

JOINT RESOLUTION

ASIAN BAN ASBESTOS CONFERENCE

September 28-30, 2021



Preamble

The COVID19 pandemic, which affects almost every country in the world, has exposed multiple weaknesses in the structure of the world order. The sudden onslaught of the pandemic has shaken the governance of countries on every continent, exposing fault lines in economic, social and humanitarian policies.

Inequality, injustice and exploitation that had become accepted practices as a result of geopolitical relationships hampered the global response to the pandemic. Facing such an emergency, decision-makers were forced to choose between the lives of citizens and the prosperity of vested economic interests

We, trade unions, organizations, individuals, victims' networks, doctors and scientists who are members and supporters of the Asian Ban Asbestos Network

ABAN, believe that saving human lives is humanity's highest priority. That is, surely, the purpose of every nation on every continent.

The Asbestos Hazard and Covid-19

Asbestos, which is still being consumed in many countries is a time bomb that can explode at any moment with deadly consequences. The ability of people affected by asbestos-related diseases (ARDs) to recover from the coronavirus is seriously compromised by their condition. It is unconscionable to wait idly on the side-lines while so many countries fail to prioritize the lives of the injured or take action to stop more toxic exposures.

The pandemic has exposed many cruel injustices including the marginalization of asbestos victims and the dire consequences for entire communities where asbestos mining and manufacturing remains a way of life. The asbestos deaths which occur are completely avoidable and the phasing out of toxic asbestos technology will not only protect workers but also members of the public. Every life is precious.

Call for Action

The commitment of all ABAN members is to protect populations in every country from the dangers of asbestos. To accomplish this goal we call on the international community to come together to stop the asbestos trade. Asian governments and businesses must accept that in the post-pandemic world, there is no place for a toxic technology based on asbestos, a known carcinogen.

Deeply saddened by the asbestos deaths of hundreds of thousands of people around the world every year, we are united by our grief and determination to create an asbestos-free future for all humanity.

We, the members and supporters of the Asian Ban Asbestos Network, hereby declare the following:

- *All types of asbestos are dangerous to human life.* For this reason, we will make strenuous efforts to get national governments to protect lives by banning the use of asbestos
- *The asbestos trade must stop immediately.* We will continue to emphasize the importance of adding asbestos to the list of substances subject to the prior informed consent protocol of the United Nations' Rotterdam

Convention. To achieve this, the collaboration of the global network is required to resolve the existing impasse imposed by asbestos industry stakeholders.

- *National asbestos bans across Asia and the Pacific are a matter of urgency.* The asbestos industries short term profits should not be allowed to continue to cause such massive personal tragedy and loss, with economic and environmental costs of the toxic others. Asbestos Not Here Not Anywhere.
- *The asbestos manufacturing sector must replace the use of asbestos fiber with sustainable and safe alternative material immediately.* Asbestos-free products exist as has been shown in countries which have already banned asbestos Corporations, which are vital drivers of national economies, must recognize their duties not only to shareholders but also to workers, consumers and local communities.
- *The economic burden of ARDS must not be off-loaded to individuals and communities but must be shouldered by negligent employers and complicit governments.* People with ARDs worked in a variety of industrial sectors from mining to manufacturing; many of the injured NEVER worked with asbestos but experienced environmental exposures from asbestos liberated by operations at mines or factories or building sites.
- *Occupational health and safety must be given the status of a fundamental right by the International Labour Organization (ILO),* alongside the existing fundamental rights: freedom of association, collective bargaining and protection from discrimination, forced labour and child labour. We hope that a decision in this regard will be taken at the ILO Conference in June 2022.
- *The inclusive and sustainable model of doing business under the United Nations' Guiding Principle for business and human rights, leaves no one behind and pays special attention to the human rights of underprivileged sections of society.* The National Action Plan makes all stakeholders accountable for securing safe and inclusive working conditions. We endorse adherence to this model by all States as they take steps to promote ethical businesses.
- *Asian Ban Asbestos Network members reaffirm their commitment to build a better world through solidarity and global collaborations.* Whilst ending asbestos use is a priority, ensuring that toxic asbestos contamination of national infrastructures and environments is eradicated remains a long-term goal. Only then, will future generations be safe from the asbestos hazard.

In the memory of the millions of victims of asbestos related diseases over past years and on behalf of all those campaigning in Asia Pacific and globally for an asbestos-free future, we pledge that our efforts to achieve a global asbestos ban will continue until we win.

Ban Asbestos Network Japan (BANJAN)
Ban Asbestos Network of Korea (BANKO)
Indonesia Ban Asbestos Network (InaBAN)
Vietnam Asbestos-related Diseases Elimination Group (VEDRA)
Laos Ban Asbestos Network (LaoBAN)
Cambodia Ban Asbestos Network (CambAN)
Bangladesh Ban Asbestos Network (BBAN)
India Ban Asbestos Network (IBAN)
Association of the Rights of Industrial Accident Victims (ARIAV), Hong Kong
Taiwan OSH-Link
ALU-TUCP, Philippines
Health and Safety Advisory Centre (HASAC), Malaysia
Center for Public Health and Environmental Development (CEPHED), Nepal
International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS)
Asia Monitor Resource Centre (AMRC)
Union Aid Abroad (APHEDA)
Building Workers International (BWI)
Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)
Solidar Suisse