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The Asian Ban Asbestos Mission to Brazil 2019

No More Asbestos Exports to Asia!

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A joint initiative of the Asian Ban Asbestos Network, the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat and the Brazilian Association of the Asbestos-Exposed

April 22-28, 2019

SECTION 1

The Asian Ban Asbestos Mission to Brazil 2019 No More Asbestos Exports to Asia!

Statement by the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN) Delegation to Brazil 2019

We are here today representing asbestos victims, trade unions and health organizations in Asia. We are horrified that even after Brazil's Supreme Court declared the commercialization of asbestos unconstitutional, the Eternit Group – owners of the country's sole chrysotile asbestos mine – intends to send deadly asbestos shipments to Asia.¹ Eliezer João de Souza, President of the Brazilian Association of the Asbestos-Exposed, has condemned Eternit's decision, calling it a "national disgrace." "If exposure to asbestos is too dangerous for Brazilians," Eliezer remarked "surely it is equally so for citizens of Asian countries."

The majority of the 1.5 million tonnes of chrysotile (white) asbestos being used every year is consumed in Asian countries which have few, if any, health and safety regulations and no safety nets or financial support for the asbestos-injured or their families. Raghunath Kasalagi Manavar from Ahmadabad, India is a former power station worker who was environmentally exposed to asbestos throughout his career. Like so many of his co-workers, Raghunath had no knowledge about the hazards of working with asbestos. For more than 20 years, he has been working to assist asbestos victims obtain accurate diagnoses of their diseases and obtain appropriate treatment. It is an uphill battle. India is Brazil's most important overseas asbestos customer, accounting for ~60% of all Brazilian asbestos exports between April 2018 and February 2019; between 2010 and 2017, more than 45% of Brazilian asbestos exports went to India.

ABAN mission delegate Siti Kristina is a former asbestos textile worker from Jakarta, Indonesia; for 23 years she worked in a factory which mixed, carded, spun, twisted, wound and weaved chrysotile asbestos. In 2010 she was diagnosed with asbestosis; in 2013 she was dismissed from her job due to ill health with neither medical assistance nor financial support. More than 20% of Brazil's asbestos exports between 2010 and 2017 went to Indonesia.

Asbestos is the world's worst industrial killer. Latest statistics suggest that annual global asbestos mortality could exceed 250,000;² this is equivalent to wiping out a city the size of Vitoria da Conquista (Bahia), Brazil, Avadi (Tamil Nadu), India, Banda Aceh (Aceh), Indonesia, or Porto, Portugal every year.

The World Health Organization, the International Labor Organization, the International Agency for Research on Cancer and other bodies tasked with protecting public and occupational health agree that the best way to eradicate asbestos-related diseases is to stop the use of asbestos.³ We are here to ask for the support of civil society in Brazil to outlaw the export of asbestos from your country.

¹ *Eternit deixa de usar amianto em seus produtos e mina produzirá só para exportação.* [Eternit stops using asbestos in its products and mine will produce only for export]. January 11, 2019. <https://www.arenadopavini.com.br/arenas-das-empresas/eternit-deixa-de-usar-amianto-em-seus-produtos-e-mina-produzira-so-para-exportacao>

² Takala J. et al. *Comparative Analysis of the Burden of Injury and Illness at Work in Selected Countries and Regions*. June 2017. Central European Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. <http://www.efbww.org/pdfs/CEJOEM%20Comparative%20analysis.pdf>

³ *Asbestos Policies of International Organizations*. Accessed April 2, 2019. http://ibasecretariat.org/lka_asb_polic_maj_int_agencies.php

SECTION 2

Introducing the Members of the Delegation

Sugio Furuya is the Secretary General of the Ban Asbestos Network Japan (BANJAN), a coalition of asbestos victims and their families, trade unions, civil societies and interested individuals established in 1987. He was a founding member of the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (A-BAN) in 2009 and since then has been its coordinator.

Raghunath Manavar (India) worked as a casual labourer in a thermal power station in the Indian state of Gujarat and observed first-hand the lack of any safety precautions or warnings about the asbestos hazard. The high levels of asbestos-related diseases amongst former colleagues motivated Raghunath to become an occupational health activist. For more than a decade he has worked as the Secretary of the Occupational Health & Safety Association (OSHA), a voluntary organization in Ahmedabad which provides legal support and mobilizes initiatives for diagnosing and raising awareness of asbestos-related and other occupational diseases.

