



Editorial

It is our pleasure to produce OSH Newsletter, issue no-44 on Occupational Safety and Health in Asia has prepared by the ANROEV Secretariat.

ANROEV Secretariat conducts research on OSH, share the updates on OSH and occupational and environmental victims, social media activities, campaign and events.

ANROEV newsletter is the part of its regular intervention.

Your support and kind cooperation will encourage us to way forward.

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Homage to Chan Kam Hong



Chan Kam-hong (60), Chief Executive of the Association for the Rights of Industrial Accident Victims, the indispensable driving force behind improvements in industrial safety laws and practices over the years, died on 05 May 2019, Sunday.

Chan devoted himself to helping workers and their families. He has been on the front line for more than 30 years. Whenever there was an industrial accident, he would rush to the scene. The only times you did not see him on the front line was when he was sick or when he was out of town,” said Fay Siu Sin-man, a colleague of Chan.

Chan joined the association around 36 years ago when construction companies and contractors were not paying much attention to the health and safety issues of their workers, Siu said. Chan wanted to make a difference.

For decades, Chan had been helping the families of victims of industrial accidents to fight for better compensation from companies. Because of his efforts, more companies had over the years been willing to engage with the victims’ families to discuss about compensation.

Under Mr. Chan’s leadership, the association supports industrial accident victims and their families, and promotes employees’ health and safety, rehabilitation as well as employees’ rights and benefits. Over the years, the association has been the government’s partner in promoting occupational safety and health, and also provided valuable inputs on various labour policies on employees’ compensation.

Homage to Chan Kam Hong



ANROEV Statement for Tribute to Chan Kam Hong

We are all pained to learn about the untimely demise of our good friend – Chan Kam Hong – Hong Chai as he would like us to call him. Hong worked tirelessly for more than three decades to bring dignity and justice to millions. His work in Hong Kong has been inspirational which he institutionalised in the form of – Association for the Rights of Occupational Accident Victims (ARIAV) and which he led to organise into victims group naming it – Mamas group as many of them were mothers.

This struck the chord with the population and forced the government to address the issue of silicosis among the construction workers. It not only made construction safer for the subsequent generation of workers but also led to the creation of the Pneumoconiosis Board in Hong Kong- leading to just compensation to victims and their families. This was one of the transformational changes that Hong Chai and ARIAV brought to Hong Kong.

Health and Safety was seen more as a right rather than privilege by workers in Hong Kong. It was all his life. His exemplary work transformed the occupational health and safety landscape in Hong Kong. Organising the victims was the most powerful tool he used to empower the helpless victims to agency of change.

In 1980s, the workers working in construction especially digging the foundation were exposed to high level of silica dust leading to silicosis in many of the workers. Many of them were married to women from mainland China, who were left vulnerable with no or little compensation. Hong Chai felt their pain and helped them subsequently followed by forming of Mesothelioma board for victims of asbestos exposure and building a BAN Asbestos Hong Kong coalition.

Hong Chai was never satisfied, he always felt – workers in Hong Kong who build this wonderful financial centre with their sweat and blood did not receive their due share and respect. These workers in various sectors like construction, transport, cleaning, health care and much more make Hong Kong what it is, yet besides being paid low, they are also exposed to workplace hazards and once sick or injured the struggle for justice is not only difficult but also humiliating at times. “It is not about compensation or money” he would often say – “it is about their dignity and their right”.

Homage to Chan Kam Hong



He on one hand supported the victims so that they could get just and timely compensation and on the other hand fought vehemently to have these processes simplified so that victims – who have suffered a lot do not need to struggle more. Hong Chai wanted a unified compensation fund for all the workers in Hong Kong, he also wanted a tribunal to safeguard the rights of victims.

“What we see is magnificent structures in Hong Kong – like the Airport but what about the workers who died in making them- we do not recognize their sacrifices”- Hong Chai would feel often for the workers and to commemorate their ultimate contribution – he wanted Hong Kong government to recognize April 28 as the workers memorial day and dedicate a monument in the centre of Hong Kong for these workers.

Hong Chai also organised beyond Hong Kong, he was a founder member of the Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational and Environmental Victims (ANROEV). He played a key role to seek justice for the victims of Kader and Zhili Fires in Thailand and China in 1993 that led eventually to the formation of Asian network. He worked closely with the victims’ networks in Japan, Korea and Taiwan and believed in a strong solidarity network and inspired formation of the victims’ network in Thailand, India, Bangladesh. Activists from other Asian countries would often visit ARIAV office to learn from their organising and service model.

Hong Chi on his part was always ready to support the organising of Victims in other countries. He also strongly believed and pushed for victims’ representation and participation at all levels he believed change was only possible when victims participated and led in a meaningful manner.

The loss of Hong Chai will be felt for ever since he was a backbone of victims struggle in Hong Kong as well as in Asia.

The biggest homage to him would be our resolve to continue his dream to build workplaces without accidents and diseases and remember the dead and continue to fight for living for dignity and justice.

Hong Chi has not died he will continue to live in all of us and we will continue to fight.

Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational
and Environmental Victims (ANROEV)

16 May 2019





4th International Conference on Occupational and Environmental Health

15-17 February 2019, Indian Ban Asbestos Network along with Occupational and Environmental Health Network of India (OEHNI), was engaged in organizing an international conference on occupational health and safety. At 16 February 2019, a daylong workshop held on “Preventing Asbestos Related Diseases in India”. Esteemed professionals and subject matter specialists from different countries, like Dr. Barry Kistnasamy (South Africa), Dr. Thomas H Gassert (USA), Dr. Tor Erik Danielsen (Norway) along with representatives from National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), Employee State Insurance Corporation (ESIC), Directorate General of Factory Advisory Services Limited of India (DGFASLI), Ministry of Labour (Government of India) actively participated in the deliberations. Dr. Tsuyoshi Kawakami, Occupational Safety & Health Specialist in International Labour Organization (ILO), with his expertise and experiences, also enlightened the participants of the workshop. This three-day event, with national and international delegates, had an agenda of addressing environmental and occupational health-related issues, as corroborated by plenary sessions and presentations.

4th International Conference on Occupational and Environmental Health Asbestos Related Diseases- The Way Forward

Lady Hardinge Medical College
New Delhi

16th February 2019



Ms. Omana George- **Visions and actions of AMRC - Asbestos**

- (i) Workers and occupational victims in Asia have organized themselves to claim their rights to a safe and healthy workplace and environment as well as to attain access to diagnosis, treatment, and compensation.
- (ii) Engagement and commitments of networks like ANROEV and ABAN on Occupational and Environmental Health, while building and strengthening National Networks across South Asia.
- (iii) Strategy development and networking played key roles in policy making and generating awareness.



The Rotterdam Convention 2019



At previous meetings of the Rotterdam Convention, there have been representations by civil society groups monitoring the process of listing hazardous chemicals on Annex III of the Convention. This week, activists from Indonesia, India, Australia, Vietnam, Switzerland and Hong Kong have been tasked with that job. Their work is being conducted under the banner of the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN) to which all the mission members and supporters belong.

Monday, May 6, 2019. Members of the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN) Mission to COP9 of the United Nations' Rotterdam Convention convened in Geneva for discussions. The participants included: Omana George, from the Asia Resource Monitor Centre, Hong Kong; Phillip Hazelton from Australia's Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA; Pooja Gupta from the Indian Ban Asbestos Network; Surya Ferdian from the Local Initiative for OSH Network, Indonesia; asbestos victim Mr. Subono, Chair of SERBUK Trade Union (Indonesia) and Bernhard Herold, from Solidar Suisse, Switzerland.

At 18:30 there was a screening of the French language version of the 2019 documentary "Breathless" at the Fonction Cinema, in General Dufour Street, Geneva.

Tuesday, May 7, 2019. Between 9:00 and 10:00 a.m. The ABAN delegation held a vigil and media conference at the entrance to the Convention Center. During the morning vigil, ABAN delegation members Phillip Hazelton, Omana George, Pooja Gupta, Subono and Bernhard Herold made short presentations about the need to list chrysotile asbestos on Annex III and the consequences of failing to do so not only for human beings but for the viability of the Convention.

A copy of an Open Letter to COP9 Rotterdam Convention delegates supported by organizations representing over 200 million workers led by the ITUC as well as asbestos victims groups, occupational safety and health campaigners, NGOs, scientists, academics and concerned citizens was presented by Mr. Subono to Charlie Avis, a representative of the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions.² White roses and a burning candle were displayed to represent the more than 200,000 people dying from asbestos-related diseases every year. Journalists, including explorer and TV presenter Paul Rose reported on the demonstration. At 2:00 p.m. Delegation members had planned to demonstrate at the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations Office – ironically located in Avenue de la Paix (Peace Avenue) – and submit a copy of the Open Letter to COP9 delegates, in English and Russian, for the attention of the Russian authorities. Unfortunately permission was not given for this activity so the protest was held under the "Broken Chair" sculpture, located outside the Russian consulate. One protestor quipped that perhaps this was a more appropriate place as the sculpture was a symbol of the malfunctioning of the Convention. Swiss media covered the action and interviewed delegation members.



Wednesday, May 8, 2019. During the morning plenary session, procedural issues were on the agenda and delegates considered the addition of a compliance procedure via a new Annex to the Convention (Annex VII). In the contact group in previous days only Iran objected to a revised text; Iran continued to block consensus in the plenary session. After a rather heated debate with opposition led by Iran, the Russian Federation, China and India, and thanks in part to the intervention from Switzerland a vote was requested – the first one ever within the Rotterdam Convention. Despite appeals to not proceed on legal and procedural grounds by the small group of opposing Parties, 120 Parties voted “yes” to adding a mechanism specifying procedures to facilitate compliance and 6 voted “no” – Iran, Namibia, North Korea, India, Cuba and Qatar.

In the afternoon, it was time for the plenary to consider listing chemicals recommended by the Chemical Review Committee on Annex III of the Convention. At the beginning of this session, Indonesian trade union leader and asbestos victim Subono, a member of the ABAN delegation, was invited to speak. According to one observer: “Subono spoke very emotionally and forcefully about his life, work and health, and appealed to the floor to list chrysotile asbestos. He said the financial gain of a few should not put at risk the lives of the many.”

In the end, there was no happy ending. One hundred and fifty-one Parties failed to overcome the objections of the Russian-led veto. A four-page chronological record of the contributions of national delegations and others to the debate (based on contemporaneous notes) showed overwhelming support for listing. Summarizing the discussions:

- delegations which supported listing chrysotile were: Australia, Colombia, Norway, Canada, Peru, Georgia, Uruguay, Gabon, Nigeria, Bahrain, the EU, Japan, Iraq, Togo, Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Moldova, Switzerland, Vanuatu, Congo, Senegal, the Maldives, Kuwait, Benin, Saudi Arabia and Cameroon;
- the ten delegations which spoke against listing using threadbare industry arguments including the “supposed” lack of objective data proving harm from chrysotile exposures, the need for more research, the hazards posed by “safer” alternatives and the possibility of “safe use of chrysotile” were: Russia, Kazakhstan, Syria, Zimbabwe, Kyrgyzstan, Venezuela, Pakistan, Cuba, India and Iran;
- citing overwhelming and conclusive scientific evidence, the World Health Organization reminded delegates that exposures to all forms of asbestos can cause cancer in humans; concurring with this assessment, the National Toxics Network called for chrysotile asbestos to be listed in Annex III; the International Labor Organization reminded delegates that the ILO Asbestos Convention should not be used to justify continued use of chrysotile asbestos and the official ILO position on asbestos called for the elimination of use of all forms of asbestos;
- India’s Fiber Cement Product Manufacturer’s Association opposed listing, saying there were no Indian studies showing negative health impacts from chrysotile exposures, while the Workers of Kazakhstan said there was no occupational risk from working with asbestos cement. The International Alliance of Trade Union Organizations “Chrysotile” opposed listing.

At the end of the May 8 afternoon plenary sessions the President referred to the frustration in the chamber resulting from the chrysotile stalemate and deferred chrysotile to COP 10.

Commenting on what transpired at COP9, Phillip Hazelton, a member of the ABAN delegation, decried the chrysotile veto saying:

“The long term blockage to listing chrysotile, the world’s biggest occupational disease killer must end and it’s up to those countries who are as frustrated as we are, to do it. They must come forward with a viable solution to break the blockade on the listing of chrysotile asbestos. We have some options, let’s get on with



May 8, 2019: Indonesian asbestosis victim Subono addressed the plenary session of the UN meeting



Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN) : Taking the Fight to the Asbestos Industry

In the first six months of 2019, landmark missions were undertaken by the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN) and the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS), working in close partnership with asbestos victims' groups, trade unions and occupational health and safety associations in Brazil, Switzerland, India, Indonesia, Japan and Australia. The preparation for the Asian Ban Asbestos Mission to Brazil 2019 and the Asian Ban Asbestos Mission to the 9th Conference of the Parties (COP9) of the United Nations' Rotterdam Convention occupied the early part of the year with the first mission lasting from April 22-28, 2019 and the second from May 5-9, 2019.

Amongst the objectives of the ABAN delegation to Brazil was to publicize the impact in Asian countries of the use of Brazilian asbestos exports; to that end, meetings held in the country's capital with Supreme Court Justices, Federal Prosecutors, legal experts, a Federal Deputy, a Federal Labour High Court Justice, an advisor to the President of the Chamber of Deputies and meetings in Sao Paulo and Osasco with officials and members of multiple trade unions, asbestos victims' support groups, journalists and others were instrumental in conveying this message to Brazilian citizens.

