

STATEMENT OF THE BOARD OF CENCAM¹

THE NEED FOR INTERVENTIONS AND STUDIES ON PESTICIDES AS A POTENTIAL CAUSE OF THE MESOAMERICAN NEPHROPATHY

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Pesticides have been a suspected cause of the epidemic of chronic kidney disease of non-traditional origin affecting agricultural workers in Mesoamerica ever since the disease began to be recognized in the early 1990s. Workers and affected communities have related the disease to the increasing pesticide exposures they have been experiencing. Concerns regarding an association between toxic pesticide exposures and the Mesoamerican nephropathy (MeN) are shared by researchers and governments.

Within CENCAM there exist different opinions regarding the strength of evidence of pesticides as a primary cause of MeN, but there is consensus about the multi-causality of the disease and the possible interaction of different risk factors, including pesticides. In addition, we agree that persons with chronic kidney disease need to be protected from all toxic exposures, which will worsen their kidney and general health conditions.

We believe that national and regional policies of stricter pesticide regulations as well as workplace interventions limiting pesticide exposures are needed. Such preventive measures would favor the health of workers and communities at risk of MeN. CENCAM fully supports controlling or banning pesticides (or other agrochemicals) which have been related to the MeN epidemic, as well as those pesticides that have been restricted or banned in other parts of the world in the interest of public health. CENCAM also supports further research into the role of pesticides in the epidemic of MeN and the evaluation of the potential impact that interventions to limit pesticide exposures could have on the prevention of MeN.

¹The Consortium on the Epidemic of Nephropathy in Central America and Mexico (CENCAM) is a consortium of researchers united in the conduct of research aimed at combating rising rates of chronic kidney disease of unknown origin (CKDu) in Mesoamerica. CENCAM was founded in November 2012 at the First International Research Workshop on Mesoamerican Nephropathy (MeN) in Costa Rica and aims to reduce the prevalence of CKD in Central America and to facilitate research collaborations.