



Press Statement **Canada Condemned!!**

Delhi, India: November 22, 2011:

Members of the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (A-BAN) who gathered in Jaipur, Rajasthan last week condemned the Indian's Government's collusion with global asbestos lobbyists and highlighted the devious and immoral behaviour of Canadian asbestos stakeholders who continue to promote sales of deadly asbestos to unsuspecting populations throughout Asia.

A statement issued by A-BAN delegates – the Jaipur Declaration – called “upon the Quebec Government to reject calls from (Canadian) asbestos industry profiteers, in particular the international consortium led by Baljit Chadha, for a \$58 million loan guarantee to finance the development of new underground asbestos mining facilities in Quebec.”

Commenting on the A-BAN activities in Rajasthan, Mohit Gupta, Coordinator of the Occupational and Environmental Health Network of India, said:

“Although, the logistical challenge posed by bringing Indian and A-BAN delegates to Jaipur were considerable, it was of immense import for members of our network to engage with grassroots activists from across India in a state where so many people have been damaged by deadly exposure to asbestos. Unfortunately, these dangerous exposures continue.”

Reflecting on the wide range of events, discussions, presentations and meetings held in Rajasthan last week, A-BAN Coordinator Sugio Furuya, from Ban Asbestos Japan, said:

“India is the world's biggest importer of asbestos. Asbestos sales continue to increase and hazardous exposures are a fact of life for many workers and members of the public. Creating the opportunity for Indian colleagues to report on the impact of asbestos use in their communities and detail innovative projects to identify and support the injured has not only informed the network but also provided vital space for the development of future initiatives.”

Having heard detailed reports on issues affecting communities in India which are resisting the imposition of asbestos-cement factories in their midst, as well as having received feedback from Asian, European and North American colleagues, a statement was issued; the Jaipur Declaration called on the Indian Government to take immediate action to “safeguard human health, protect the environment and secure the universal right to life (See Appendix A).”

Notes to editors:

1. The A-BAN meeting was sponsored by the Asian Ban Asbestos Network, the Occupational and Environmental Health Network of India and the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat. For more information on this event, contact Sugio Furuya (A-BAN) or Mohit Gupta (OEHNI) by email respectively at nrd15877@nifty.com or mohit.gup@gmail.com
2. Global asbestos consumption in 2010 was 2,029,586 tonnes; almost 70% (1,373,689 tonnes) of which was consumed in Asia. India is the world's biggest asbestos importer having imported 408,431 tonnes in 2010, the majority of which came from Russia, Brazil and Canada. India is Canada's biggest market for asbestos.
3. Canadian asbestos stakeholders in government and industry continue to make concerted attempts to develop asbestos markets in India in collaboration with Indian asbestos vested interests at all levels of government, Indian asbestos trade associations and commercial vested interests. Canadian civil society, major medical associations and publications as well as representatives of Canadian labour have spoken out against the country's double standards at selling to India a product deemed too hazardous to use in Canada.
4. For further background on asbestos issues in Asia and elsewhere, see various publications on the website: [www.ibasecretariat.org](http://ibasecretariat.org) including India's Asbestos Time Bomb: http://ibasecretariat.org/india_asb_time_bomb.pdf

Appendix A

Jaipur Declaration

The meeting of the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (A-BAN), having met in Jaipur on November 14-15th 2011, hereby declares:

- The history of India shows occupational and environmental exposure to asbestos is a public health hazard of enormous proportions.
- India's consumption of asbestos is increasing and widespread; dangerous exposures to asbestos are routine occurrences throughout India.
- Asbestos stakeholders in industry and government have a vested interest in promoting asbestos use in India even though safer alternatives exist.

We hereby call on the Indian Government to:

- heed the calls by international agencies to ban the use of asbestos in India and encourage the use of safe substitutes;
- implement the WHO's recommendation to establish a national program for the elimination of asbestos related diseases;
- co-operate with UN initiatives to include chrysotile asbestos on Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention;
- support individuals and communities injured by exposure to asbestos;
- make amendments in law so that the process of providing justice to victims is fast and victims are offered legal aid.
- create a fund by the imposition of a tax on industry to provide interim relief and support to victims, their families and affected communities
- free community based palliative care services should be made available for all victims of asbestos related diseases;
- acknowledge and support the efforts of grassroots groups and asbestos victims support groups in India working to highlight issues relating to the country's legacy of asbestos use;
- impose duty on the import of asbestos fibre and asbestos containing products with a view to decreasing asbestos imports;
- progress efforts to ban asbestos by 2015.

The A-BAN delegates call upon the Quebec Government to reject calls from asbestos industry profiteers, in particular the international consortium led by Baljit Chadda, for a \$58 million loan guarantee to finance the development of new underground asbestos mining facilities in Quebec.

In Jaipur, A-BAN delegates re-affirmed their commitment to free Asian populations from the grasp of the deadly asbestos industry in order to safeguard human health, protect the environment and secure the universal right to life.