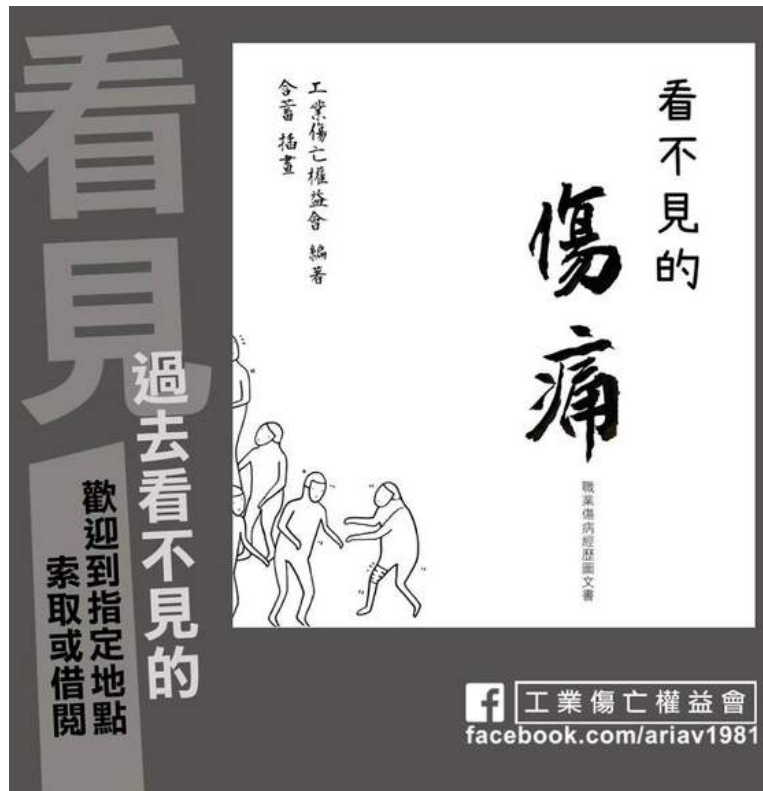
Amongst the purposes of the ABAN mission to the Geneva meeting of the Rotterdam Convention was to ensure that there was a visible presence of asbestos victims during the UN debates on regulating the global trade in chrysotile (white) asbestos. This was achieved via a well-publicized vigil, the circulation of documentation, discussions with UN officials and presentations at the plenary sessions by two members of the delegation.



Update from Partners

Hong Kong

“The Unseen Pain” Book Launch



The book titled "The Unseen Pain" has launched on 16th March, 2019. Association for the Rights of Occupational Accident Victims (ARIAV) organized the event.

Sufferers of work injury, occupation disease and family members of the deceased workers share their experiences and feelings in this book. In addition, people across various sectors, including union member, funeral director, entrepreneur, sportsman and doctor, are invited to respond to the above experiences and make inspiration.

“Still Human” Film Viewing

Date: 16th March

Organise : Association for the Rights of Occupational Accident Victims (ARIAV)

Injured workers, family members of the deceased workers, and supporters of ARAIV are invited to watch the film “Still Human”. The main character was disabled due to work injury, and was confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life.

Despite this, he is able to continue with his life positively and help his servant to pursue her dream, which becomes a redemption for him.



OSH talks

Giving talks in schools and different organizations on the importance of occupational safety and the procedure of dealing with work injury, inspiring audiences to give concern to job safety and labor rights. Association for the Rights of Occupational Accident Victims (ARIAV) organized the talks.



Occupational Health and Safety for workers in Electronic Factories

On 5th May 2019, Cividep India, conducted a workshop for electronics sector workers at Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, India. 55 workers, including 14 women, attended the event. The objective of the event was to increase awareness about the health hazards associated with the electronics industry, and to empower workers to raise their voices against poor safety conditions by educating them on their legal entitlements. Resource persons included a retired official from the ESI Corporation in Chennai, and an advocate with considerable experience of working on labour issues. Topics addressed included health and safety provisions and existing entitlements for workers under the Factories Act, Workmen's Compensation Act, and the Employee State Insurance (ESI) Act.

Study on existing conditions of OHS within electronics factories

Cividep India conducted a study on existing conditions of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) within electronics factories situated in and around Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu. A total of 20 workers from six factories, including ten women workers, were interviewed as part of the study. A survey questionnaire was administered, which addressed various relevant aspects of OHS, including common health issues, working conditions, prevalent safety risks/hazards at the workplace, measures and facilities provided within factories, among others. Common health issues reported by workers included back/shoulder/wrist pains, vision-related problems and watering of eyes, stomach pain and breathing issues due to exposure to chemicals, blisters/boils/cuts/swelling of fingers due to handling machinery, skin problems and allergies, irregular menstrual cycles/hair loss/ulcers due to heat exposure, stress caused by excessive production targets.



OHS Training for Tea Plantation Workers of Southern India



Cividep India conducted two trainings on occupational health and safety for tea plantation workers in Coonoor (Nilgiris district) and Valparai (Coimbatore district) in two prominent tea-producing areas in southern India. Around 43 workers were present across the two training programmes.

The first workshop was conducted on 5th May 2019 in the town of Coonoor. The resource person, a medical officer in one of the major tea estates in the region, and chief doctor at the Sagayamatha Hospital in Coonoor, engaged participants in discussions relating to health issues, common occupational risks/hazards, safety equipment, working and living conditions, and the importance of personal hygiene and regular medical check-ups.

The second workshop was conducted on 23rd June 2019 at Valparai, in collaboration with an active trade union in the region. Resource persons for the training included a doctor from the Public Health Centre, an advocate who familiarised workers with relevant labour rights, and a senior union leader who spoke about the benefits of collective bargaining and past activities carried out in the region by the union.



Bangladesh

Multi-Stakeholder Consultation on Promotion of Decent Work at Leather Supply Chain



Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHE) organised a Multi-Stakeholder Consultation on Promotion of Decent Work at Leather Supply Chain at CIRDAP Auditorium, Dhaka on 26 January 2019. Honorable Deputy Inspector General of Department of Inspection of Factories and Establishment (DIFE) Mr. Amar Chan Bonik has presented as Chief Guest.

In his Speech Amar Chan Bonik said, we will try to strengthen the visible inspection system in all sector including leather supply chain by labor inspectors.

Sanjib Pandita, Regional Representatives of SOLIDAR SUISSE, development partner of OSHE said, government of Bangladesh including related authorities concern for the other supply chain but negligence in footwear and leather supply chain is visible. He also said that, all of we are agreed about the problem of leather sector and the problems are serious. These problems should be addressed.

Chairperson of OSHE Saki Rezwana presided at the seminar while Vice Chairperson S M Morshed moderated it.

Researcher Sharmin Sultana presented the Keynote paper on Occupational Safety and Health of the workers of leather supply chain and recommended several proposals for government and others stake holders.

The speakers asked the government and other stakeholders to take initiatives to strengthen the inspection in this sector, giving loan to set up industries easily and ensure the fare price of product to reduce the crisis in tannery sector. They also emphasized to change the attitude of the owner and workers.



Bangladesh

Advanced Training on OSH for Potential Peer OHS Experts for 3F Partner Federations in Bangladesh



Bangladesh OSHE foundation in collaboration with United Federation of Danish Workers, South Asia Regional Office in Dhaka popularly known as 3F has an intervention to implement a series of fifteen nos day long Training on OSH for Potential Peer OHS Experts for 3F Partner Federations in Bangladesh with the objective to increase trade union representatives' capacity to provide support to the workers members of the newly formed workplace safety committees in the textile and garment sector.

The 1st training was held on 25 June 2019 at 3F Office, Gulshan, Dhaka. A total of 17 participants from Bangladesh Independent Garment Workers Union Federation (BIGUF), Bangladesh Garment & Industrial Workers Federation (BGIWF), Bangladesh Garment, Textile & Leather Workers' Federation (BGTLWF), Bangladesh Textile & Garment Workers League (BTGWL), Bangladesh Revolutionary Garments Workers Federation. (BRGWF) and United Federation of Danish Workers (UFGW) took part in the training. Among them 12 were fresher for 2019 and rest 5 were last batch's participants who received the training in 2018 whereas 7 were female.

Skill Development Workshop Held

OHS Initiative for Workers and Community, a project of OSHE foundation, organised a skill development workshop for the youth leadership of garment sector at Mirpur on 18 January. DIFE deputy inspector general (safety) Md. Mahfuzur Rahman Bhuiyan conducted a session where OSHE Executive Director A. R. Chowdhury Repon spoke at the closing session.





Vietnam

Establishing a network of supporters to improve OSH in the electronics industry in Vietnam: Initial results from CDI' need assessment



24 March 2019 - With the support of Asia Monitor Resource Centre (AMRC), the Center for Development and Integration (CDI) in cooperation with Bac Ninh Labor Union (LU) organized a workshop on need assessment of improving OSH in the electronics industry in Vietnam.

The workshop aims at creating a space for participants to share their knowledge and experiences on OSH management and discussing their need on capacity building and networking. In total, there were 63 participants (60% are women), including 18 participants from Bac Ninh LU, universities, research centers, OSH management agencies and especially 45 OSH personnel coming from 25 electronics factories located in Bac Ninh and Hai Phong city.

The workshop was an important event for CDI to explore the needs of OSH personnel in many electronics factories. Based on initial results, CDI will keep continue to set up and promote the network of OSH supporters in the electronics industry in Vietnam.

OSH training for electronics workers in the new electronics production center in Asia

On 24th June 2018, with the support of the Developing World Outreach Initiative (DWOI), the Center for Development and Integration (CDI) in cooperation with Bac Ninh LU organized an one-day training course on OSH for workers from electronics companies in Bac Ninh province. Thank to the course, 30 participants who come from 9 electronics companies have improved their understanding on hazard control, especially chemical, ergonomic and its impact to workers' health. Those participants realized the fact that the Electronics industry is not as clean as they thought before.

After the training, participants actively participated in 4 workers' group meetings and re-trained OSH knowledge to other 60 migrant workers. About one year after the first training, CDI continued receiving DWOI's support for implementing another training on chemical safety for electronics workers. 22 workers (of whom 16 are women) coming from 9 companies in Yen Phong industrial zone have improved their basic knowledge on chemical hazards in their working process and know useful ways to prevent or reduce negative effects on their health.



Indonesia



The National Seminar "Dissolved Toxins in the Land of Disasters"

The National Seminar "Dissolved Toxins in the Land of Disasters" was held on 09 May 2019 which took place at Hotel Oria Jakarta. The seminar was attended by several elements of society namely Workers' Unions, NGOs, Academics and expertists in the field of asbestos and disaster, therefore fillers in the seminar were filled by Darisman from the Local Initiative for OSH Network (LION) Indonesia, Dr. Anna from Ina-BAN , from ILO Bangkok, from the Disaster Management Agency and the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The National Seminar initiated by Lion which is part of Ina-BAN collaborated with ILO Jakarta, so that the target of the participants was to involve more unions and humanitarian workers in the field of disaster.

Asia mission, Delegation INA-BAN to Brazil

In April 2019 the Local Initiative for OSH Network (LION) Indonesia was trusted to be a representative of Ina-BAN to become an Indonesian delegation in the Asian mission to Brazil. In the mission there are 3 countries representing Asia, namely Indonesia, India and Japan. Which 3 countries become the most countries in asbestos consumption every year.

The mission aims to pressure Brazil not to continue the export of Asbestos specifically to Asia, because according to Asia Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN) data, Brazil's biggest market destination in exporting asbestos material is the country in Asia, in other words Brazil disposes of poison that is beneficial to the country in Asia.

Delegates in the mission traveled to various levels of government in Brazil both to the Executive, legislative and Judiciary and even to visiting several political parties to ensure that we actually opposed Brazil's position in exporting Asbestos material to Asia.





Indonesia

Training of OSH and advocacy of Occupational Disease with Asbestos at Bandung



National Workers Union (SPN) West Java in collaboration with the Local Initiative for OSH Network (LION) Indonesia on March 14, 2019 has held an OSH training with the theme "OSH Advocacy and Asbestos-Caused Diseases" held in Bandung.

The training, which was attended by more than 50 participants from various regions in West Java, discussed a lot about the advocacy process and the reporting flow when the work-related illnesses were discovered. Because of the fact other than Occupational Disease which is still not popular in Indonesia, the flow of reporting when it was discovered that Work Disease was also very complicated to do.

OSH training with FSPMI in Batam on June

About 50 workers from several electronics factories in Batam, Indonesia participated in the OSH training, which included an overview of OSH issues (particularly toxic hazards) and which focused on right-to-know, CHEMHAT, hazard mapping, and body mapping. Prevention is the key!



OSH Festival IndustriALL Indonesia Council, Bekasi

On 2 of February 2019, the OSH Industri All Indonesia Council Festival was held, which took place at the MM2001 Bekasi Industrial Estate in West Java. Industri All is working with the Local Initiative for OSH Network (LION) Indonesia as an institution that focuses on OSH, to hold an OSH festival in which there is an OSH Seminar and Stand Booth for free health checks and a good exhibition of OSH equipment campaigns.

The OSH Festival was attended by more than 200 workers from various companies and various unions affiliated with the All Industry.



The seminar "Advocating for Occupational Diseases" which was part of the Osh Festival, attracted much attention because it raised a theme that was not yet popular in Indonesia. Many workers know about Occupational Accidents but not with Occupational Diseases, whereas Occupational Diseases more often affect workers with a more difficult advocacy process. So that many questions from trade unions are related to ways of advocacy that must be done. Hopefully there will be an improvement in OSH Management in every company after getting new knowledge related to advocacy for Occupational Diseases, and can reduce the number of Occupational Accidents.



Philippines

WORKSHOP-FORUM ON THE NEW OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH LAW



The Institute for Occupational Health and Safety Development (IOHSAD) – Philippines conducted a forum and workshop on the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Law signed by the government in August 2018. Workers from different sectors (agricultural, manufacturing and service) participated in the forum held last February 27. A representative of the Gabriela Women’s Party, the primary author of the OSH bill in the Philippine Congress discussed the highlights of the new law. She also recognized the significant contribution of the Pass the OSH Bill Advocacy Campaign launched by workers’ institutions such as IOHSAD and labor unions that solidified the support of the workers and the general public which paved the way to the bill’s passage.

