

**Remarks by PSI representative to the Rotterdam convention's conference of the parties on 28 October, 2008 in Rome.**

Dear Madam chair, distinguished delegates,

Thank you for the opportunity and privilege of making some remarks to this conference. I am Doctor Jorge Mancillas, Health officer for Public Services International. PSI is a global federation of 651 public employees unions in 161 countries, who have a combined membership of over 20 million active union members.

We want to express the position of PSI and convey to you the publicly expressed opinion of the International Trade Union Confederation, the ITUC, which represents 168 million active union members in 155 countries, including all the countries which have expressed opposition to including chrysotil asbestos in Annex III.

Our organizations strongly support the inclusion of chrysotile asbestos in Annex III.

In expressing its opposition to inclusion, the Russian delegate voices its concern for the 60,000 workers who might be affected economically by such a decision. The trade union movement re[resents the interests of those 60,000 workers the Russian delegate refers to. He does not have their informed consent. Their trade unions do.

We represent those most at risk. We have witnessed the consequences of occupational exposure to chrysotile asbestos for workers. It is our concern for the health and safety of millions of workers that is the base for our support of inclusion of Chrysotile asbestos in Annex III.

We are deeply concerned at what today's deliberations portend for the Rotterdam Convention.

The parties to the convention, by consensus, agreed to a thorough, reliable process to evaluate substances for inclusion in Annex III.

The parties to the convention, by consensus, agreed on the composition of the Chemical Review Committee (CRC).

All parties had an opportunity to provide all relevant information to the 31 scientists in the CRC.

The process went forward with everyone's informed consent.

Now, when the CRC submits a recommendation in its guidance document, a few parties raise questions and block the reaching of a consensus.

To selectively pick which recommendation suits you and which it does not, based on considerations which remain to be fully clarified, undermines the whole process.

Especially, when all parties had an opportunity to design the process, and participate in the process. We strongly urge all parties to carefully measure the consequences of what they are doing here today.