



Associated Labor Unions – TUCP

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July 10, 2012

His Excellency Christopher Thornley

Ambassador to the Philippines
Canada Embassy, Levels 6-8, Tower 2
RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Avenue
Makati City 1200

RE: Canadian government 50 million Canadian dollars loan to Jeffrey Mines

Dear Ambassador Thornley,

We would like to convey to you how your government's decision on June 29 to grant a 50-million Canadian dollars loan to revive the operation of Jeffrey Asbestos Mines deeply dismayed the labor and trade union-initiated tri-party's campaign to phase out asbestos-related diseases in the Philippines and lessen the exposure of millions of Filipino workers to cancer-causing asbestos dusts.

Since 2009, the Associated Labor Unions-Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (ALU-TUCP) partners with the Building and Woodworkers International (BWI) in prompting a government inter- agency tripartite process called National Programmes for the Elimination of Asbestos-Related Diseases (NPEAD)—a template designed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) precisely to address the problems that has been latently killing working people and members of their families in the country and around the world for many decades.

The process identified the Jeffrey Mines as the source of asbestos that the more than 3 million Filipino workers who are significantly exposed to every day. The several thousands of raw, unlabelled asbestos which are imported from that mine every year are mixed with various commercial and home products which end up in schools, residential buildings, warehouses, including government offices and infrastructures.

When bankruptcy stopped the mine operations last year, the process optimistically developed toward identifying alternative materials which prepared the asbestos-industry players toward just transition. However, the repercussions of your government's decision to grant such loan corroded the entire progress of the process that the tripartite body has made over several years here in the Philippines. By such decision, the Canadian government bolstered the shackle of Filipino workers to the risk of asbestos exposure.

We hope that our collective conscience will warm down the reprehensible decision your government have made and take back the loan mandate for the sake of the well-being of workers and their families in the Philippines and all over the world.

Respectfully yours,

Gerard R. Seno
National Vice President
Member, Oversight Executive Committee

Cc:
Michael Mendoza, Member OEC
Heads, NO

