



Associação  
Brasileira dos  
Expostos ao  
Amianto



Governador do Estado de Goiás  
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April 24, 2020

## Re: Health Risks Posed by COVID-19 and Chrysotile Asbestos

Dear Governor Caiado,

At this time of global crisis we, the undersigned, wish to send you a message of solidarity and express our admiration for the actions you are taking to protect the people of Goiás State from the deadly virus which is ravishing populations around the world including those in our home countries of Brazil, the UK, Japan, Indonesia and India. Even as President Bolsonaro discounts the deadly nature of the health crisis facing Brazil, your efforts and those of other Brazilian Governors are being informed by the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO); there is no doubt that implementation of the WHO recommendations will mitigate the scale of the disaster to come.

One year ago, members of our organizations were in Brazil as part of the Asian Ban Asbestos Mission to Brazil 2019. We made the arduous journey to your country to engage in discussions with members of civil society, trade unions, the judiciary, the legislature and others about plans by Eternit, S.A., in collaboration with your administration, to restart asbestos operations at the SAMA mine in Minaçu.<sup>1</sup> We understand from an article published in February, 2020 that the recommencement of chrysotile mining, despite the 2017 Supreme Court decision which prohibits it, is something which is still on your political agenda.<sup>2</sup> We are perplexed by the contrast between your proactive stance on COVID-19 and your apparent lack of concern over the deadly health risk posed by human exposures to chrysotile asbestos, a substance which the WHO, the International Labor Organization, the International Agency for Research on Cancer and other international agencies believe can cause a variety of deadly cancers and debilitating respiratory conditions.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Asian Ban Asbestos Mission to Brazil 2019.*

<http://ibasecretariat.org/asian-mission-to-brazil-apr-2019-link-page.php>

<sup>2</sup> *Contra a lei, Eternit e Caiado anunciam volta do Amianto* [Against the law, Eternit and Caiado announce return of asbestos]. February 17, 2020.

<https://outraspalavras.net/outrasmidias/contra-a-lei-eternit-e-caiado-anunciam-volta-do-amianto/>

<sup>3</sup> *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)

During these unsettled times, we are all having to re-evaluate our priorities and make significant changes for the common good. We, the undersigned, and the Brazilian Governors you are working with are motivated by the same goal: to save life. We would respectfully urge you, once this crisis recedes, to rethink your views on reopening the chrysotile mine. The citizens of Goiás State deserve healthy and long lives, free from deadly asbestos exposures.

We send you warm greetings and hope that one day soon, we will all awake to a better and safer world.

Sincerely,

Eliezer João de Souza, Corresponding Author<sup>4</sup>  
President, Brasileira dos Expostos ao Amianto Associação [Brazilian Association of the Asbestos Exposed (ABREA)]

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