Some of the major provisions of the OSH Law are the following : (a) the law covers all workplaces including the establishments inside the special economic zones; (b) workers’ right to know all types of hazards in the workplace’ (c) workers’ right to refuse unsafe work without threat or reprisal from the employer, if as determined by the Labor Department, an imminent danger situation exists in the workplace; (d) workers’ right to personal protective equipment; (e) imposition of administrative penalties to employers, contractors, subcontractors who willfully fails or refused to comply with the required OSH standards.

On the other hand, IOHSAD, explained to the workers the need to continue the campaign for safe workplaces in the country. The safety group considered the new OSH Law as an initial victory but also recognized the need to continue the campaign for the criminalization of OSH violations and hold non-compliant employers criminally liable.

The new Expanded Maternity Leave Law was also discussed among the workers. Women workers expressed their appreciation and raised their questions on the implementation of the legislation. The new law provides women workers 105 days of maternity leave days plus 15 days for solo parents.



Organizational Update - Environics Trust and iBAN



January

- 3-day medical camp in Kymore, Madhya Pradesh - an asbestos affected area in Central India where in 159 victims were diagnosed (142 secondary cases). These victims filed their claims with Turner and Newall and will soon receive their compensation.
- The 2-day meeting of iBAN network members was also held in New Delhi to discuss and draft the outline of an action plan for 2019, for implementation of the actions. The detailed update can be found at <http://environicsindia.in/2019/02/20/report-of-ban-asbestos-meeting-19-20-january-2019/>

February

- 2-day state-level meeting with the government officials of Jharkhand presided. The agenda of both these meetings were - implementation of Supreme Court order on Silicosis (7 February 2019) and National Green Tribunal order on reclamation of asbestos mines in Jharkhand (8 February 2019). In both the meetings with the Chief Secretary of the state, discussions were confined solely on the two respective judgments aimed to evolve a modus operandi for accelerating the process of implementation.
- On 23rd February iBAN network member, organized a meeting in Kolkata, Victims were given their compensation on that day.

March

- On 13 March, the first official screening of the documentary "Breathless", wherein delegates and participants from Ministry, CSO, Doctors and others were present. After the deaths of his father and many others from his village due to asbestos exposure, filmmaker Daniel Lambo had a fervent to find the truth about the deadly asbestos industry in Belgium and its extended business in India.
- On 15 March, at the launch of UNGP, an opportunity to represent the work on an international platform - United Nations. Under the UN business and human rights wings, iBAN presented its work to the international audience.
- On 20 March a meeting with like-minded CSOs was held to discuss and decide the framework of a case study on the implementation of UNGP in the asbestos industry in India.

May

- On 31 May 2019, a training-cum-workshop was arranged in association with the Occupational Safety and Health Association (OSHA) in Rajasthan. The workshop and training were organized for stone quarry and cutting workers, to generate awareness on the OSH norms and their legal rights.

June

- On 7th and 19th June, meeting with partners of Praxis and Partners in Change, CSOs with whom asbestos case study is ongoing took place. These meetings were held to develop the study further and in details.

In addition to, organizing meetings and workshops, Environics Trust is conducting a study on determining the carrying capacity of a coal-area (about 1300 sq. km) in Chhattisgarh. The secretariat plans to develop a strategy to study the widespread use of asbestos in the aforesaid area and identify potential victims of occupational and environmental health hazards in the area.



Pakistan

Workshop on Basic Trade Union

A two days' basic trade union training workshop was organized on 2-3 May 2019 in Lahore. Total 32 HBWs, brick kiln workers, power loom workers, members of Pak telecom employees' union including 14 males and 18 females attended the training. Session on occupational Safety and health was added along with other sessions as situation of workers' rights, introduction to constitutional and labour rights of workers, international human and labour rights mechanisms and conventions, Introduction to important labour laws, importance of organizing and unionization, basic documentation for registration and annual returns of the registered unions, gender based division of labour and impact on female workers, importance of organizing women workers in the training workshop.



Safety Tool Kits Distribution

LEF distributed 270 toolkits among 270 workers. These tool kits included cotton gloves, masks and N95 masks. Before distribution of safety tool kits, LEF discussed the needs for these kits and importance of safety at work place.

Need analysis for the distribution of safety Tool Kits

During the need analysis, LEF came to know that workers did not have much information about the needs for safety tools. They are more interested in wages and other benefits. So LEF asked different workers about their occupations in Lahore and Faisalabad districts. These workers were from different factories and home based sector. Mainly all workers were from garment sector.

This was a very basic kind of safety kit for garment workers and was developed by keeping in view the budget and situation of workers. LEF followed up with some selected workers after sometime of distribution and found out that they are using the tool kits and some of the workers have even informed other workers about importance of safety tool kits.



Orientation on OSH



An orientation session on occupational safety and health was held on 19th of April 2019 in Lahore. Total 21 factory workers including 12 males and 9 females attended the session. The participants were almost garment workers.

The objectives of orientation session:

- To enhance knowledge of risks at work place
- To realize the workers how their health is important
- To give them knowledge how they can minimize the risks and keep them healthy

At the end of the session the workers were encouraged to organize themselves and demand for safe workplaces.

Awareness Raising Training for Brick kiln workers



A session for brick kiln workers was organized on 26th of January 2019 at Lahore. Total 30 male and female workers participated in it. The workers were informed about different health hazardous at work place and how they can prevent themselves.



Nepal

Training of Trainers on Occupational Health & Safety



OSH is one of the major issues directly related to the workers' Health. Large number of Nepali workers involves in informal sector, however formal sector also one of the major area of work. All Nepali workers are still unaware of the concept and importance of OSH. Considering this fact, in collaboration with AMRC, GEFONT has been organized one-two days ToT on OSH in Kathmandu.

The objective of the training was to:

1. Enhance the capacity of union member on OSH Issue.
2. Identify hazards and their associated risk with works.
3. Proper use of safety protection measures to prevent or minimize accidents in cement industries workers.
4. Sharing knowledge and expertise of AMRC on OSH Issue.

Aiming to enhance the capacity of union member on OSH Issue, identify hazards and their associated risk in works, proper use of safety protection measures to prevent or minimize accidents in cement industries workers and Sharing knowledge and expertise of AMRC on OSH Issues, these two days training has been organized by GEFONT during 29-30 March 2019 comprising 35 participants including Leaders/members from Whole Industry Trade Union Nepal (WHIN), basically workers working in cement factory and GEFONT province level leaders.

The training was facilitated by Sister Omana George from AMRC and Bidur Karki from GEFONT. The training has been conducted in two sessions. The first session was inaugural and second is core session with various other sub sessions. Program inaugurated by GEFONT President Com. Binod Shrestha. He highlighted about the important of OSH especially in Cement Industry.

Outcome of the training

- Participants trained on basic OSH Issues
- Identified the hazards and their associated risk is in Cement Industry.
- Gained knowledge and expertise from AMRC on OSH Issue
- Developed trainer on OSH Issue in cement Industry
- Gained basic knowledge on formation of OSH workplace policy.
- One year Planned for OSH campaign.

Malaysia

Activities of HASAC Penang, Malaysia.

1) Implementation for Chemical Classifiers (ICOP) two day training program conducted on 17-18 February, 2019 organized by Malaysian Industry Association (MIHA) & Department of Occupational Safety & Health.

Training attended by President – Dr. T. Jayabalan for competency as assessor.

2) Health & Safety Advisory Centre (HASAC) organised its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 8 March, 2019.

3) Training on Hearing Conservation Program Conducted on on 12 March 2019 comprising 300 workers from Fraser & Neave Bottling Company. The training program facilitated by Dr. T. Jayabalan.

Conducted Audiometry Assessment among 20 workers also measured in this training.

4) Safety & Health Conference 2019 conducted on Driving OSH Excellence at work on 20-21 March 2019, Participated by President – Dr T. Jayabalan.

5) Conducted research on use of antibiotics in animal husbandry in Penang, Malaysia and implications for public health on 9 May 2019. The data has been collected from poultry farm, veterinarian and dairy farmers.



IWMD 2019

CIVIDEP India Organized Workshop on Occupational Health and Safety for workers in electronic factories to observe IWMD 2019



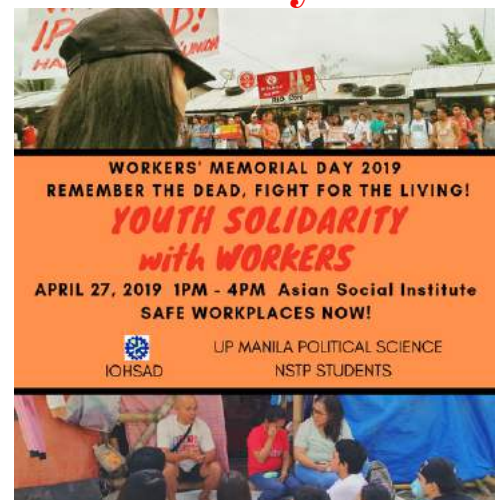
On the occasion of International Worker Memorial Day, Cividep India organised a workshop on 28th April 2019 on Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) at Sunguvarchatram, Tamil Nadu, India. 67 workers, including 24 women, employed in electronics factories in the region, attended the event. The workshop followed the theme of the ANROEV network "Raising Voice to Ratify ILO Convention no. 155 (Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981)". Mr. Gopal Reddy, former educational officer of Building and Wood Workers International (BWI) was invited as resource person for the workshop. The historical background and significance of the occasion, the importance of using safety equipment, and the proposed ILO instrument relating to OHS, were some of the topics addressed.

IOHSAD Philippines Marked Workers' Memorial Day 2019

IOHSAD marked this year's Workers' Memorial Day with a program that showcased the research outputs and case studies conducted by Political Science students of the University of the Philippines Manila.

The students conducted interviews among agricultural workers (SUMIFRU banana plantation), manufacturing workers (laundry detergent company and electronics company), service workers (business process outsourcing companies) to survey the different OSH issues in their respective workplaces.

They also gathered initial testimonials from workers who are victims of unsafe workplaces or those who are suffering from work-related illnesses and health conditions.



April 27, 2019 International Workers Memorial Day Rally in Osasco at the headquarters of the Metal workers Union attended by ABAN, IBAS and ABREA (Brazilian Association of the Asbestos-Exposed) members.



OSHE celebrated World Day for Safety and Health



Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHE foundation) celebrate the World Day for safety and Health at Work 2019 with due respect. A discussion meeting held at the Conference Hall of OSHE to commemorate those who have killed and injured at workplaces all over the world.

Mr. A. R Chowdhury Repon, Executive Director of OSHE, urged the government of Bangladesh to ratify the ILO Convention 155 (occupational health and safety) as part of states obligation towards ensure safe, healthy and hazards free work places.

On the other hand Building Safer Workplace for Vulnerable Garments Workers (BSW) project of OSHE foundation observe the World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2019 at community level with the participants from different garments workers at Mirpur area.

The World Day for Safety and Health at Work is an annual international campaign to promote safe, healthy and decent work. It is held on 28 April and has been observed since 2003

Mass Mobilization on International Worker Memorial Day, Jakarta, Indonesia

International Worker Memorial Day was observed for the first time in Indonesia in 2016 which was initiated by the Local Initiative for OSH Network (LION), Jakarta, Indonesia. Only one union shown its interest to participate in the celebration.

From 2016 unions' participation has been increased in International Worker Memorial Day celebration, as evidenced in 2019 there are 7 Trade Unions and 1 Confederation involved in the IWMD.

The IWMD aims to remind workers all over the world that, there are still many workers who are being casualties due to occupational accidents and diaereses, so that all workers are expected to pay more attention and prioritize health and safety while working.



Currently in Indonesia there has been a forum for victims of work called "Forum Pejuang K3" in which members consist of workers who have been victims of workplace accidents or work-related illnesses. The forum has more than 170 people till now.

So that the Forum Pejuang K3 annually becomes the leading organization in the IWMD celebrations, so that there will no longer be additional victims like them.



108th International Labour Conference

New international labour standard to combat violence, harassment at work agreed



A new Convention and accompanying Recommendation to combat violence and harassment in the world of work have been adopted by the International Labour Conference (ILC) on 21 June 2019.

The Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 and Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019, were adopted by delegates on the final day of the Centenary International Labour Conference, in Geneva.

The Convention recognizes that violence and harassment in the world of work “can constitute a human rights violation or abuse...is a threat to equal opportunities, is unacceptable and incompatible with decent work.” It defines “violence and harassment” as behaviors, practices or threats “that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm.” It reminds member States that they have a responsibility to promote a “general environment of zero tolerance”.

The new international labour standard aims to protect workers and employees, irrespective of their contractual status, and includes persons in training, interns and apprentices, workers whose employment has been terminated, volunteers, job seekers and job applicants.

ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment: Five key questions



Shauna Olney

For the first time violence and harassment in the world of work are covered in new international labour standards, adopted at the Centenary International Labour Conference and now open for ratification by ILO member States.

By Shauna Olney, Chief, Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch, ILO

What is the significance of the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and Recommendation (No. 206)?

The process behind these instruments began in 2015, and – with the recent global outcry against violence and harassment – their adoption could not be more timely or relevant. The Convention is strong and practical. Together with the Recommendation, Convention No. 190 provides a clear framework for action and an opportunity to shape a future of work based on dignity and respect, free from violence and harassment.



The right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment has never before been clearly articulated in an international treaty. It also recognizes that such behaviors can constitute a human rights violation or abuse.