Rajkamal Tewary (India) of the Workers' Initiative – Kolkata has been working on asbestos problems since 2012. In 2018, he was elected President of the Everest Industries Ltd. Permanent Employees Union; this new union replaced a pro-management trade union at India's largest asbestos-cement manufacturer: Everest. Under his leadership, the workers are calling for the company to transition to asbestos-free technology and for all of India's asbestos workers to take action on the asbestos hazard.

Firman Budiawan is the director of the Local Initiative for OSH Network – Indonesia (LION – Indonesia), a community organization focused on occupational safety and health issues. In 2010, he was one of the founding members of the Indonesia – Ban Asbestos Network (INA-BAN), a coalition of asbestos victims and their families, trade unions, NGOs, civil society stakeholders and technical, scientific and other experts on a variety of asbestos issues.

Siti Kristina is a former asbestos textile worker from Jakarta, Indonesia. Like many of her former work colleagues, she has contracted asbestosis from hazardous exposures at her workplace. In May 2017, she spoke at a United Nations conference urging that action be taken on the asbestos hazard, telling delegates: "I was exposed to asbestos in the factory for 23 years. If asbestos got under our clothes it was difficult to remove it. After ten years I started coughing. In 2010, I was diagnosed with asbestosis. I am just one and many of my friends have been suffering."

SECTION 3

Personal Statements by Delegation Members

Sugio Furuya



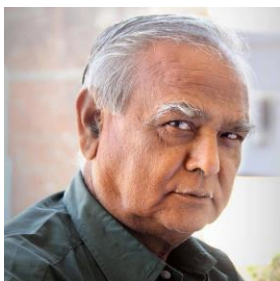
This is the first time that people from countries where Brazil's asbestos is sent have asked to be heard by the people of Brazil. Our delegation includes an asbestos victim, a trade unionist, ban asbestos campaigners and civil society activists. We are here because we are gravely concerned about the intention of Eternit, the ultimate owners of the SAMA chrysotile mine, to continue exporting Brazilian asbestos to Asian countries. This asbestos will be used by vulnerable populations given no warnings about the health hazards and no protection from toxic exposures at work, at home or in the environment.

In 2000, the historic Global Asbestos Congress – Past, Present and Future was held in Osasco, the heartland of Brazil's asbestos-cement sector. We were so inspired by that event that four years later we held the next Global Asbestos Congress in Tokyo. That was the beginning of Asia's fight-back against asbestos. Today, Brazilians have turned their backs on asbestos and it is right that they have done so. We applaud them! But the question remains is the life of a worker in São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro worth more than that of a worker in Ahmedabad or Jakarta?

Global asbestos pushers regard Asia as the last market for the deadly fiber; up to 70% of asbestos used annually is consumed in Asian countries. In order to prevent national governments, regional bodies and international agencies from taking decisive action on the asbestos hazard, asbestos vested interests have embarked on a multilingual, high-profile disinformation campaign, corrupted policy makers, implemented trade sanctions and spied on ban asbestos activists.

At this critical moment, when Brazil is poised on the verge of a historic triumph – shutting down asbestos mining and ending the use of the deadly dust at home and abroad – we have come here to appeal directly to the people of Brazil. We feel confident that once you hear about the tragic reality of asbestos use in Asia, you will put pressure on politicians and asbestos stakeholders to stop exporting asbestos.

Raghunath Manavar



I became an occupational health activist by accident in 1995 having witnessed the disastrous effects asbestos exposures were having on my workmates at a thermal power station in Gujarat. Like them, I had toiled in occupational settings heavily contaminated with asbestos, but so far, I have been lucky. Others like Kishan Datlani and Manua Bahi Patel were not. Kishan died in 1996 and Manua (aged 63) in 2000 from diseases caused by exposure to asbestos. In India, it is very difficult to secure an asbestos disease diagnosis. This is why our organization: the Occupational Health and Safety Association (OSHA) – in collaboration with civil society partners – has pioneered free diagnoses camps for former and current workers from asbestos factories and power stations. Once a diagnosis of an asbestos disease has been made, we work with those affected to access medical care and make claims for

compensation. To date, OSHA has helped more than one hundred victims to file asbestos cases and obtain compensation.

