



12 September, 2016

Shri Anil Madhav Dave
Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) Environment, Forest & Climate Change
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Indira Paryavaran Bhavan, Jorbagh Road
New Delhi - 110 003, India
Email: anil.dave@sansad.nic.in

Re: Asbestos Ban in India

Dear Minister Anil Madhav Dave,

On behalf of the Occupational and Environmental Health Network of India (OEHNI), the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN) and the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat, we wish to congratulate you on your interview with the Times of India on August 15, 2016 in which you were quoted as saying “Since the use of asbestos is affecting human health, its use should gradually be minimised and eventually end. As far as I know, its use is declining. But it must end...”¹

Data sourced from the United States Geological Survey show that in the three years 2012, 2013 and 2014 total asbestos consumption in India was 1,174,765 tonnes. To put this figure into context, before the UK banned asbestos, it had used 7 million tonnes; this consumption produced the country's most deadly epidemic of occupational diseases. Each year more than 5,000 people die from avoidable diseases caused by asbestos including asbestosis, mesothelioma, lung and other cancers. In Japan and Korea, similar epidemics have been reported. We believe that due to the long latency period of these diseases, a similar catastrophe is being incubated in India. In fact, cases of the fatal asbestos-related cancer mesothelioma amongst Indian workers have been reported including that of Shankar Jog on July 19, 2016.²

¹ Will look for alternatives to carcinogenic asbestos: Environment Minister. August 15, 2016.
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Will-look-for-alternatives-to-carcinogenic-asbestos-Mantri/articleshow/53703528.cms>

² Remembering Shankar Dattaray Jog. August 4, 2016.
<http://ibasecretariat.org/lka-remembering-shankar-dattaray-jog.php>

Over 50 countries have banned the use of asbestos products. Ten years ago, the ILO and WHO called for a global ban on the manufacture and use of asbestos and asbestos products. The World Bank has also issued a directive to avoid the use of asbestos products in construction projects, including disaster relief as has the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.³

The OEHNI, ABAN and IBAS networks are well established regionally-based, grassroots campaigning groups which have access to key resources including information on various subject areas such as the existence and use of asbestos-free materials, the transition from outdated asbestos technology to cleaner production processes, the state of the art in medical treatment, support for victims, preventative measures and environmental hazards. We would be more than happy to work with you on developing a road map to free India from the asbestos scourge.

Sincerely,

R Sreedhar, OEHNI Secretariat, New Delhi, India

Sugio Furuya, Chair ABAN, Tokyo, Japan

Laurie Kazan-Allen, IBAS Coordinator, London, England

³ World Bank. *Good Practice Note: Asbestos: Occupational and Community Health Issues*. 2009. <https://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTPOPS/Resources/AsbestosGuidanceNoteFinal.pdf>
UNHCR Inter-Office Memorandum No. 025/2005
[http://ibasecretariat.org/unhcr_memorandum_025_\(iom\)-025\(fom\)_mar_25_2005.pdf](http://ibasecretariat.org/unhcr_memorandum_025_(iom)-025(fom)_mar_25_2005.pdf)