These instruments – the first of the ILO's second century – also reaffirm the ILO's crucial standard-setting role. They are tangible evidence of the enduring value and strength of social dialogue and tripartism, and social dialogue and tripartism will be essential to implementing them at national level.

What kind of acts come under the definition of “violence and harassment”?

Definitions vary and lines are often blurred. For example sexual “harassment” is often classified as a form of gender-based “violence”. This is why the Conference took a pragmatic approach, defining violence and harassment as “a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices” that “aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm”. This potentially covers physical abuse, verbal abuse, bullying and mobbing, sexual harassment, threats and stalking, among other things. The Convention also takes account of the fact that nowadays work does not always take place at a physical workplace; so, for example, it covers work-related communications, including those enabled by ICT.

Who will be protected under the Convention?

The Convention's focus on inclusivity is very important. It means that everyone who works is protected, irrespective of contractual status, including interns, volunteers, job applicants, and persons exercising the authority of an employer. It applies to the public and private sectors, the formal and informal economy, and urban and rural areas.

Some groups, and workers in certain sectors, occupations and work arrangements are acknowledged to be especially vulnerable to violence and harassment; for example, in health, transport, education and domestic work, or working at night or in isolated areas. The sectors specific to each country will be identified through tripartite consultation.

Gender-based violence and harassment is specifically highlighted, and the approach also takes into account third parties (e.g. clients, customers, service providers and patients) because they can be victims as well as perpetrators.

Importantly, the impact of domestic violence on the world of work is also included. This is a significant step in bringing domestic violence out of the shadows, and changing attitudes. The Recommendation also sets out practical measures, including leave for victims, flexible work arrangements, and awareness-raising.

Is it possible for the Convention to change attitudes?

Changing attitudes is never easy but is essential if we are to eliminate violence and harassment from the world of work. The adoption of strong instruments like this sends a powerful message. It makes the invisible visible, acknowledging the pervasiveness and unacceptability of violence and harassment.

We need to tackle the underlying causes, including multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, gender stereotypes and unequal gender-based power relations.

Workplace risk assessments, as set out in the Convention and detailed further in the Recommendation, can also help to change attitudes because they can take into account factors that increase the likelihood of violence and harassment (such as gender, cultural and social norms). The Convention and Recommendation also call for training and awareness-raising measures.

When does it come into force?

As with most ILO Conventions, Convention No. 190 will enter into force 12 months after two member States have ratified it. Given the high level of support indicated when it was adopted, we are confident it will come into force quickly.

But the Convention will have an impact even before then. All member States are required to bring it to the attention of their competent national authorities, and this ensures the issues receive visibility at national as well as international level.



Female workers at semiconductor plants face greater risk of leukemia and death

Female workers handling chips at South Korean semiconductor plants face a 1.59 times higher risk of leukemia and a 2.8 times higher risk of dying from the disease than for all workers, according to the findings of the first research study on the issue by a state institution. In the case of the non-Hodgkin lymphoma form of blood cancer, the risk of death was found to be as much as 3.68 times higher. The result offered a conclusive confirmation of claims that have been made over the past decade or so by the semiconductor health and human rights watchdog group Banollim and others.



At the Government Complex Sejong on May 22, Kim Eun-a, director of the department of the occupational health research at the Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA), announced findings from an epidemiological study of the health of workers in semiconductor manufacturing. Based on a 10-year epidemiological study begun in 2009, the researchers concluded that female workers at semiconductor companies face a 1.55 times higher risk of developing leukemia, a form of blood cancer. For female operators aged 20 to 24 who handle semiconductor chips directly in factory clean rooms, the risk ratio was 2.74 times. For the study, the researchers examined 201,057 current and former workers at six semiconductor companies, including Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix.

Female operators were found to have a 2.81 times higher risk of dying from leukemia than other workers. The issue of leukemia at semiconductor factories first became known to the public with the 2007 death of Hwang Yu-mi, a former operator at a Samsung Electronics plant in Giheung, from acute myeloid leukemia. In the case of non-Hodgkin lymphoma, the risk ratio among female workers was 2.19 times higher for operators at semiconductor factories, while the risk of dying from the disease was 3.68 times higher for all female workers at semiconductor companies. The rate was 2.52 times higher than for the general population.

Noting “increase risk ratios for thyroid cancer, stomach cancer, breast cancer, brain and central nervous system cancer, and renal cancer,” the researchers concluded the cases of thyroid cancer and of stomach cancer and breast cancer among women “require additional examination,” citing the possibility that more semiconductor company employees may have learned about their conditions due to increased workplace health examinations.

In December 2008, KOSHA released findings from a yearlong study tracking cases of blood cancer at semiconductor processing plants following Hwang Yu-mi’s application for industrial accident recognition in 2007. At the time, the study was widely criticized for its short duration – which was seen as inadequate to produce significant findings in connection with leukemia – and for ignoring the “healthy worker effect.” The claim was that because workers as a group tend to be healthier than the general public, as they receive ongoing health examinations at the time of hiring and while employed, their risk ratios should be compared with other workers rather than the total population. In her announcement on May 22, Kim presented two sets of figures comparing the risks of cancer and other conditions among semiconductor workers with both the total population and all workers.

The study’s findings are expected to make it easier for workers to gain industrial accident recognition for different forms of blood cancer developed while employed at semiconductor workplaces. The door to industrial accident recognition has been opened wider for semiconductors with the Ministry of Employment and Labor’s adoption last year of the so-called “principle of presumption,” which simplifies the approval process for individuals working on the same or similar processes to cases where industrial accidents have already been recognized for eight types of diseases, including leukemia and malignant lymphoma.

By Jeon Jong-hwi, staff reporter

See more at http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/895075.html



61% leather workers of Bangladesh have health problems



OSHE foundation unveiled a baseline report titled 'Occupation Health and Safety Baseline Study in Leather Supply Chain of Bangladesh'. A huge number of workers, 61% to be accurate, at the Dhaka leather industry are currently suffering from different kinds of health issues and accidents at their workplace, said Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHE foundation).

OSHE foundation unveiled a baseline report titled "Occupation Health and Safety Baseline Study in Leather Supply Chain of Bangladesh" at the CIRDP auditorium on Saturday during a multi-stakeholder consultation on "Promotion of Decent Work at Leather Supply Chain." According to the report, 61% of leather workers are currently suffering from various types of health problems and injuries from accidents at their workplaces which is around 64 of 105 study participants, according to the study. Many non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, and cancer were left out of the research design due to lack of sources of the researcher.

Among the sufferers, 26.6% workers are suffering from headaches, 18.8% from skin burns, 15.6% from hand and leg pains, 14.1% have allergies, and 10.9% of the workers are facing knee and back pain. The rest are facing nose irritation, eye pain, body itching, sleep problems, chest pains, cough, breathing problems, diarrhea, hearing problems, blurred vision, redness of eye, eye irritation, scabies, and hand pain in varying frequencies. Meanwhile, in the last six months, a maximum of 33.3% workers suffered from knee and back pain, 26% from body pains, 20% from hand itching, skin irritation and leg ulcers, 13.3% from headaches, and 6.7% suffered from fever, gastric, jaundice, blurred vision and hearing problems.

According to the study, 93% of the workers did not get any kind of training ever. Among the respondents 32.7% perceived inadequate lighting, 22.1% chemical gases, 21% polluted environment, 19% chemicals of manufacturing process, 17.3% dust and the rest are claiming noise, improper ventilation systems, heat, and lack of protective equipment are the cause of the mentioned health problems.

Around 28.6% of workers have claimed using unsafe machinery, 20.2% unsafe handling of chemicals, 16.3% inattentiveness, 12% slippery floors, 11% materials, 10.6% poor housekeeping, and 1.9% respondents also claimed open needles as perceived factors related to injuries and accidents.

The study found that 67% of workers got safety equipment from the owners. Among the workers, 53% wear gloves, 53% masks, 28% boots, and 10% workers use goggles as safety equipment.

There are no welfare facilities in most of the factories such as first aid, treatment facilities, welfare officer, canteen, dining room, and there is no rest room, child room, safety committee, among all the studied factories. Ziaul karim, manager (compliance) of Apex Footwear Ltd said: "Workers are not using safety equipment though we have all the equipment; they just do not want to wear them (safety equipment) even after they were trained." He recognized waste management, both solid and liquid, as the main challenge for the leather industry.

The study was conducted at 16 tanneries, two leather goods production factories, and two footwear industries. Studies were conducted at a total of 20 industries to determine the occupational health and safety status in the leather supply chain from October 11 to November 20 last year in Dhaka and Savar.



The issue of banning chrysotile under the Rotterdam Convention was postponed for another two years.



Chrysotile asbestos was not included in the prohibitive list of the Rotterdam Convention in 2019. The ban on chrysotile did not take place due to the position of Russia, Kazakhstan, Syria, Zimbabwe, Kyrgyzstan, Venezuela, Pakistan, Cuba, India and Iran.

The decision was made in favor of the producers of chrysotile asbestos, which is beneficial for Russia, where there are two large producers of this substance.

Western environmental organizations call chrysotile harmful, they consider it to be the cause of lung disease and are seeking a ban worldwide. Now chrysotile asbestos is not used in construction in Europe. In Russia, the manufacture and use of chrysotile products is regulated by special rules.

Manufacturers of chrysotile asbestos insist that when used correctly, it is safe for human health. According to them, chrysotile came under a prohibitive campaign along with its really dangerous fellow amphibole, which is another substance. Chrysotile manufacturers believe that the campaign against chrysotile has been launched and supported by manufacturers of more expensive synthetic analogues.

Chrysotile is used in construction and engineering works, it is especially valued for its fire-resistant properties.

The Rotterdam Convention was adopted in 2004. Under this agreement, countries regulate the circulation of various chemicals, taking care of the preservation of the environment and human health. Since 2011, Russia has joined the convention - as it is believed, in many ways in order to influence the discussion around chrysotile. Previously, the question of banning chrysotile was raised six times, but every time the decision was postponed for the future.



Occupational safety? Indian factories recorded 21 fatal accidents per million Workers, EU less than 2



The average rate of reported fatal accidents in Indian-registered factories per 1,000,000 workers employed in the years 2010-2013 was 20.85, while it was 1.53 for the European Union in the same period. Based on occupational injury rates estimated by the World Bank, the risk of fatal and non-fatal occupational injury in China and India is about two and a half times higher than in the Economic Established Market region (basically Europe and North America).

Some data on accidents are available but there is paucity of data on occupational diseases. Diagnosis of occupational disease is still such a rare event that in many developing countries even the first case is not reported. The Ministry of Labour of the Government of India published data for occupational diseases in India for years 2014, 2015 and 2016. In these three years, 132 cases of occupational diseases were notified by only 5 states of India. The rest either did not diagnose or failed to report. Private medical practitioners are sometimes hesitant to notify occupational diseases because they are concerned that the victim may lose his/her job, or that no one will take care for his/her rehabilitation or compensation.

Diagnosis and reporting of occupational diseases is benighted. In India, 80% of health care is provided by the private sector, which is not monitored under any law. In rural parts, health care is provided by unqualified medical practitioners who do not have knowledge of occupational health.

Incomprehension of legal provisions and occupational health among rural and private medical professionals is egregious. The state is not investing in making the legal provision known. With technological advancement, working conditions may improve which would reduce occupational diseases. On the other hand, global warming, use of modern technology like robots, driver less vehicles, 3D printing, artificial intelligence may generate joblessness or an increase in unemployment in developing countries.

What can be done:

The state has a major role to play. Let it invest in propagating legal provisions. Associations of medical practitioners can also be encouraged. Workers, trade unions and non-profits may be educated on notifiable occupational diseases. The government can provide assistance to industry to improve the work environment. The central government should name one single competent authority for all cases notified from mines, manufacturing, services and other sectors. Amend the law to empower any citizen to notify a case.

The notifications should be online and should be accessible to the public so that possibility of changing the record by the authority can be minimized or diminished.

For more : https://www.counterview.net/2019/04/occupational-safety-indian-factories.html?fbclid=IwAR3w2kjh1_1efXYQKb7bFR97FVg_Q7fhCKqns1eeUwamI9sYpjf5klVPb5Q



Chrysotile Roofing Rheets : A Growing Curse in Sri Lanka



Sri Lanka has been plagued with stories of devils and goblins from time to time. Each time, these devils and goblins would cause a commotion and eventually vanish into thin air. Among these phobias there is one such phobia that has continued to resurface within the society for some time, and it's none other than Chrysotile roofing sheets.

The local Chrysotile industry dates back to more than 60 years, in other words it has served customers spanning three generations. However, to date there are no records of any consumers suffering from health issues caused by these roofing sheets. Even the former Director of Maharagama cancer hospital has ascertained this fact. The turn of events makes it evident that there is an underhanded ploy to mask the truth about Chrysotile roofing sheets, spread a baseless fear and try to distance the product from the society.