My objective in coming to Brazil is to ensure that the voices of India's asbestos victims do not go unheard and to make sure that those people injured by working in power plants or other industrial settings contaminated with asbestos are not forgotten. As a member of the India Ban Asbestos Network (IBAN), and on behalf of all my IBAN colleagues, I call upon the government of Brazil to stop the exportation of asbestos deaths to India. We humbly entreat the citizens of this beautiful country to stand shoulder to shoulder with us and with all of Asia's asbestos victims and say: "Stop exporting Brazilian asbestos!"

Rajkamal Tewary



As a trade unionist, I was aware of the adverse effects of asbestos on the health and longevity of our members. Over the last three years, 150 workers with asbestos diseases from exposures at the Kolkata factory of Everest Industries Ltd., India's largest asbestos-cement industrial group, have been identified. A very poor health and safety regime ensured that workers were routinely exposed to high levels of asbestos, some of which came from Brazil. In 2018, after participating in an asbestos medical camp in Kolkata to identify injured workers, two Everest employees were suspended; after prolonged discussion with the Everest management, they were reinstated in February 2019. The industry, local and central government are pro-asbestos as was the former "union" which was under the control of Everest (Kolkata). In 2018, this "yellow union" was replaced with an independent union: the Everest Industries Ltd. Permanent Employees Union, of which I am the President.

Part of our work is helping to generate greater awareness of occupational hazards such as asbestos. We are in constant dialogue with other unions and have been liaising with colleagues in the shipbuilding sector working under the Ministry of Defence on the construction of military vessels. Together we have achieved a tripartite agreement which specifies that asbestos must not be used in ship building. On March 4, 2019, our Union issued a demand to Everest to stop using asbestos; this is the first time in India that a trade union in an asbestos factory has done so.

On behalf of colleagues who have died and those whose health has already been compromised by toxic exposures, we implore the Brazilian Government to ensure that asbestos mining is ended (with just transition arrangements implemented for affected workers and communities) and that asbestos shipments to Asia are stopped, never to be restarted.

Firman Budiawan



I am part of the Asian Ban Asbestos Mission to Brazil in my capacity as a founding member of the Indonesian Ban Asbestos Network (INA-BAN). Indonesia is one of the world's top five asbestos-consuming countries; in 2015, usage was 120,000 tonnes. As we have no asbestos mines, all of the asbestos we use is imported, with a substantial amount coming from Brazil. Asbestos industry stakeholders in government circles and private industry are anxious to preserve the status quo and do so by a variety of means including asserting that the absence of epidemiological data documenting asbestos-related diseases in Indonesia is proof that asbestos is being used safely. This is untrue: "the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence." If asbestos exposures to human beings in other countries have

produced debilitating and lethal diseases, the same must surely be happening in Indonesia. The lack of Indonesian data is indicative of the lack of political will to challenge an industry which has for decades cultivated close ties with political leaders and civil servants.

Obtaining a diagnosis of an asbestos-related disease in Indonesia is extremely difficult and many cases go undiagnosed or are misdiagnosed as TB or some other disease. Although INA-BAN has identified twelve cases of asbestos-related disease only five of them have been recognized by the State. However, it remains to be seen what benefits this official recognition will bring to the injured.

INA-BAN warmly welcomed the news that the use of asbestos had been banned in Brazil, but we were very shocked by the announcement by Eternit SA earlier this year that it intended to continue asbestos exports to Indonesia and other Asian countries even though it would cease asbestos sales in Brazil. We cannot understand how Eternit could apply such a double standard or how Brazilians could allow this merchant of death to carry on exporting death to Indonesia, India, Colombia, Mexico, Thailand, Malaysia, Bolivia, Vietnam and other countries.

We are here seeking your support and your condemnation of Eternit, a pariah company which has killed generations of Brazilians. While the deaths may have stopped at home, they will continue wherever these deadly shipments are sent.

Stop killing us! Stop the export of deadly asbestos! On behalf of INA-BAN, say no to asbestos at home and abroad!

