FAO through the EC funded project (Capacity building related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries - Clean up of obsolete pesticides, pesticide management and sustainable pest management) is the principal sponsor of the course development and also supports students from countries with a known problem linked to pesticide management, the other being the Swedish Chemical Agency (KemI). Professor Mohamed Jeebhay, acting head of the School of Public Health and Family Medicine, added his good wishes to the participants, and thanked Dr Rother for her efforts in establishing this course, which he described as "another feather in our cap in terms of our outreach programmes". Dr Rother added that all of the materials developed for this course are "open source" and will be available as a resource to both participants and the general public.

FAO is looking to expand the scope of the course and is investigating the development of additional centres of excellence that can offer the materials in other regions and other languages. The development of short courses based on individual modules is also in the pipeline.



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