

**Asian Ban Asbestos Network, Asia Monitor Resource Centre, Asian Network for the Rights Of Occupational Accident Victims, Building and Wood Workers' International, International Ban Asbestos Secretariat, Occupational & Environmental Health Network of India, Mine Labour Protection Campaign, India, Peoples Training And Research Centre, India, The Forum of Asbestos Victims' Support Groups UK, Japan Association of Asbestos-related Disease Victims and Their Families, Ban Asbestos Japan, Ban Asbestos Network Korea, Brazilian Association of the Asbestos-Exposed, Ban Asbestos France and Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization, U.S.**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**embargoed SEPTEMBER 1, 2010**

### **Warning to Asbestos Investors!**

**London England:** Representatives of civil society from around the world reacted with outrage to news that Asian and European funds could be used to expand asbestos operations at the Jeffrey Mine, Quebec.<sup>1</sup> News broadcast by the Canadian media in late August suggested that “potential investors” from India and London will travel to Quebec this month to observe mining operations with an eye to future investment.<sup>2</sup>

Global ban activists, who have been closely monitoring the situation at the Jeffrey Mine, had hoped that the economic situation combined with a tidal wave of objections to government investment in the mine, would bring about the demise of the planned expansion. The financial participation by investors from India will most definitely prove contentious. “When Quebec’s Premier came to India earlier this year,” said Mohit Gupta of the Occupational and Environmental Health Network of India, “asbestos victims, trade unionists and others mounted protests in Mumbai and New Delhi over Quebec’s hypocritical stance on asbestos, a substance virtually unused in Canada.<sup>3</sup> We will denounce any and all Indian companies which choose to invest in this deadly industry.”

Concurring with Mr. Gupta’s sentiments, Tony Whitston, Chair of the Forum of Asbestos Victims’ Support Groups (the Forum) UK, said: “With more than 4,000 people dying in this country from asbestos-related diseases every year, it is outrageous that any UK company would be considering cofinancing an asbestos mine in Canada. Forum members are in discussion with trade unionists, politicians, campaigners and ban asbestos supporters as to what action should be taken in the event such investments are made.”

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<sup>1</sup> Thibodeau C. *Mine Jeffrey: la production reprend pour un mois*. August 26, 2010.

<http://www.lanouvelle.net/Economie/Ressources-naturelles/2010-08-26/article-1701012/>

Lalonde M. *Asbestos mining resumes for now*. August 28, 2010.

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/business/Asbestos+mining+resumes/3453561/story.html#ixzz0xv2QSE8b>

<sup>2</sup> The mine owners urgently need \$75 million+ to finish work on underground mining facilities; although, the Quebec government intimated it would provide the bulk of this money, it has not yet done so.

<sup>3</sup> *India Rejects Quebec Premier*.

[http://ibasecretariat.org/lka\\_india\\_rejects\\_asb\\_premier.php](http://ibasecretariat.org/lka_india_rejects_asb_premier.php)

## Notes to Editors

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- The World Health Organization, the International Labor Organization, the European Union, the International Commission on Occupational Health, the United Nations, the Collegium Ramazzini, groups representing global labor and many other international agencies and national governments agree that exposure to all types of asbestos is hazardous.<sup>4</sup>
- According to a fact sheet issued by the World Health Organization in July 2010: "more than 107 000 people die each year from asbestos-related lung cancer, mesothelioma and asbestosis resulting from occupational exposure."<sup>5</sup>
- The Quebec Medical Association, representing Quebec's 9,500 doctors, as well as the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Cancer Society, have all called on the Quebec government to oppose the mine, stating "To continue to mine and export asbestos is unacceptable on the medical level."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See: *Asbestos Policies of Major International Agencies*

[http://ibasecretariat.org/lka\\_asb\\_polic\\_maj\\_int\\_agencies.php](http://ibasecretariat.org/lka_asb_polic_maj_int_agencies.php)

<sup>5</sup> WHO Fact sheet N°343, July 2010: *Asbestos: elimination of asbestos-related diseases*

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs343/en/index.html>

<sup>6</sup> In a press release, these groups noted: "Depuis 1945 la communauté médicale recense et identifie des pathologies liées à l'amiante. Continuer à exploiter des mines d'amiante, et à exporter ce produit, sont des gestes inacceptables au plan médical. C'est pourquoi l'AMQ avec ses 9 500 membres joint sa voix à l'Association médicale canadienne pour demander au gouvernement du Québec de reconsidérer la garantie de prêt demandée par la mine Jeffrey."

<http://newswire.ca/fr/releases/archive/June2010/30/c9438.html>