



A-BAN
Asian Ban Asbestos Network



Press Release

May 27, 2026

Award for Outstanding Grassroots Mobilization!

A coalition of campaigning groups represented by the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS), the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN), the Asian Citizens' Center for Environmental Health (Eco-Health), the Indonesian Ban Asbestos Network (INA-BAN), the Local Initiative for OSH Network – Indonesia (LION), the Consumers Association of Penang, Sahabat Alam Malaysia, Ban Asbestos Network of Korea (BANKO), is delighted to announce that the winners of the IBAS Award for Outstanding Grassroots Mobilization 2026 is the “Asbestos. Not Here, Not Anywhere” campaign!¹

This initiative is a priority campaign of Australia's Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA which, since 2010 has worked to eliminate asbestos-related diseases in Southeast Asia.² The expertise and support of Australian and international partners were essential factors in the positive impact and multiple achievements made by this program as were the leadership and organizational skills of Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA personnel: Phillip Hazelton, Adam Kaminski, Kate Lee and Clare Middlemas.³

Dedicated outreach work to build technical, medical and campaigning capacity and raise professional and public awareness of the deadly asbestos threat yielded substantive results in key consuming countries in Asia, the region which accounts for virtually all global asbestos usage. Coordinator of the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN) Sugio Furuya was categorical about the meaningful contribution the Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA campaign has made to the regional asbestos debate:

“Soon after ABAN was founded, Union Aid Abroad began its campaigning work on asbestos in Southeast Asia. ABAN members participated in many of the innovative outreach projects and this collaboration helped generate the momentum needed to change national asbestos dialogues from those accepting of the ‘controlled use of asbestos’ to those calling for timed phase-out of all use. The efforts of all the campaign partners from Australia – individual specialists as well as national institutions, civil servants and NGOs – is highly valued by all the members of our network.

¹ Information about the organizations supporting this award are provided under the Notes to Editors on page 3.

² Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA. *Eliminating asbestos related diseases in Southeast Asia*.

<https://apheda.org.au/projects/eliminating-asbestos-related-diseases-in-southeast-asia/>

Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA website: <https://apheda.org.au/>

³ The international partners to this campaign included: The Building and Woodworkers Trade Union Federation (BWTUC) Cambodia, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training Cambodia, Ministry Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction Cambodia, Cambodian Ban Asbestos Network, Local Initiatives OSH Network (LION) Indonesia, Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU), Ministry of Health Laos, Lao OSH Association, University of Health Sciences Laos, the Thailand Ban Asbestos Network (TBAN), the Council of Work and Environment Related Patients' Network (WEPT), the Asian Ban Asbestos Network and the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat. Asbestos specialists from international agencies – the World Health Organization, the International Labor Organization and the Asia Development Bank – also made valuable contributions to this campaign by sharing their expertise. Collaborating groups closer to home included: the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the Asbestos and Silica Safety and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Asbestos & Silica Safety and Eradication Agency (ASSEA), and Asbestos and Dust Diseases Research Institute (ADDRI), Australian Aid and Australian Embassies across the region.

We are now at a critical juncture, with Malaysia moving toward a national asbestos phase-out and Indonesia fighting off lawsuits brought by asbestos vested interests; Australia's support is providing vital backing for these local efforts. I commend Australia for expanding this campaign to even more Southeast Asian countries and hope that solidarity will be further strengthened to achieve an asbestos ban in Asia and around the world.”

Echoing his fellow campaigner Sugio's sentiments, President of the Cambodian Building and Wood Workers Trade Union Federation (BWTUC) Sok Kin said:

“The BWTUC has been cooperating with APHEDA in Cambodia since 2017. The initiatives carried out during the asbestos project enabled the BWTUC to inform and mobilise workers in the construction, brick kiln, cement, handicraft carving, and wood-processing sectors in Cambodia. Throughout this time we have, in collaboration with our members and stakeholders, carried out consultations, developed networks, provided training and run regional, national and international campaigns to raise awareness about the harmful effects of asbestos. In addition, we have lobbied the government to issue regulations to stop the use of all asbestos throughout Cambodia. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to APHEDA for its continuous attention, financial support, resources, and technical assistance over the past seven years.”

Surya Ferdian, the Director of the Local Initiative for OSH Network (LION), Indonesia, is categorical about the importance of APHEDA's work in Indonesia:

“APEHDA has played a vital role in raising awareness in Indonesia about efforts to eradicate asbestos-related diseases (ARD). Much light has been shone for the Indonesian people thanks to a commitment and constancy tested over more than ten years in conjunction with LION Indonesia. Apheda's strong assistance for Indonesia has restored hope for ARD victims, supplied academic knowledge and taught social activists the critical importance of human life free from asbestos exposures. APEHDA's presence in Indonesia sparked optimism, which must be nourished and transformed into a light that offers hope to others.”

Reiterating the unwavering commitment of the organization for global justice of the Australian trade union movement to the “Asbestos. Not Here. Not Anywhere” campaign, Adam Kaminski, Union Aid Abroad's Asbestos Campaign Coordinator, said:

“We believe the campaign is really important, achieving strong results against a strong push back by the asbestos exporters and industry who continue their intimidation: SLAPP [Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation] legal actions, misinformation and even trade threats against countries wanting to transition to safer materials. The Australian trade union movement has adopted a strategy to continue this campaign in coming years in solidarity with workers and communities in our region who are needlessly being exposed and dying. We hope to continue with all those working on this in the region and with the support of the large movement now built around the campaign.

"Our work with partner organizations across the region would not be possible without the collaborations we have built with the Australian trade union movement and government, in particular this includes the Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency, and the various Australian Government aid and trade initiatives that are supporting asbestos transition in the region. We are humbled by this award and gratefully

accept it as recognition of the hard work and dedication of our partners at home and across the Asia Pacific.”



Notes to Editors

For additional details, please email: Laurie Kazan-Allen (IBAS) at lkaz@btconnect.com

Information about the groups which issued this press release can be accessed at:

- International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS)
Website: <https://ibasecretariat.org>
- Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN), Japan
email Sugio Furuya, ABAN Coordinator at: <mailto:2009aban@gmail.com>
- Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN)
Website: <http://anroev.org/aban>
- Asian Citizens' Center for Environmental Health (Eco-Health), South Korea
Website: <http://www.eco-health.org/>
- Ban Asbestos Network of Korea (BANKO), South Korea
email Dr. Yeyong Choi at: <mailto:choiyy@kfem.or.kr>
- Indonesian Ban Asbestos Network (INA-BAN)
Website: <http://inaban.org/>
- Local Initiative for OSH Network – Indonesia (LION)
Website: <https://lionindonesia.org/>
- Consumers Association of Penang, Malaysia
Website: <https://consumer.org.my/>
- Sahabat Alam Malaysia (Friends of Earth, Malaysia)
Website: <https://foe-malaysia.org/>