Siti Kristina



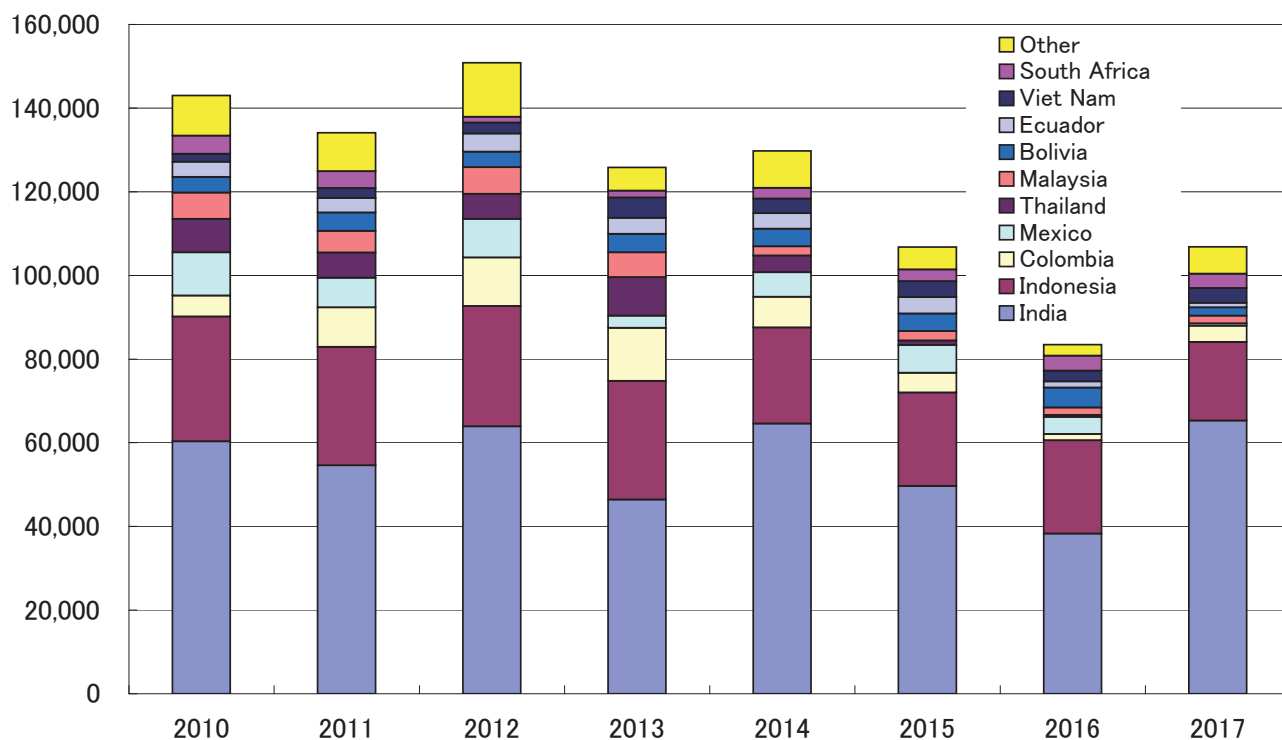
I worked for 23 years in a textile factory in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta that produced asbestos cloth for pipe insulation in the mining industry. I was one of 65 people, who mixed, carded, spun, twisted, wound and weaved chrysotile asbestos on a daily basis. The conditions were atrocious and there were no attempts made to minimize asbestos dust: asbestos sacks were lifted and emptied by hand, our work clothes were taken home for washing; we ate, drank and rested in the area where asbestos was being produced.

In 2010, I was diagnosed with asbestosis after medical tests by Korean experts; previous tests by company doctors did not detect any abnormalities. Due to ill health, I was fired by my employer in 2013. It was not until 2016, that an Indonesian doctor diagnosed occupational asbestos-related disease. Out of a group of 20 people who were tested, the doctor reported that 10 had asbestos-related conditions. After pressure by workers and civil society groups, finally in 2017 the Indonesian government recognized occupational diseases related to asbestos; we have yet to see if this recognition will translate into medical care or support from employers.