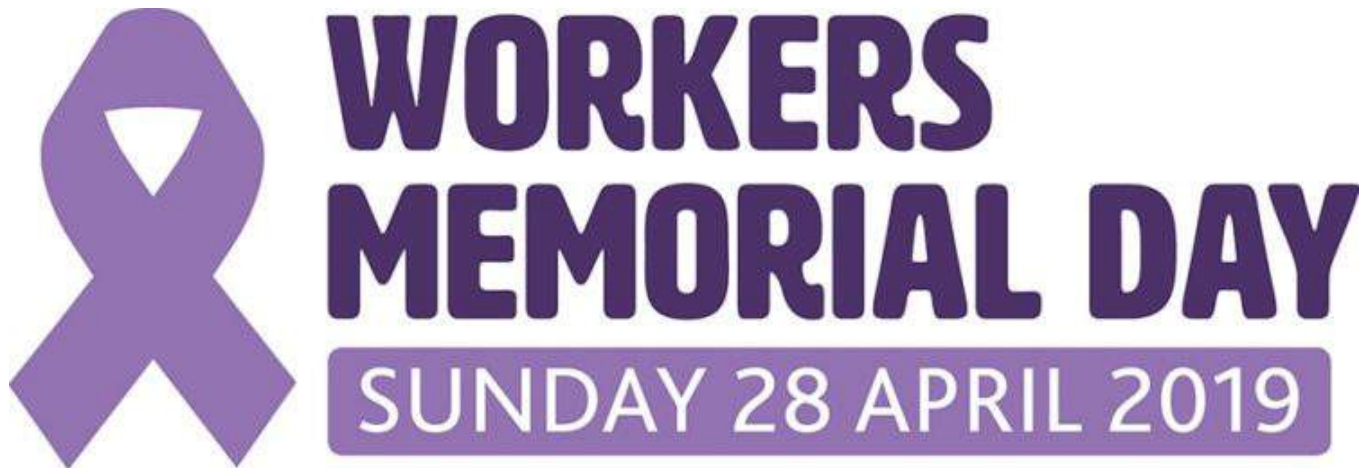
One of the main causes of the so called Chrysotile roofing sheet phobia is the opinion established in the world towards asbestos. In addition, the society lacks awareness on the differences between amphibole asbestos and serpentine chrysotile. Despite Serpentine Chrysotile – a natural resource – being classified under asbestos, there are several key differences between amphibole asbestos and serpentine chrysotile. Several research experiments have proven that Chrysotile does not cause any health issues. Declaring its stance on Chrysotile in 2007, the World Health Organization stated that, 'Controlled and well managed use of Chrysotile will create no health hazards to those working in the Chrysotile industry or the consumers.'

Chrysotile fibre is used by the local producers to manufacture Chrysotile fibre cement roofing sheets. The Chrysotile fibre cement mixture contains only 8% of Chrysotile fibre while the remaining 92% consist of water and cement. This further clarifies that only a fraction of Chrysotile fibre is used in the manufacture of roofing sheets. Therefore, instead of continuing its perennial name which has created many myths, the product will be rightfully and aptly referred to as 'Chrysotile fibre cement roofing sheets' henceforth as a means of addressing the problem of misrepresentation.

Chrysotile fibre cement roofing sheets are not only durable but are also quite affordable. These roofing products are available in a variety of colours, giving more charm to the most significant part of the house. Users of Chrysotile roofing sheets benefit from a number of advantages such as having a roof with high fire resistance, sound absorption, ability to withstand any climate or environmental condition, leaving no spaces for venomous creatures, and the ability to withstand external impacts made by leaping monkeys.



ANROEV Statement for International Workers' Memorial Day 2019



28 April, a day of remembrance for workers who were killed, injured or disabled due to lack of proper health and safety at work. Workers' Memorial Day is an opportunity to highlight the preventable nature of most workplace incidents and ill health and to promote campaigns for the fight of improvements in workplace safety. The basic slogan for the day is remembering the dead – fight for the living.

According to recent report of the ILO, currently, more than 374 million people are being injured or affected by illness every year by work-related accidents. It is estimated that economic loss due to OSH-related causes represent almost 4 per cent of global GDP, in some countries the cost can be as high as 6 per cent.

The developing Asia is one of a key region in the world constantly suffering with high number of work related deaths, diseases and injuries caused by unsafe working condition. According to a new report from the International Labour Organization (ILO), Changes in working practices, demographics, technology and the environment are creating new occupational safety and health (OSH) concerns. Growing challenges include psychosocial risks, work-related stress and non-communicable diseases, notably circulatory and respiratory diseases, and cancers. Death caused by hazardous substances at work are all time high linked to 1 million preventable death worldwide each year which is unacceptable.

It's a great sorrow to mention that, the overall development approach in the field of OSH in Asia is mainly focused on workplace accident; addressing occupational diseases is still not a priority. Occupational diseases (silicosis, asbestosis and occupational cancers and many more) are invisible and imminent threat for workers in Asia. The absence of OSH Rights, social protection and just compensation for industrial accidents, injuries and diseases are pushing affected families deeper into poverty and making them vulnerable.

Recent tragic workplace accidents in various parts of Asia show that health and safety of workers is not prioritised by employers or the enforcement authorities. Occupational accident victims specially women and young people are even being further marginalised as they find it even harder to find long term unemployment or forced to take precarious work that is low paid, unprotected and hazardous.

We must recognize the economic cost, the immeasurable human suffering such illnesses and accidents. These are all-the-more tragic because they are largely preventable.

According to UNHCR, exposing workers to substances that do not have a determination of a health-based safe level of exposure is a violation of their rights.



Statement/Press Release

At the most fundamental level, comprehensive information regarding the intrinsic health hazards of the vast majority of industrial chemicals continues to be absent, including their ability to cause cancer, to be mutagenic or to be toxic for reproduction. Continued exposure of workers to such chemicals not only constitutes a challenge to the rights of these workers to information, but also may amount to exploitation by deception. Without such information about toxic exposures at work, this further limits the rights of workers to realize other related rights.

OSH legislations are out-dated (regressive) as these generally fail to keep in step with emerging workplace issues and non-standard forms of employment. In many cases, workers in the informal economy, domestic workers, migrant workers are not covered under the legislations. Enforcement of OSH legislations are equally a serious concern in Asia and require joint responses at national and regional level. Updated OSH legislation in the Asian region reflecting the nature of work in Asia is crucial to prevent workplace accidents and diseases and to ensure just compensation for victims.

The ILO convention 155 (occupational health and safety) and 170 (chemicals convention) is considered as basic international labour standard for securing health and safety rights of all working people inside the national boundary; ensure safe chemical management and exposer free workplaces. On the other hand, the important feature of the ILO convention 155 is applied to all workers in all branches of economic activity. Therefore, ratification of 155 by countries in Asia is very important to ensure state's basic legal obligation, ensure occupational health and safety rights of all workers within the country. The formulation of harmonisation of compensation systems and ratification of ILO Convention 155 is an urgent need in Asia.

Furthermore, the goal of ILO conversion 170 is to provide workers with information about the chemicals at their workplaces, and about appropriate preventive measures so that they can effectively participate in protective programmes; establishing principles for such programmes to ensure that chemicals are used safely, but regrettably it is found that, till now only few countries in Asia has ratified convention 155 such as China, Korea, Mongolia, Australia, Fiji and Kazakhstan.

Its ratification status in south Asia and South East Asia is nil. On the other hand only 21 countries in the world ratified ILO convention 170 (chemical safety), and only China and Korea from Asian region are included that list.

The international community has long recognized health as a human right. But in a world where above 3 million workers continue to die every year as a result of occupational accidents and work-related diseases; it is time for safety and health at work to be recognized as a fundamental principle and right at work.

It has to be point out here that, one of key recommendations at just published Global Commission on the Future of Work report is a universal labour guarantee required that protects workers' fundamental rights, an adequate living wage, limits on hours of work and safe and healthy workplaces.

On the International Workers' Memorial Day 2019, ANROEV demands the governments in Asia to immediately ratify ILO Convention 155 and 170 as part of states obligation to ensure workers' rights for a safe, healthy and hazards free workplaces in Asia.

Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational and Environmental Victims (ANROEV)
28.4.2019





Asian Transnational Corporations (ATNC) Monitoring Network's Statement

STOP DEADLY WORKING HOURS IN ASIA



In modern society, work has no meaning for the working class. Our daily routine is monotonous, dull and demeaning. We do our work not to develop our potential, but to enrich our employer. Most of our precious time is spent generating profits for the capitalists. Being working class means being forced to dedicate our time and even our lives to the capitalists.

In Asia, workers' lives are literally bound to the capitalists. Workers spend around 8-14 hours a day, or 45-70 hours/ week, on average at the workplace for very low wages. Workers in Hong Kong, for example, are reported to work an average of 50.1 hours a week, while only recently in South Korea it was announced that the average working hours would be reduced to 52 hours/ week from 68 hours previously.

In other parts of Asia, workers are ordered to work longer. Garment workers in Bangladesh are forced to work up to 14-16 hours a day for a six day a week. In some cases, the exhaustive working conditions are made worse by long overtime work. Workers in Japan log at least 80 hours of overtime a month, but this can amount to as much as 159 hours, equal to 6 hours of overtime each day.

Although in some countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines the maximum working hours should not be more than 8 hours under the countries' labour laws, if travel time is included this can still mean a 12-13 hour day due to bad traffic and the long-distance commute to major cities such as Jakarta and Manila. Workers can spend 5 hours just to commute tens of kilometers between their workplace and their home.

Stress and fatigue caused by exhausting working conditions do not come without more severe health risks. In China, where average working hours exceed 60 hours per week, official figures reported that in 2014 1,600 workers died every day from working too hard. Meanwhile, a woman worker in Japan last year reportedly died from heart failure after logging 159 hours of overtime.



Statement/Press Release

Deadly working hours exist elsewhere in Asia. In Hong Kong, 19 passengers were killed when a bus driver who was exhausted due to long driving hours (12-14 hours) crashed. Similarly, in Indonesia, tank truck drivers employed by Pertamina Inc (an Indonesian state-owned oil company) face death risks by driving petrol tanks for more than 12 hours a day.

Death by overwork or 'work to death' is so prevalent that there is even a term to define it: Karoshi (過勞死) in Japan, Gwarosa (과로사/過勞死) in South Korea and Guolaosi (过勞死) in China. Even though there are no particular terms, Cambodia's garment workers are also literally working themselves to death. Mass fainting in the factory is reported in many countries, such as Cambodia and Indonesia, while in China we have already heard the sad story of Foxconn workers becoming suicidal due to harsh working conditions.

Long working hours brings no benefit at all to society. Lack of rest due to overwork can lead to the accumulation of stress and fatigue, which is one of the main sources of many health risks. Increasing stress hormones may cause heart failure or strokes, while the decreased metabolic ability due to lack of rest may cause diabetes. Overwork will not make workers become more productive but their cognitive level will decrease as the result of exhaustion.

Sleep deprivation may affect mental health and workers may become emotionally aggressive. Workers may frequently fight with his/her spouse due to accumulated stress. It is also common that stress may turn into depression or anxiety. This is reflected in the high suicide rate in South Korea where 40 people commit suicide every day on average.

Intensification of competition under free market capitalism has only adversely impacted on the working class.

The 'Race to the Bottom' has created even more harsh conditions at the workplace. Workers are forced to work harder and harder to earn nothing but death itself. By extending working hours, the capitalists are not only robbing the fruits of our labour, but our dignity and even our lives.

Working in excess of the limits of our physical and mental capacity has already proven harmful to our lives. ATNC Monitoring Network demands our governments strictly limit working hours to 6 hours per day without reducing workers' wages. In order to maintain both our physical and mental health, we should have time to rest for at least 8 hours per day. Working hours should also take into account commuting time from home to the workplace and back.

We will not have enough time to rest if we spend too much time commuting. ATNC Monitoring Network also demands decent wages, not only to sustain our basic needs but also to develop our potential as human beings. If we earn decent wages we will not need to work longer to increase our income to meet basic needs and we will not need to work deadly working hours anymore.

We had a victory in limiting working hours as a result of constant class struggle since the "Eight Hour Movement" on May 1st, 1886. However, our victory has now been taken away from us as the number of working hours is almost exactly the same as before the Eight Hours Movement. We should not remain silent any longer as our quality of life has been degraded to the point of death. We should reclaim our victory.

We don't need deadly working hour.



Rotterdam Convention COP 9



Twelve year veto of asbestos producer countries to the listing of chrysotile asbestos costing lives and making a mockery of scientific evidence and the principles of the Convention.

This week in Geneva, representatives of countries from across the globe are meeting for the 9th Conference of Parties (CoP) of the Rotterdam Convention. The Rotterdam Convention is an agreement between countries (now with 161 signatories) around the world to regulate dangerous chemicals and pesticides in order to protect people and the environment. If a chemical is listed on Annex III of the Convention then it can only be traded with "prior informed consent".

For the last twelve years – since the second meeting of the Convention Parties – chrysotile asbestos has been recommended for inclusion on Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention by the Convention's independent scientific committee. However, the current requirement for consensus of all Parties before listing means it has been blocked by a few countries who profit from its use and export. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) representing 207 million workers globally, national trade unions, asbestos victims' societies, academics, scientists, NGOs and ban asbestos networks are signatories to an open letter that will be distributed at the Conference.

The letter calls on the Parties to finally list chrysotile asbestos on Annex III of the Convention and immediately reform the Convention so that a small number of states with economic interests can no longer block listings of chemicals.

A delegation representing some of the estimated 222,000 asbestos disease victims who are dying every year and the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN) from India, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Australia and Switzerland will campaign for action directly at the Conference. Planned activities and actions organized during the Conference and to which all supporters and media are invited include:

Monday 6th May 18.30 Screening of the documentary "Breathless" (French language version) at Fonction: Cinéma, Maison des Arts du Grütli, rue du Général Dufour 16, Geneva.

Tuesday 7th May 9.00 am -10.00 am Vigil and Media Conference at the entrance to the Convention located at Centre International de Conférences Genève (CICG) 17, rue de Varembé.

Tuesday 7th May 2.00- 3.00 PM demonstration in front of the Russian Embassy located at Avenue de la Paix, à la hauteur de la Mission de Russie, mais du côté du parc du Musée Ariana. The delegation and all supporters of the Open Letter:

- condemn the long term hijacking of the convention by a few countries;
- demand that recommendations of the Convention's own Chemical Review Committee be respected and supported on the basis of the clear scientific and medical evidence presented;

- call on all Parties to COP9 to support reform of Article 22 of the Rotterdam Convention at this COP in order to allow a 75% majority vote of the Parties to include a chemical on Annex III should consensus fail;

call on all Parties to support listing of chrysotile asbestos on Annex III of the Convention at COP9, the 7th time it has been recommended.



