

Statement From the Asia Regional Conference on Asbestos

Jakarta 4th August 2010

CANADA –STOP EXPORTING CHRYSOTILE TO ASIA

“Canada portrays itself as a defender of Human Rights, while continuing to export deadly chrysotile asbestos to Asia”

The Quebec government is preparing to give a loan guarantee of \$58 million to rescue the asbestos industry and allow the opening of the new Jeffrey underground mine. Québec and the rest of Canada refuse to use asbestos in the built environment, so Jeffrey Mine Inc. plans to export 200,000 tonnes of asbestos a year from the new underground mine to developing countries for the next 25 to 50 years.

Causing Death

Asbestos is one of the most hazardous substances that is still being sold for industrial use. Exposure to asbestos is stated by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to be the **single largest cause of occupational cancers in the world**, killing about 100,000 to 140,000 globally every year. The World Health Organization estimates that between 5 and 10 million people will ultimately die from asbestos-related diseases.

Promoting Deadly Misinformation

A large proportion of these deaths will be attributed to the mines of Quebec in Canada which stubbornly continues not only to export but also promote the use of asbestos in developing countries, including **India, Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia**, and historically exported to **Japan and Korea** where asbestos related deaths continue. The asbestos industry falsely claims that chrysotile is safe and that chrysotile is being used within safe limits of exposure. But the international scientific community and international organizations, such as the **International Agency for the Research of Cancer (IARC)**, the **World Health Organization**, **International Labour Organization** and the **Canadian Cancer Society**, all classify chrysotile asbestos as a human carcinogen and have determined that there is *no safe threshold of exposure* to it. Asia is in the midst of an asbestos disease epidemic. Many people die every year from lung cancers and mesothelioma caused by exposure to asbestos at work or in the built environment. Due to its long latency period, (sometimes over 30 years) the asbestos-related diseases are a ticking time bomb that will continue to kill for many more years. **The Canadian government must be held to account for the deaths they have caused. We demand that Canada:**

- 1. Stops the production of asbestos**
- 2. Stops the export of asbestos**
- 3. Contributes actively towards the Global Ban on all forms of Asbestos and the elimination of asbestos diseases**

Signed by participants at the Asia Regional Conference on Asbestos Jakarta 4th August 2010 , representing: Association of Construction and Informal Workers (ACIW); Philippines Associated Labour Unions (ALU) ; Building and Wood Workers Federation of Cambodia (BWTUC); Building and Wood Workers Federation of Thailand; Federation of Construction, Informal and General Workers (FKUI) Indonesia; Union of Employees in the Construction Industry (UECI), Malaysia; Construction Workers Union (CWU), Timor Leste; Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU); National Institute for Labour Protection (NILP), Vietnam; Local Initiative on OSH Network (LION), Indonesia; Friends of Earth (FOE), Indonesia; Ban Asbestos Network Korea (BANKO); Ban Asbestos Network Japan (BANJAN); Asian Ban Network (A-BAN) ; Building and Woodworkers International, International Metalworkers Federation.