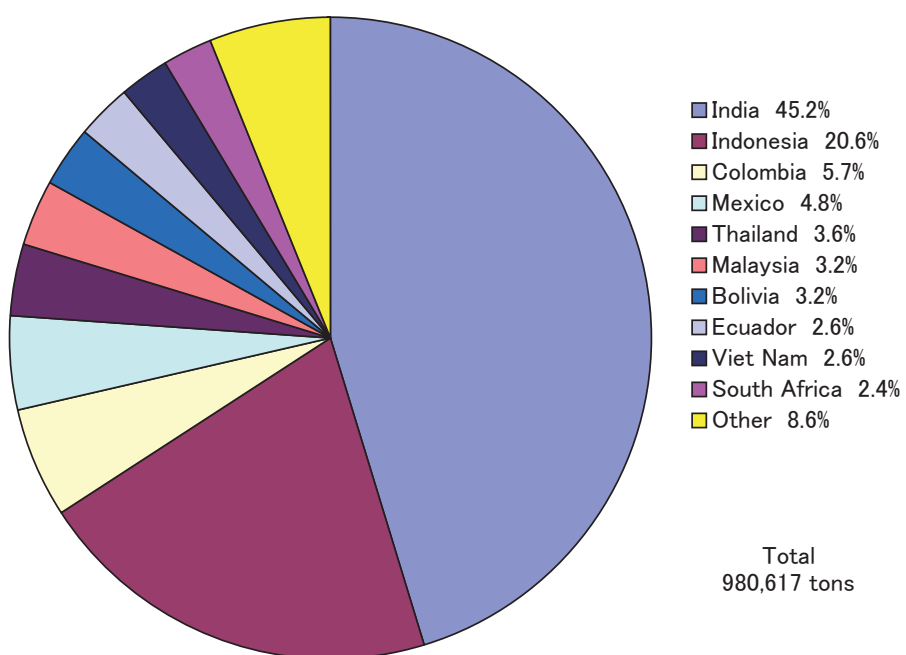
In Indonesia, there is widespread ignorance about asbestos; most workers do not have access to information about asbestos. Medical testing is expensive and out of reach for most workers so people live and die with asbestos conditions. This is the situation for many of my friends. They cannot be here so I am representing them when I call for solidarity from our brothers and sisters in Brazil who know very well about the human sacrifices demanded by asbestos stakeholders; our deaths are the price paid for their profits. Please stop sending asbestos to Asia.