Failure to list Chrysotile Asbestos at the Rotterdam Convention (RC COP-9) due to Unethical Veto

According to the World Health Organisation, all forms of asbestos are carcinogenic. Exposure to asbestos, including chrysotile, causes cancer of the lung, larynx and ovaries, and also mesothelioma (a cancer of the pleural and peritoneal linings). Asbestos exposure is also responsible for other diseases such as asbestosis (fibrosis of the lungs), and plaques, thickening and effusion in the pleura. The alarming fact about these diseases is that it can take 15 to 60 years to develop the symptoms and once diagnosed it's often too late to do anything.

For these reason to ban the asbestos all over the world for the last twelve years – since the second meeting of the Rotterdam Convention Parties – chrysotile asbestos has been recommended for inclusion on Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention by the Convention's independent scientific committee. However, the current requirement for consensus of all Parties before listing means it has been blocked by a few countries that profit from its use and export.

A copy of an Open Letter sent to COP9 at Rotterdam Convention delegates supported by organizations representing over 200 million workers as led by the ITUC as well as asbestos victims groups, occupational safety and health campaigners, NGOs, scientists, academics and concerned citizens was presented prior to the meeting on Rotterdam Convention in Geneva (29 April – 9 May 2019).

The letter called-up to the Parties at the meeting to finally list chrysotile asbestos on Annex III of the Convention and immediately reform the Convention so that a small number of states with economic interests can no longer block listings of chemicals.

Propaganda of Pro-Asbestos Lobbying Group at COP-9 /2019

Like as before, the pro -asbestos lobbying group as lead by the International Alliance of Trade Union Organisations "Chrysotile" was very active in the COP-9 of Rotterdam Convention on 29 April to 9 May 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland and made their all kind of efforts and energy to spoil the discussion at the event for not to include the asbestos as hazardous substance in Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention.

For the unethical veto of some asbestos producer countries as led by Russia, chrysotyle has not listed at Rotterdam Convention (COP9). The countries at this group were Russia, Syria, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Zimbabwe, Venezuela, Pakistan, India, Iran and Cuba.

Their unethical and baseless argument at the COP-9 was that, "Chrysotile asbestos is the safest commercial fibre, used mainly for production of high-density roofing materials, facade boards and pipes. This material has unique qualities: fire resistance, plasticity, low electrical conductivity. In developing countries chrysotile products represent important construction materials, which allow to build high-quality, durable and affordable housing. Banning chrysotile asbestos could have potentially disastrous consequences, including unemployment, impoverishment, and a decrease in the availability of governmental programmes for providing housing and drinking water to residents."

Actions by Asian Ban Asbestos Network (A-BAN) at COP9 of Rotterdam Convention, Geneva:

A six person delegation representing some of the estimated 222,0001 asbestos disease victims who are dying every year and the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN) from India, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Australia and Switzerland campaigned loudly for reform directly at the Conference with a vigil outside the Conference to remember the millions who have died from exposure to chrysotile asbestos, engaged direct advocacy with delegates at COP-9 and direct interventions at the convention floor itself.



This also meant directly challenged and confronting the chrysotile asbestos industry group at the conference. The delegation included: Bernhard Herold, from Solidar Suisse, Switzerland, Omana George, from the Asia Resource Monitor Centre, Hong Kong; Pooja Gupta from the Indian Ban Asbestos Network; Surya Ferdian from the Local Initiative for OSH Network, Indonesia; asbestos victim Mr. Subono, Chair of SERBUK Trade Union (Indonesia) and Phillip Hazelton from Australia's Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA.

Delegation from the A-BAN of the Convention slammed the failure for the 7th time to list chrysotile asbestos onto the Rotterdam Convention due to unethical veto of asbestos producer countries and their allies. They strongly criticized the abuse of the consensus approach by the chrysotile lobby. Three representatives from the delegation directly addressed the conference

Trade union leader Subono and a former asbestos factory worker from Indonesia assisted by Surya Ferdian from LION an OSH NGO in Indonesia told the conference. 'I have worked 14 years in a factory using chrysotile asbestos. I am now suffering from an asbestos related disease from that exposure. I am here representing other friends who are victims of asbestos in Indonesia and in the world. We are so angry with the countries blocking the listing at this Convention. We condemn this veto. How can the financial interests of just a few Parties block the desires of the many to protect workers like me, from toxic exposures?'

Bernhard Herold from Solidar Suisse, the development NGO of the Swiss trade unions and also a member of the Asian delegation, strongly criticized the abuse of the consensus approach by the chrysotile lobby. "This is not about consensus. This is about the tyranny of a small minority against a large majority. Just 10 countries blocked the will of the vast majority to list chrysotile' he said. He told the delegates "You cannot continue kicking the can down the road. This would be totally irresponsible, contemptuous and lastly deadly for many."

Pooja Gupta Coordinator for India Ban Asbestos Network was in disbelief at what she heard. 'It is saddening to see that India was one of the blocking countries. I am from India and I have seen many victims and deaths due to asbestos related diseases. The position of the Indian representatives and the Fiber Cement Association talking about the safe and controlled conditions in which asbestos products are manufactured is completely untrue. There is no such thing as controlled safe use and we have so much evidence of asbestos exposures in India. Hence, I would like my government to wake up and address the issue.'

Omana George, Asia Monitor Resource Centre Hong Kong reflected 'COP 9 has been historic to be a part of, as it was the only COP of the Rotterdam Convention 15 year history where delegates voted and abandoned the consensus approach to push through adoption of a new Annex VII on compliance. The vote result was 120 supporting and 6 opposing the proposal. This brings in new energy and possibilities to the COP especially to all of us working on the listing of chrysotile asbestos that this is a clear precedent; this vote may be the first step out of the current deadlock in the listing of chrysotile asbestos in Annex III. We now have a lot of work to do to achieve reform to listing at COP 10.'

Phillip Hazelton Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA the global justice organisation of Australian Trade Unions proposed 'This long term blockage to listing chrysotile, the world's biggest occupational disease killer must end and it's up to those countries who are as frustrated as we are, to do it. They must come forward with a viable solution to break the blockade on the listing of chrysotile asbestos. We have some options, let's go on with it!!'





Cambodia

Launching of Cambodian National Asbestos Profile



The Minister of Labour and Vocational Training (MOLVT) launch the first Cambodian National Asbestos Profile on 27 June 2019.

The profile has been developed over the last 2 years following Pracas 340 setting up the Working Group of 13 Ministries employers and trade unions led by the Minister MOLVT His Excellency Mr Ith Samheng.

For the first time the profile reveals which Cambodian workers are at high risk of exposure to asbestos and therefore asbestos related diseases such as lung cancer and mesothelioma. Evidence is presented from research conducted in Cambodia on which products contain asbestos. International evidence is presented on health risks from exposure to asbestos and the global death rates from asbestos exposure.

Asbestos is the leading cause of death of all occupational disease in the world accounting for almost half of all occupational cancers according to the World Health Organization (WHO). There are 6 types of asbestos but the most common type is called chrysotile (white) asbestos. Nearly 70 countries have already banned all types of asbestos.

The Cambodian National Asbestos Profile is an important document for policy makers, workers and consumers in Cambodia in moving forward to take action to prevent asbestos related diseases and the heavy environmental, health and economic costs of continuing to use asbestos containing products.

The Profile has been developed with technical and financial support of Union Aid Abroad APHEDA, the Asbestos Safety Eradication Agency Australia (ASEA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), World Health Organization (WHO) and Australian Aid through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

Colombia

Colombia Congress Banned Asbestos

Because of its health hazards, Colombia's congress banned on production, sale and use of asbestos on 11 June 2019 for 12 years of struggle for it. The ban will take effect in 2021 and allows local companies that use the mineral in its products a five-year transition period phase out the use of the mineral that is well known for causing, among other things, lung cancer.

Ahead of the vote, the lawmakers heard citizens who had fallen ill to a variety of diseases believed to have been caused by asbestos. Other witnesses to the debate brought images of loved ones who died because of their exposition to the cancerous mineral that has long been used in construction.

The house of Representatives, which had the final vote on the issue, unanimously agreed to the ban, much to the joy of the invited victims. The mining and export of the controversial mineral was also banned.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 100,000 people die annually as a result of their exposure to asbestos fibers. In Colombia, during the last 50 years, more than 1,700 people have died from lung cancer and mesothelioma as a result of asbestos use.

The Ana Cecilia Nio Ban Asbestos Law was adopted months after the Administrative Court of Bogotá (March 4, 2019) ordered the State to implement a policy phasing out the use of asbestos within five years. The Court issued orders that the Ministries of Health and Labor implement specific measures to ensure that the switch to safer technologies was progressed including the right to impose criminal and administrative sanctions, such as substantial financial penalties, for non-compliance.





South Korea

Samsung Has Put SHARPS Activists Under Surveillance, Court Records Reveal



Two confidential Samsung documents surfaced during a criminal hearing on April 16 for 32 Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd directors and executive indicted for allegations of illegal union-busting, confirming long-held beliefs that Samsung had placed SHARPS under illicit surveillance. The two records were among a trove of documents the government seized two years ago from the Future Strategy Office of the Samsung Business Group, the secretive office of 200 staff handpicked and used by the conglomerate's founding Lee family to perpetuate its control of 63 affiliates.

Samsung's Fears of a Union and Two Comic Books In one document, the office made a list of juyo inmul, or "persons of interest," including Hwang Sang-ki—a SHARPS founder and father of a publicly known victim of Samsung's blood-disorder cluster—and Lee Jong-ran, SHARPS's labor attorney. The document included such private information as photos of the two activists, their national ID numbers, and their descriptions as well as those of their personal friends, according to Kyunghyang which reviewed the documents.

The document was drafted in late 2012, when Samsung contacted SHARPS to start its first dialogue.

"As the cluster issue gained publicity," Kyunghyang quoted a prosecution document as saying, "[the Future Strategy Office] watched not only employees at risk of unionization, but also SHARPS."



Malaysia

Workers and Activists Demand Ban on Asbestos with the support of Health & Safety Advisory Centre, Penang Malaysia (HASAC)



Exposure to the asbestos remain a serious problem in Malaysia. This problem involves the government as a whole, the state governments, all local councils and many of the government agencies involved in occupational health and safety, housing, environment, public health and science and technology.

Malaysia has partially banned the use of asbestos. The prohibition of asbestos building materials in schools, clinics and hospitals built by government started in 1999. However, asbestos construction materials such as roof and ceiling tiles are still sold in the market. There are no acts or regulations prohibiting the use of asbestos in private buildings in Malaysia.

The need for a complete ban of asbestos arises from serious concerns for the continued use of this substance both at home and at the workplace. This concern is supported by World Health Organization (WHO), International Labour Organization (ILO) and even World Trade Organization (WTO) among others.

Asbestos was first used for industrial purposes in Malaysia in the 1960s and the first regulations related to asbestos have been around since 1980s. Although there are regulations, the problem is compounded by the limitations on the data collection on the numbers of asbestos related disease (ARDs).

Further establishing comprehensive medical records of ARD cases is also a major challenge on account of insufficient expertise in picking up the disease. The reason for the poor pick-up of ARD could be due to economic, social and political in nature. Therefore the best way out is to ban outright this deadly material.

A memorandum was submitted to 1) The Minister of Health 2) The Minister of Human Resources 3) The Minister of Housing 4) The Minister of Science Innovation & Technology in January 2019 urging for a immediate ban of all forms of asbestos.



Bangladesh

OSHE foundation Observed Rana Plaza Tragedy Day 2019 with Due Respect



Rana Plaza Accident Victims Rights Network and OSHE foundation remembrance the victims of Rana Plaza tragedy to mark the 6th anniversary of the deadliest building collapse of an eight storied building at Savar in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

A demonstration was organized by the members of victims' rights network in association with OSHE foundation on 24 April 2019 in front of Rana Plaza collapse site in Savar, Dhaka. Ms. Saki Rezwana, Chairperson of OSHE, Mr. Alam Hossain-Director of OSHE and Representatives from Trade Unions and members of Rana Plaza Accident Victims Rights Network also participated the event.

Ms. Saki Rezwana urged that, Bangladesh is being observed 6th years of the tragedy, but the victims are still struggling for proper rehabilitation, social safety and legal justice. After six years of the Rana Plaza tragedy, families of many victims' were yet to get proper rehabilitation, medical treatment, re-employment and legal justice.

The speakers also urged the relevant authorities to take alternative employment opportunities for the victims those who are unemployment till now and sufferings a lot and include them in the social protection scheme of the government. They also urged the authorities to strengthen the inspection system and ensure occupational health and safety and social protection of all factories and establishment in Bangladesh.

In human chain the victims and their families demanded for proper rehabilitation, social protection, and alternative employment opportunity for injured workers, long medical support and legal justice. The victims and their family members also demanded to ensure fair compensation, social protection and treatment still needed.

Coordinator of Rana Plaza Accident Victims Rights Network Md. Ohidul Islam said, there were lack of coordination in giving compensation for the victims. The injured workers are unable to work yet and they don't able to pay their treatment cost. So we demand to the prime minister to rehabilitate the injured workers and ensure alternative employment for them. He also seek attention of prime minister to ensure formal education of the victim's children. He added that, if the government provide proper education for the children of the victims, they would be much benefited.

Note: On April 24, 2013, Rana Plaza, an eight-storied commercial building, collapsed in Savar with death of 1,136 garments workers and more than 2,500 critically injured due to serious health and safety negligence and corporate greed.



Subono's Fight

Subono, 14 years working at SICIP, a manufacturer of chrysotile raw materials imported from RUSSIA, BRAZIL and Kazakhstan. He has been suffering from asbestos related disease from exposure to chrysotile asbestos. He attended at Rotterdam Convention (COP-9) representing other friends who are victims of asbestos in Indonesia and in the world. Subono is very angry with the countries blocking the listing at this Convention.

