



INTERNATIONAL BAN ASBESTOS SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

September 27, 2021

Towards an Asbestos-Free Asia!

Tomorrow (September 28, 2021) marks the start of the 2021 Conference of the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN).¹ Once again, the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS) is proud to partner with civil society groups from Asia and abroad in a regional event which harnesses the power of solidarity and social activism to progress efforts to eradicate the asbestos hazard.

In 2009, *The Hong Kong Declaration towards a Complete Ban on all forms of Asbestos* recognized the formation of ABAN as:

“a landmark in the Asian campaign to obtain justice for the asbestos-injured and to implement a regional asbestos ban. The group which consists mainly of asbestos victims’ organizations, labour unions and environmental justice groups from 16 Asian Pacific countries will work towards strengthening the grassroots Ban Asbestos movement in Asia.”²

ABAN has addressed the devastation caused by asbestos use in Asia – the region which accounts for the majority of the world’s consumption of asbestos – in a variety of ways: large-scale conferences in asbestos-using countries provided opportunities for both the formal and informal exchange of information, sub-regional events facilitated communication through the development of personnel connections, capacity building and training workshops and historic missions to asbestos-producing countries in 2010 (Canada)³ and 2019 (Brazil)⁴ challenged the double standards of countries which produced and exported asbestos whilst declining to use it at home.

ABAN has also produced information videos in multiple Asian languages as well as coordinated the publication of a series of reports, monographs and information material in various languages as resources for local campaigners.

Commenting on the logistical challenges faced by mounting a high-profile event during a global pandemic, ABAN Coordinator Sugio Furuya said:

“ABAN members have been at the forefront of the Covid epidemic in many countries; their awareness of the toxic threat posed by invisible fibers gave them a head start in

¹ *Asian Ban Asbestos Network*. May 22, 2009.

<http://anroev.org/aban/asian-ban-asbestos-network-a-ban/>

² *The Hong Kong Declaration towards a Complete Ban on all forms of Asbestos*. [page 49].

http://ibasecretariat.org/hk_report_web_fin.pdf

³ *Asian Solidarity Delegation to Quebec, Canada*. 2010.

http://ibasecretariat.org/quebec_mission_2010_arch_events.php

⁴ ABAN Press Release. *STOP Brazilian Asbestos Exports!* April 21, 2019.

<http://ibasecretariat.org/press-release-stop-brazilian-asbestos-exports-apr-21-2019.pdf>

understanding the deadly nature of the coronavirus. This is the first *virtual* ABAN conference and we are optimistic that despite the obstacles we face we will reach even more activists than we had previously. The asbestos problem has NOT gone away during the pandemic. Asbestos vested interests have continued their propaganda offensives and gunboat diplomacy as seen by threats made in Ukraine over the withdrawal of Kazkh oil and vaccine supplies should the country make good on its pledge to ban asbestos.⁵

The deaths of 4.7 million people during the pandemic have been a wake-up call to international agencies, regional authorities and national governments that we cannot continue our ruthless exploitation of the planet. There is no place in the post-pandemic world for the use of toxic substances like asbestos.”⁶

IBAS congratulates ABAN on its achievements over the last 12 years and looks forward to strengthening ties with fellow ABAN members during the sessions which will be held this week.

Notes for Editors

1. For further information on this event, please contact ABAN Coordinator Sugio Furuya, email: 2009aban@gmail.com Participation in the conference is **by invitation only**.
2. Links to a number of ABAN asbestos videos, in more than a dozen Asian and several European languages – mostly dating from 2009-2011 – are available on the IBAS website (see: http://ibasecretariat.org/video_list.php); for example:

Chinese: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6Jl5g4KCfQ>

Indonesian: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyhj32BmWGI>

Urdu: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xG6uPAvqYM8>

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⁵ Kazan-Allen, L. *The Fight for Sovereignty over Ukraine's Asbestos Policy*. September 21, 2021. <http://ibasecretariat.org/lka-fight-for-ukraine-sovereignty-over-its-asbestos-policy.php>

⁶ Email from Sugio Furuya. September 26, 2021.