SECTION 4

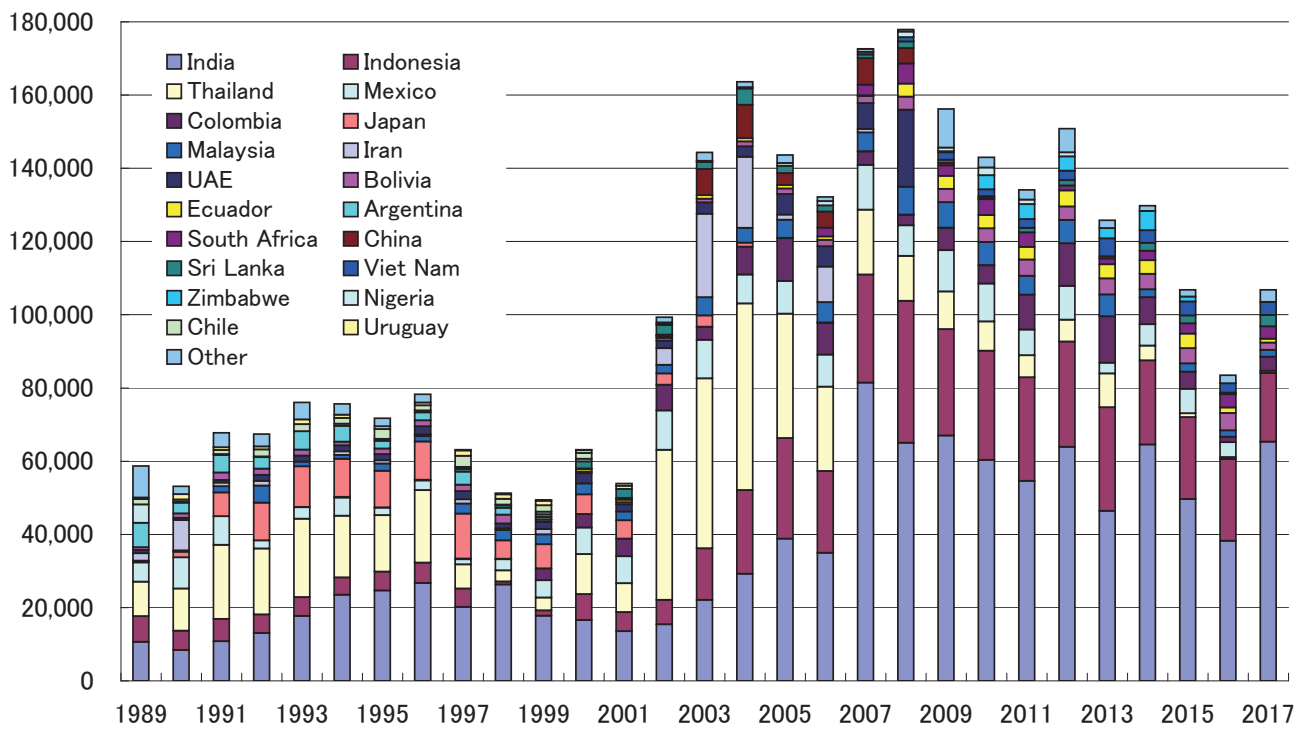
Asbestos Export of Brazil 2010–2017



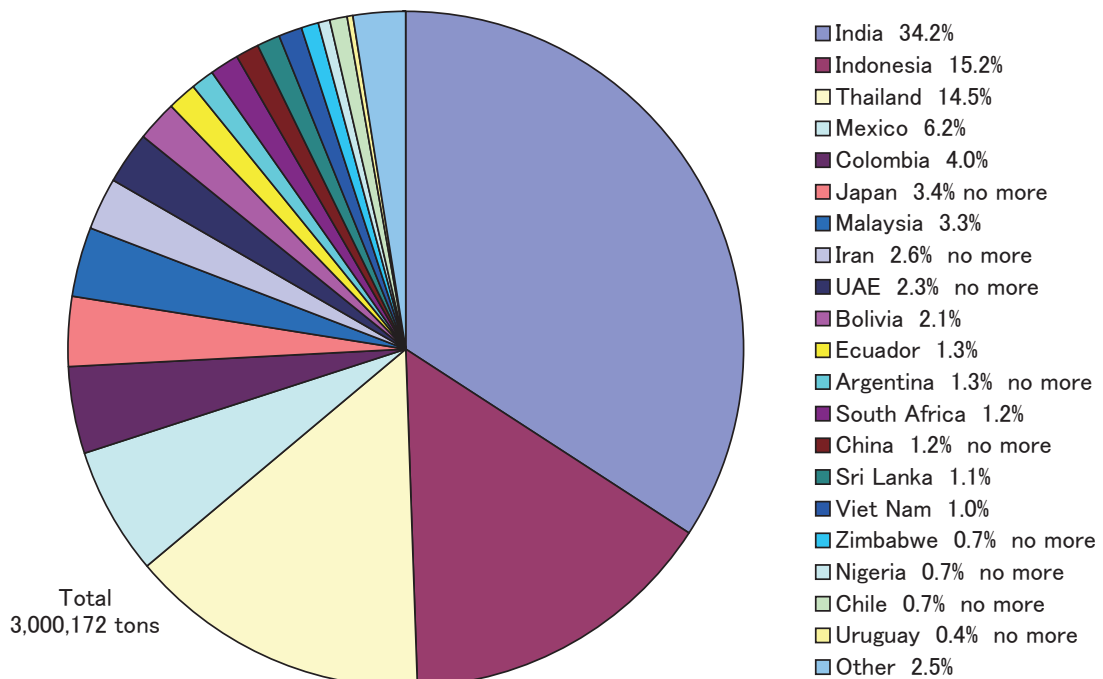
Asbestos Export of Brazil 2010–2017



Asbestos Export of Brazil 1989–2017



Asbestos Export of Brazil 1989–2017



SECTION 5

PRESS RELEASES



Associação
Brasileira dos
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PRESS RELEASE

APRIL 21, 2019

STOP Brazilian Asbestos Exports!