There are over 200,000 deaths from chrysotile exposure every year. Millions dead over the last 20 years. Almost half of all global occupational diseases are caused by chrysotile asbestos but still no action here on this substance. COP9 marks the 7th COP over 12 years that chrysotile asbestos has been recommended but blocked. He and his colleagues condemn this veto.

He said, "we know the lie of safe use. I worked in inhuman, dusty working conditions without real PPE. This made me and my friends often experience pain, coughing, shortness of breath, fatigue. Examinations that companies did were company secrets and not accessible."

They demanded to Cop-9 that, the meeting, chrysotile can be included in the list of Appendix III or that the Convention is reformed to ensure this.

He exclaim with sorrow that, How can the financial interests of just a few Parties block the desires of the many to protect workers like me, from toxic expo

Death due to Silicosis : no compensation and lack of treatment



Sikandar, 33 worked for 10 years as agate polisher on a vertical wheel machine known as PATIYA local language used to make round beads. Since 2013 he got sick and had to leave the job. Did not know anything on his right to claim compensation for silicosis and has not filed any compensation claim under the Employees Compensation Act. He was married with two children. His daily expenses of treatment were around Rs.250/- which his family couldn't afford.

He was diagnosed suffering from Silicosis. It is also observed that he was taking the anti-Tuberculosis treatment since 2013. Contacted to District Health Officer and other officers in person and it is informed that there is no Government scheme to help patients who need Oxygen at home. On 20 April 2019 Sikandar passed away before any Government help reaches him. He died so young.



Case Study/Report

Asbestos still killing 5,000 Britons each year, 20 years after ban

Asbestos is killing 5,000 people a year, two decades on from the toxic material being banned, a new report has shown.

The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) said people were still being exposed to asbestos, 20 years after it was outlawed in Britain.

More than 130 companies or individuals have been ordered to stop work activities over the past year because of non-compliance with asbestos regulations, said an IOSH report.

Asbestos is present in at least 500,000 buildings built before 1999, said the report.

IOSH chief executive Bev Messenger, said: "It is unacceptable that 20 years on from asbestos being banned in Britain, organisations are still potentially putting at risk the lives of employees, their families and other members of the public.



"Thousands die in Britain every year from cancers like mesothelioma, while many more are diagnosed with it.

"All this is preventable through good occupational safety and health. It is time for organisations to wake up and realise how dangerous asbestos is. There are no excuses."

"Currently the only treatments available are aimed at slowing the progression of the disease and improving quality of life.

"This devastating disease is preventable, and the dangers of asbestos are well known. It's vital companies are vigilant and take the proper precautions to protect people from the life-threatening dangers of asbestos, and take urgent action if asbestos has been found

The Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) records 73% increase in mine casualties



The Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority reported a 73 percent increase in the number of casualties during the first four months of 2019 when compared to the same period last year.

According to its report, 26 incidents occurred from January until April, a 73 percent jump compared to 15 during the same period in 2018.

"Of the 26 mines and explosive remnants of war accidents, eight cases, or 31 percent, involved mines, while 18, or 69 percent, were ERW accidents," the report said.

"From January to April, eight people were killed and 39 others were injured," it added. "[Last year in the same period] five people were killed, 19 were injured."

The report noted that from January 1979 to April this year, a total of 64,825 incidents were recorded, which killed 19,776 people and injured 36,007 others.



Gujarat agate workers use potentially low preventive practices to 'evade' deadly silicosis

A decade ago the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) may have come up with a Global Programme for the Elimination of Silicosis by 2030. However, a new research paper co-authored by Canada-based scholars in association with senior Gujarat activist Jagdish Patel of the People's Training and Research Centre (PTRC),



Based on a survey of 1,120 respondents (agate workers 743, family members 277, and neighbours 100) in Khambhat, Central Gujarat, one of India's top hubs for drilling, cutting and polishing agate – a home-based industry which employs up to 50,000 workers are employed across the country – the semi-precious stone is used to make jewellery and other decorative items, which are exported to the US, Hong Kong, Thailand, and European countries. Titled “Reducing agate dust exposure in Khambhat, India: Protective practices, barriers, and opportunities”, and published in the “Journal of Occupational Health”, the study says, while 44%, 35%, and 8% of agate workers, their family members, and neighbours, respectively, use some form of prevention practices, because the knowledge and risk perceptions are “generally high” among them, only 33.8% did not believe in the efficacy of measures they adopt.

The study notes, “The majority did not believe or were unsure if agate dust inhalation could be prevented”, adding, not without reason, majority of individuals (61.4%) did not use any effective “prevention practices.” The most commonly used preventive practices, says the study, are “a dust mask, cloth, or scarf (roughly 60% of all individuals); wet handling (roughly 30% of all individuals); and enclosing or moving the process away from family members.”

Calling the use of these prevention practices having “potentially low efficacy”, the study says, “The majority of all individuals (69.6%) knew that very fine dust was the type most dangerous to health” and that “the most commonly known health consequence of inhalation was difficulty in breathing or coughing.” It adds, “About 70% of individuals reported that they breathed enough dust to be harmful to their health, indicating generally high perception of risk.” Further, says that study, “Only 30% of workers reported being willing to invest in new technologies. Among these individuals, approximately half were only willing to invest Rs 2,000. Interestingly having debt was not associated with the willingness to invest, suggesting that factors beyond cost could limit prevention practices currently or in the future.”

For more : <https://www.counterview.net/2019/07/gujarat-agate-workers-use-potentially.html?fbclid=IwAR0Uc2g937fQZaddAv87UTxlmUvRPtjJzOU39oUgLbNqwVAwVIB7IkG8NxU>



History of Rajesh Kumar & Poonam

Name:- Poonam wife of Late Rajesh Kumar Vyas
I P No. 37/10518461 (D 42 Paldi Dispensary)
Date of birth (or approximate age) :- 16th July, 1981.
Male or female :- Female
Married/single/widowed/divorced/cohabiting:- Widowed
Address:- L204, Radhe Apartment Opp. Aasopalav Bungalows, Thaltej- Ahmedabad-380054 (Gujarat).
Contact Mob. No. 085111 08876
Poonam Vyas is wife of Late Rajesh Vyas is case of second exposure, & at present working as security Guard in a private co. She has two daughters aged 22 yrs. & 8 yrs.



Length of time suffering from breathing problems.

Her father-in-law shri Kalidas Vyas joined Shri Digvijay Cement Co. (known as Gujarat Composite Cement Co.) In 1971 & worked till 1995 as a Civil Engineer, whose resident was allotted in the campus of Company itself i.e. Shri Digvijay Staff Colony.

Her husband (Rajesh) was born in this campus, became the victim of Mesothelioma, died on 10th July, 2016. & Kamlesh-elder brother of Rajesh is suffering from brain tumour at present. On 28 March, 2017, Kamlesh has undergone the surgery of Biopsy at GCRI-Gujarat Cancer Research Institute, Ahmedabad & its report is awaited.

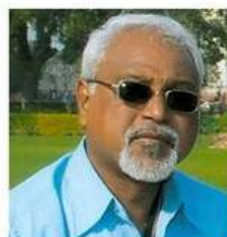
On 19th March, 2017 Dr. Murli visited OHSa Office-Ahmedabad & and observed the entire history/details about Ms. Poonam Vyas & her family. It is presumed that her other family members might be the victims of Asbestosis.

The list of mesothelioma had collected through an RTI application addressed to ESIC Model, Hospital, Bapunagar, Ahmedabad, where found three cases of Mesothelioma i.e (1) Rajesh Vyas, (2) Mr. Munnalal Shrama, (3) Mr. Shanmugam. Through ESI portal, I got addresses of victims & personally approached to their residence & ESI dispensaries also.



Name- Rajendra Pevekar
Age- 53 year
Status- Secondary

R. Pevekar was exposed to the fiber through his father's clothing. His father used to work in an Asbestos Material producing company in Mumbai. His mother is also suffering from Asbestosis after being exposed to asbestos fibers while washing her husband's clothes. Both have to be hospitalised two-three times in a year for treatment.



Name- Ravindra Ganpat Mohite
Age- 65 year
Status- Primary

Ravindra G. Mohite was exposed to the fiber while working for Ferrado Industries, Mumbai which used asbestos as one of the raw product. He has helped several hundred of his colleagues to get diagnosed and recognition as victim of ARDs.

More than 1600 victims of ARDs have been found in India. We demand inclusion of Chrysotile in PIC List of RC-9 immediately

For More Details

Email- ibancoordinator@gmail.com

Follow- India Ban Asbestos Network - @iBAN_Delhi



S. Korean Gov't Admits “Relatedness of Fatalities and Illnesses” in Semiconductor Industry



Workers fell sick and died due to exposure to hazardous chemicals in their chip labs, Korean Workers Compensation & Welfare Service (KCOMWEL) concluded on May 22, after reviewing ten years of epidemiological data.

The government entity tracked blood-disorder cases and analyzed risks among workers who worked in the chip industry between 2007 and 2017, KCOMWEL said. “The two types of blood disorder, leukemia and non-Hodgkin Lymphoma victimized chip workers who have worked in the industry before 2010.” “We could not exactly determine hazardous materials or their exposure levels,” added the agency, “However, their working conditions contributed to the incidences of [the illnesses].”

KCOMWEL collected data from about 200 thousand workers who worked, in 2007-2010, at chip labs at four corporations including Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd. and SK Hynix.

Trigger: The Death of A Young Worker

Spurred by the death in 2007 of Hwang Yu-mi, the first known victim of Samsung’s blood disorder cluster, the findings of KCOMEL’s first-ever comprehensive epidemiological probe into an industry will likely streamline workers compensation proceedings for many victims still awaiting rulings or seeking retrial of their rejected petitions.

Lately Available

For SHARPS, KCOMEL’s acknowledgement of the “relatedness” validated its ten years of campaigning for cluster victims at Samsung and other chipmakers in South Korea. “This probe depended only on lately available data,” said Hwang Sang-ki, a SHARPS founder and the father of Yu-mi. “It took eleven years to see these findings,” Mr. Hwang added. “Law should change to have the government to share the burden of proof with workers compensation petitioners.” Said SHARPS in a press release on May 22, “The probe still left things to be desired.” “It did not investigate temporary workers,” it continued. “It did not clearly determine what caused the blood disorders [among the workers].”

The following are key takeaways from the KCOMWEL probe: Female chip workers are 1.19 times more likely than the average population and 1.55 more likely than average workers to fall victim to leukemia;

Air pollution kills 100,000 Indian children every year, study says

The noxious air hanging over India’s towns and cities kills more than 100,000 children under five every year, a damning study published on 05th June 2019 for World Environment Day found. India has repeatedly failed to address environmental concerns. Last year a UN report found 14 of the world’s 15 most polluted cities were Indian.

Despite calls to action against pollution around the globe, Indian politicians mostly side-stepped the issue in the last election.

The State of India’s Environment (SoE) Report found air pollution is responsible for 12.5 percent of all deaths in the country — painting a bleak picture of the environmental record of recent Indian governments.



Carried out by the non-profit group Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), based in New Delhi, the report also found that 86 percent of Indian water bodies were “critically polluted.”

In April, CBS News correspondent Elizabeth Palmer met patients in the emergency ward of Delhi’s National Institute for Tuberculosis and Respiratory Diseases. Every one of them, in one way or another, were victims of Delhi’s filthy air. Between 800 and 1,000 people with lung problems line up at the ward every day for treatment.

“We have no non-smokers in India,” said Dr. Arvind Kumar, a prominent chest surgeon and founder of the Lung Care Foundation in India. Due to the air pollution in country, “everybody living in India is a smoker,” he said.

At its worst, India’s air can be 70 times dirtier than what the World Health Organization considers safe.



A worker dies of toxic exposure in the workplace every 30 seconds



In fact, it is often deadly: Around the world, a worker dies from toxic exposure in their workplace every 30 seconds, according to a 2018 UN report

In total, around 2.8 million workers globally die from unsafe or unhealthy work conditions per year, according to the report. And diseases resulting from workplaces—like lung cancer linked to inhaling carcinogenic substances on the job—account for around 86% of all premature death.

Cancer is by far the biggest contributor to those deaths, making up roughly 70% of workplace diseases. “Almost all such cancers can be prevented,” the report reads.

“More than 200 different known factors, including toxic chemicals and radiation, have been identified to date as known or probable human carcinogens, and workers are exposed to many of these in the course of their jobs,” the UN report reads. “Debilitating and fatal lung diseases, neurological disabilities, and reproductive impairments such as infertility and inability to carry a pregnancy to term are among various other health impacts that plague workers exposed to toxic substances.”

