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Supply of DDT to South Africa for Malaria Control Program

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Why in News

Recently, **HIL (India) Limited** has supplied 20.60 Metric tonne of **Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT)**, a fertilizer to South Africa for their **malaria** control program.

The Company is further in the process of supplying DDT to Zimbabwe and Zambia in the current Financial Year 2020-21.

HIL (India) Limited

- It is a PSU under the **Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers**.
- It was incorporated in 1954 to manufacture and supply DDT to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for **malaria control programmes**.
- It is the **sole manufacturer of DDT** globally.

Key Points

- **DDT:**

- It is a colorless, tasteless, and almost odorless crystalline chemical compound.
 - It was first synthesized in 1874 by the Austrian chemist Othmar Zeidler.
 - Its insecticidal action was discovered by the **Swiss chemist Paul Hermann Muller** in 1939.
 - He was awarded the **Nobel Prize** in Physiology or Medicine in 1948 "for his discovery of the high efficiency of DDT as a **contact poison against several arthropods.**
 - Arthropods** are invertebrate species which include insects (Mosquitos), arachnids (Spiders), and crustaceans (Crabs) etc.
 - Originally developed as **an insecticide**, it became infamous for its **environmental impacts.**
 - A worldwide ban on agricultural use was formalized under the **Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.**
 - However, its limited use in **disease vector control continues**, because of its **effectiveness in reducing malarial infections.**
 - The **World Health Organisation** (WHO) recommends DDT as one of the efficient **Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS)** chemicals to **curb mosquito menace** and it is widely used by Southern African countries like South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia, Mozambique and India.
 - IRS is a **core vector control intervention** that involves the application of a residual insecticide to internal walls and ceilings of housing structures where malaria vectors may come into contact with the insecticide.
 - **Supply to South Africa: South Africa will be utilising DDT** in three provinces bordering **Mozambique.**
 - The region is **highly affected with Malaria** and it has reported **maximum morbidity and mortality.**
- **Supply to Other Countries:** HIL (India) Limited has recently exported **Malathion Technical 95%** to Iran under Government-to-Government initiative for the **Locust Control Programme** and also exported **Agrochemical-fungicide** to Latin American region.

Malaria

- **Malaria** is caused by **Plasmodium parasites.**
 - The parasites are spread to people through the bites of infected **female Anopheles mosquitoes, called "malaria vectors".**

- **Impact:** Malaria continues to be one of the **major public health problems** globally.
 - In 2018, an estimated **228 million cases** of malaria occurred worldwide.
 - Most of the **cases and deaths (93%)** were reported from **African Region**.
 - In the South East Asia Region, **India accounts** for the majority of cases and death.
 - According to **World Malaria Report 2019**, India reported 2.6 million fewer cases in 2018 **compared to 2017**. Thus the overall incidence of malaria in the country has reduced.
 - However, 7 states (**Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Gujarat, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh**) account for about 90% of the burden of malaria cases in India.

Source: PIB