Towards the end of April, 2019, delegates from the Asian Ban Asbestos Mission 2019 are embarking on a historic trip to add their voices to calls for an end to asbestos mining and exporting in Brazil, one of the world's leading asbestos-producing countries. The members of the delegation include representatives of countries, which between them, absorb ~80% of annual Brazilian asbestos exports. They will entreat citizens, politicians, civil servants, decision-makers and corporations to abandon double standards and respect the right to human life not only at home but also abroad.

Since the mid-20th century, asbestos mines in Brazil have produced nine million tonnes of chrysotile asbestos; while much of it was used at home – especially in the early years – recently the majority has been exported, with most shipments going to countries in Asia with few, if any, health and safety regulations. As a result, the lives of workers, consumers and members of the public have been endangered; in a newly published paper, scientists from Brazil and Europe warned that deadly epidemics in asbestos-consuming countries are inevitable.⁴ Even when asbestos use is prohibited, the Brazilian asbestos fibers remaining in human organs, in national infrastructures and throughout the environment will remain a potent threat.

Siti Kristina, a member of the Asian Ban Asbestos Mission, has come all the way from Indonesia to deliver her message in person:

“I was exposed to asbestos in a Jakarta textile factory for 23 years. If asbestos got under our clothes it was difficult to remove it. After ten years I started coughing. In 2010, I was diagnosed with asbestosis. I am just one and many of my friends are also suffering. They cannot be here so I am representing them when I call for solidarity from our brothers and sisters in Brazil who know very well about the human sacrifices demanded by asbestos stakeholders; our deaths are the price paid for their profits. **Please stop sending asbestos to Asia.**”

Commenting on the significance of the Asian Ban Asbestos Mission 2019, President of the Brazilian Association of the Asbestos-Exposed (ABREA) Eliezer João de Souza said:

“The Supreme Court decision in 2017 declaring the commercial exploitation of asbestos unconstitutional was a huge victory for all Brazilians. Despite that ruling, the merchants of death wish to continue mining and sending asbestos overseas. That is unconscionable and unacceptable. ABREA members are unanimous in their support for the delegation and are grateful for the opportunity to hear about the reality of asbestos use in their countries.”

⁴ Algranti, E. Ramos-Bonilla JP. et al. *Prevention of Asbestos Exposure in Latin America within a Global Health Perspective*. Annals of Global Health, 2019; 85(1): 49, 1-15.
<https://doi.org/10.5334/aogh.2341>

Notes for Editors

1. To interview delegation members, Portuguese speakers please contact: Fernanda Giannasi (ABREA) at fer.giannasi@terra.com.br or WhatsApp+55 11 983533131; English speakers please contact: Sugio Furuya (ABAN) by email at 2009aban@gmail.com or WhatsApp +81 8030246210.
2. For background material about delegation members, see the English version of the press briefing documentation: <http://ibasecretariat.org/press-briefing-asian-ban-asbestos-mission-to-brazil-apr-2019.pdf> and the Portuguese version of the press briefing documentation: <http://ibasecretariat.org/press-briefing-asian-ban-asbestos-mission-to-brazil-apr-2019-por.pdf>
3. Information about the groups which issued this press release can be accessed at:
 - Brasileira dos Expostos ao Amianto
Associação [Brazilian Association of the Asbestos Exposed (ABREA)]
Website: <http://www.abrea.org.br>
 - Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN)
Website: <http://anroev.org/aban>
 - Indonesian Ban Asbestos Network (INA – BAN)
Website: <http://inaban.org/>
Email: Darisman at: mandarisman@yahoo.com
 - Indian Ban Asbestos Network (IBAN)
Email: Pooja Gupta at: poojagupta0202@gmail.com
 - International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS)
Website <http://ibasecretariat.org>

**ABREA**Associação
Brasileira dos
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PRESS RELEASE

January 15, 2019

STOP – You’re Killing Us!