The Special Rapporteur heard testimony from former Samsung workers (all women) and their family members about tasks performed in the manufacture of semiconductor chips, such as dipping semiconductors into a chemical solution by hand to remove unnecessary parts and manually sorting and testing chips under high temperatures or voltages, releasing fumes. Former workers explained that they would still smell fumes from the workplace long after returning home. Neither the former workers nor the family members of the deceased could name the substances they had used in the workplace. For more info : <https://qz.com/1564995/toxic-exposure-at-work-kills-one-worker-every-15-seconds/>

Story of Maksud Malek

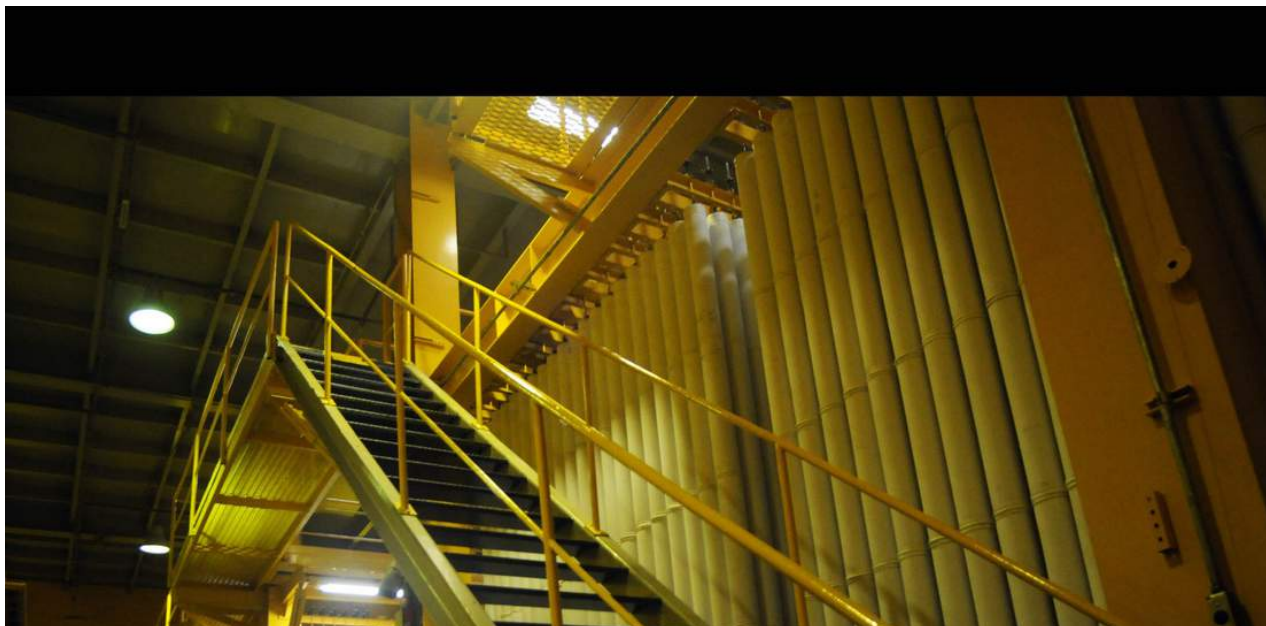


Maksud Malek (37; born in 1979) is a patient of silicosis in village Timba near Khambhat of Anand district of Gujarat in India. He has been migrated to Jaipur with friends to work as Agate polisher when he was still very young. He was paid Rs.250/- per day plus lodging and boarding at that time. After spending 2/3 years he returned back and got married in 2001. Later he worked as agate polisher in Khambhat city and in his own village for few days. For last one year he is in bedridden and on Oxygen. In 2007 he has affected TB and his family- parents, and brothers abandoned him. He was cured following treatment. His wife knew the hazards of agate polishing and was beseeching him to take up some other job. In 2018 he fell sick again. His wife said, he earned Rs.250/- per day in Jaipur, now we have to spend Rs.2500/- per day over the treatment. His wife is now looking after three children and earns a living, too. In the last 7 months, he had to be hospitalized several times and each time they had to spend Rs.15/17000/-

On 09 April Maksud Malek passed away with no compensation.



The Mine that Kills



Albertino de Oliveira is a broken man. He has seen seven members of his family die in the past ten years. “My wife, my father, a brother, three uncles, a cousin, “ says the man with white hair at the age of 54. His family members all have something in common: they were all employees of the asbestos mine in the city of Minaçu.

Albertino has a list of 30 people who suffer from mesothelioma or have spots on their pleura. These are illnesses typical of asbestos workers. Besides some of the names, Albertino writes the letter “F” or “falecidos”, that is, deceased.

From 1973 to 1988, he also worked in the mine, bagging the fibers. “Fifteen years of work in a cloud of dust with pieces of cotton up my nose serving as my only form of protection,” he says. He is not sick yet, but it is a struggle for those who have breathed the fiber for years that are dying today.

Albertino has calculated that in the coming years, around 500 people will develop medical issues related to asbestos, among whom many will be former employees of the mine but also those who simply lived in the area, that up until 1987 were totally immersed in the white asbestos dust.

In this area of the state of Goiás, found 400 kilometers north of Brasília, in the center of Brazil, the former employees don’t have a voice. Some have received settlements, others are trying to years after leaving the company, still without having their illnesses recognised. La Sama, already owned by the most infamous company, even in Italy, Eternit, have almost always obtained extra-judicial agreements with all its victims, so as not to be cited in any penal proceedings. In Minaçu, a city in which around 30 thousand people live, criticising asbestos puts the only local employer in danger. “The town was born with asbestos and it will die with it” says Albertino.

Around 70% of the taxes collected by the local government come from mining activities. With a total of 300 thousand tonnes extracted every year, it is the third largest asbestos mine on the planet, ones in Russia and Canada. And the only one still active in Latin America. Around 13% of all asbestos sold around the world comes from Minaçu.

For those from Sama, asbestos is not dangerous, not when it is carefully managed, for example, by limiting the contact between workers and the asbestos dust.



British firms secretly send killer asbestos to world's poor

An obscure law that allows companies to trade in secrecy has been used to make Britain one of the world's biggest traders in asbestos, a material that kills more than 100,000 people every year. Despite asbestos being banned in the UK for the past 20 years, several British-registered companies are responsible for shipping hundreds of thousands of tons of the mineral every year to some of the world's poorest countries, where it is still used in construction and engineering.

They include companies registered as limited partnerships (LPs), which can operate without paying taxes, publishing accounts or declaring publicly who owns them. In 2015, a single UK-registered company was responsible for shipping almost half the asbestos mined in Russia, the world's biggest producer. The Scottish National Party MP Martin Docherty-Hughes, a member of Westminster's all-party group on occupational health and safety, is to raise the issue of LPs in the Commons this week, demanding urgent action to restrict their ability to trade in secrecy.

Trading in asbestos is not unlawful in the UK and there is no suggestion the LPs are engaged in illicit activity. A Sunday Times investigation established that one of the world's biggest traders in asbestos is the Johannesburg-registered CJ Petrow & Co (Pty), of which Ion Petrow, a British-born businessman who lived with his family in Nairn, Invernesshire, until 2016, is a director. Petrow is also a director of Nairn-based CJ Petrow International, a global trader in metal. Despite a UK-wide ban on all forms of asbestos since 1999, data obtained by The Sunday Times

According to Russian customs data throughout 2015, it was responsible for 106 shipments of asbestos, totalling 34,636 tons and valued at \$13.67m, destined for Cuba and Vietnam.

Over the past 17 years, the biggest trader in Russian asbestos is Minerals Global Trading LLP, another limited partnership company, formerly based at an industrial estate unit in Wood Green north London. In 2015, it arranged the export of 263,660 tons of asbestos, worth a total of \$71.46m

for use in India, Indonesia, China, Mexico, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, according to Russian customs and excise data.

Another UK limited partnership, Worldwide Cargo Logistics Solutions LLP, arranged 36 shipment of asbestos totalling 2,965 tons and valued at \$1.39m, destined for China, India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia in August and September 2018.

Docherty-Hughes, whose constituency includes the shipbuilding area of Clydebank, which has some of the world's highest rates of cancer caused by exposure to asbestos, said: "Thousands of families across Scotland have been left devastated by the legacy of asbestos, especially here in Clydebank which has one of the highest rates of asbestos-related disease per head of population." He said it was a matter of concern that limited partnerships were involved in the trade, adding: "I will be pressing the UK government on the need for measures to address these concerns at the soonest opportunity."

Data obtained by The Sunday Times has also revealed the extent of CJ Petrow & Co (Pty)'s involvement in the global asbestos trade. In 2015, the South African-based company was responsible for 741 shipments, totalling 65,324 tons and valued at \$38.7m, to India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Mexico. In February this year, it was responsible for the shipment of 2,128 tons of chrysotile raw asbestos worth \$1.2m, to India. Ion Petrow is believed to be based in Vevey, on the north shore of Lake Geneva. A solicitor acting for Petrow said his client was not involved in the day-to-day running of the South African business.

There is no suggestion that any of the UK companies with which he has a connection have traded in asbestos or that CJ Petrow & Co (Pty) has undertaken any trade with the UK. He added that Ion Petrow "does not personally trade in asbestos either". None of the LP companies responded to our inquiries. There is no suggestion that anyone at the addresses where they are registered knew about their activities.

The government said: "We are aware of reports that in a minority of cases Scottish limited partnerships have been used for criminal activity. We have published proposals to reform limited partnership law, and intend to bring forward legislation to bring them into law as soon as possible."

Source Citation (MLA 8th Edition) "British firms secretly send killer asbestos to world's poor." Sunday Times [London, England], 14 July 2019, p. 7. Academic OneFile, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/A593230964/AONE?u=colu44332&sid=AONE&xid=43890a83>. Accessed 15 July 2019.



Impact of asbestos on public health

A retrospective study on occupational/non-occupational exposure of Fibronit plant (Italy)

The study sample was composed of 188 cases, 66% males. The average age at death was 71.4 years, significantly lower in females than males. Almost the totality of the subjects used to live in the province of Pavia at the time of death (97.3%).

Regarding the kind of asbestos exposure, the subjects was subgrouped into three categories: occupational, neighborhood, household. In several cases, the subjects had more than one source of exposure. At least 84% of the entire study group had environmental exposure to asbestos, approximately 27% household and 60% occupational. Considering only the group of individuals exposed occupationally, 70% of the 110 individuals for whom asbestos occupational exposure was ascertained were Fibronit workers and in almost all cases they were males (71/77). For 70 Fibronit workers it was impossible to know the exact period of time in which they worked at the plant, which an average result of approximately 20 years, with a variability of about 10 years.

As expected, based on the strong excess of men employed at Fibronit plant, the frequency of occupational exposure was significantly different between the two genders, as shown in Table 1. Similarly, among women, the frequency of household exposure to asbestos, linked to a family member exposed occupationally, was two times higher than that found among men and this excess is again significant. Instead, the difference between men and women in respect to environmental exposure was not significant

In the entire study, the most frequent cause of death was pleural mesothelioma, followed by lung carcinoma and asbestosis. In 80% of cases, the cause of death, revealed by a forensic autopsy, was found to be a mesothelioma. About 11% of cases died from asbestosis and its consequences and in the remaining cases another related asbestos pathology.

Considering the subjects for which it was possible to establish their smoking habits (143) it was possible to point out the following findings. Most of the subjects were ex-smokers or smokers at the time of death (64.6%), but significant differences between the two sex were pointed out ($\chi^2=18.0$, $P<0.001$): over 50% of women never smoked, whereas less than the 25% of men were non-smokers.

The concentration of airborne fibers inside a factory where asbestos is processed is much higher than the asbestos detectable in the surrounding environment (subjects with environmental exposure who developed mesothelioma used to live at a distance from Fibronit ranging from 100 meters to 700-1000 meters). Environmental asbestos concentration was measured between 1981 and 1990 (revealing airborne concentrations within the threshold established by current law, with occasional higher values), but never during the 1950s and 1960s, when the factory was fully active and when, considering the long mesothelioma latency, the most relevant exposures probably occurred.¹⁸

About the exposure, almost the totality of the workers in the asbestos-cement industry were men (66%); most of the women included in the sample examined, however, had environmental exposure (they used to live in Broni, nearby the Fibronit plant); a considerable group of the women included in the series had, instead or in addition, a household exposure, as they were in contact with clothes or objects containing asbestos brought into the house by a Fibronit worker.

For Details : <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6321947/>



Revealed: the Scottish links to asbestos trade



The deadly material is banned in Britain but companies registered in the UK are involved in shipping it to developing nations, says Carlos Alba. To people of the Highland town of Nairn, Ion Petrow and his family are part of what made their community tick. A successful businessman, he and his wife Helen a doctor offering alternative remedies have been valued members of the Nairnshire Farming Society and he was a stalwart of the local Rotary Club.

In its early years, the Nairn Book and Arts Festival benefited from sponsorship by the Nairn family firm, CJ Petrow International Ltd described by Companies House as "agents involved in the sale of timber and building materials" and in the "wholesale of metals and metal ores". But unknown to festivalgoers, almost 9,000 miles away in Johannesburg, another Petrow family business CJ Petrow & Co (Pty) Ltd was shipping asbestos to the developing world. For as well as being a pillar of the community, Petrow is a director of one of the world's biggest traders in the deadly mineral, estimated to cause 107,000 deaths annually.

A solicitor acting for Ion Petrow said his client was not involved in the day-to-day running of the South African business. There is no suggestion that any of the UK companies in which he has a connection has ever traded in asbestos or that CJ Petrow and Company (Pty) Ltd has undertaken any trade with the UK. For many Scots, asbestos and its lethal effects represent a chapter from the nation's industrial past best forgotten, when shipyard and other workers suffered painful, lingering deaths after their lungs were exposed to its deadly fibres.

Chrysotile, or white asbestos, is used for thermal insulation and fire protection in asbestos-cement, friction materials, gaskets, seals, textiles and composites. It became the last variant of the mineral to be outlawed in Britain 20 years ago and asbestos is now banned, in all its forms, in 66 countries across the developed world. Every month thousands of tons of the substance are shipped by or on behalf of CJ Petrow & Co (Pty) Ltd from Sverdlovsk Oblast, an asbestos mining area in the Russian Urals, to the handful of developing countries that still tolerate its use. Most of it ends up in India, the world's second-largest consumer of asbestos behind China, where it's used by the construction industry to make roofing sheets and as insulation for brake linings. Other shipments go to Sri Lanka, Thailand and Indonesia. India, Brazil, Russia and China account for almost 80% of the asbestos consumed globally every year.

Source : 14 July 2011 the Sunday Times

For Details : <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/revealed-the-scottish-links-to-asbestos-trade-wvh25gwjg>



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