Last week, Brazil’s former asbestos giant, Eternit SA announced that it planned to cease production of asbestos-containing products for the domestic market but continue to export asbestos fiber to “dozens of countries” including “the United States, Germany, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and other Asian countries.”¹

On behalf of asbestos victims in Brazil and Asia and campaigning bodies representing trade unionists, health and safety campaigners and ban asbestos activists we deplore this double standard which implies that Brazilian lives are worth protecting but those of Indian, Indonesian and other Asian citizens are not.

Commenting on this hypocrisy, President Eliezer João de Souza of the Brazilian Association of the Asbestos-Exposed (ABREA) said:

“The fact that Eternit has finally accepted that the production of asbestos products is unacceptable in Brazil is to be welcomed but the continuation of mining and exports is not. ABREA members know all too well the fate of those exposed to asbestos and feel that it is a **national disgrace** our country is exporting this toxic substance.”

Echoing these views, Sugio Furuya of the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN) said:

“Most of the around 1.5 million tonnes of asbestos produced every year is used in Asian countries where it is regarded as just another raw material. Epidemics of asbestos-related diseases have been documented in Japan and Korea with cases of asbestos-related diseases having been diagnosed in India, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and Mongolia – many more are expected!”

Conditions in asbestos factories in India – the world’s largest importer of asbestos – are atrocious according to Pooja Gupta, National Coordinator of the India Ban Asbestos Network (IBAN):

“Footage shot by one of our members on June 3, 2018 at a ‘modern’ asbestos factory in Kolkata, West Bengal revealed an abysmal failure to protect workers from high levels of airborne asbestos during the manufacture of asbestos roofing sheets. In small-scale units and back street workshops, the situation is even worse. If asbestos was no longer available, Indian companies would be forced to transition to safer technologies.”

Speaking on behalf of the Indonesian Ban Asbestos Network (INA-BAN), Darisman asked Eternit to consider:

“How many more people will you kill? Asbestos is a toxic material which has proven to be deadly and has been outlawed by Brazil’s Supreme Court. And even so, you want to export it to Asia?! You need to know that at this time many people are suffering and

¹ Pavini, A. *Eternit deixa de usar amianto em seus produtos e mina produzirá só para exportação* [Eternit stops using asbestos in its products and mine will produce only for export]. January 11, 2019.

<https://www.arenadopavini.com.br/arenas-das-empresas/eternit-deixa-de-usar-amianto-em-seus-produtos-e-mina-produzira-so-para-exportacao>

dying in Indonesia from diseases caused by exposures to asbestos. You must stop exporting killer asbestos! Your hypocritical behaviour is the cause of a humanitarian disaster for Asian countries and we publicly condemn you for your actions.”

Summing up the consensus Fiona Murie, Global Director of Construction and Occupational Safety and Health at the Building and Woodworkers International (BWI), said:

“People working in the construction industry are amongst those worst affected by asbestos workplace exposures. This is why the BWI has been supporting calls for a global asbestos ban for over 30 years. It is simply unacceptable for Eternit Brazil to dump its asbestos on industrializing countries where workers have few, if any, protections and no access to benefits or medical care when they become ill. The mining of asbestos in Brazil and elsewhere must be stopped with support provided by governments to affected workers and communities.”

Notes for Editors

1. For further information, please: email Sugio Furuya (ABAN) at 2009aban@gmail.com or Fernanda Giannasi (ABREA) at fer.giannasi@terra.com.br
2. For more information on the groups which issued this release see:
 - *Associação Brasileira dos Expostos ao Amianto* [Brazilian Association of Asbestos Victims (ABREA)]
<http://www.abrea.org.br>
 - Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN)
<http://anroev.org/aban>
 - Building and Woodworkers International (BWI)
<https://www.bwint.org>
 - Indonesian Ban Asbestos Network (INA – BAN)
<http://inaban.org/>
email: Darisman at: mandarisman@yahoo.com
 - Indian Ban Asbestos Network (IBAN)
Email: Pooja Gupta at: poojagupta0202@gmail.com
 - International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS)
<http://ibasecretariat.org>

Section 6

**Images from Asia Provided by Members of the Delegation
followed by some images of Mission Banners and Posters**

The following four images are included courtesy of the Indian Ban Asbestos Network:





The following four pictures are courtesy of the Indonesian Ban Asbestos Network







Todas as formas de amianto mata!



**Brazil! Tome uma posição!
Diga não às exportações de amianto!**



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