

'Controlled Use' and the Reality in Asia



Vietnam 2004







Indonesia



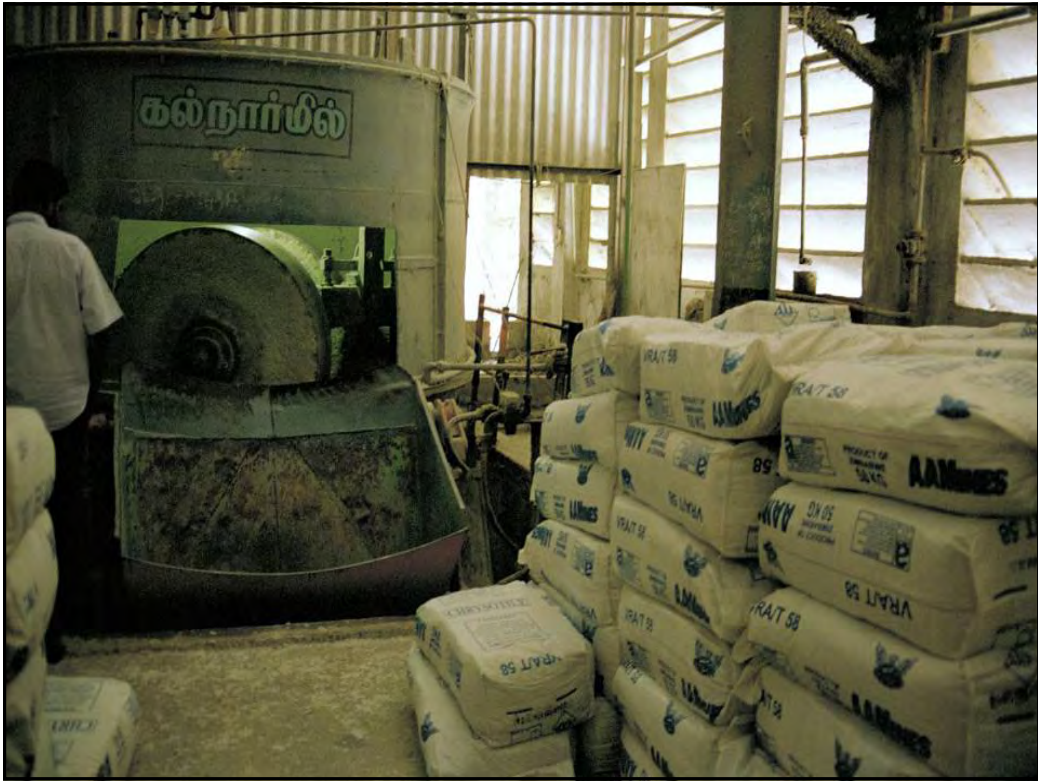






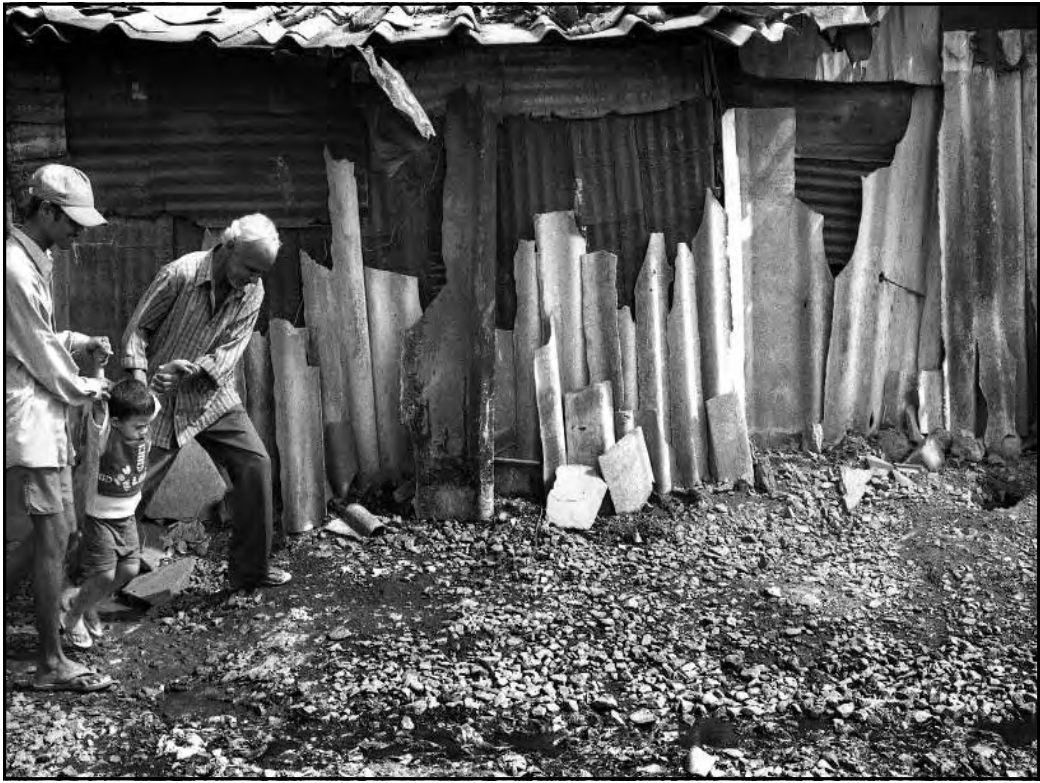












J.V. Furuya Sugio

Quebec City, December 8, 2010

On Canadian chrysotile asbestos exports :

A message for the Ban Asbestos visitors from India, Korea, Indonesia and Japan.

India, like many other developing countries, is certainly growing economically at an amazing pace, but remains a country in great need of basic infrastructures. The situation is different in Japan and Korea. Presently, Canada supplies about 20% of India's need for chrysotile, the rest coming from other sources such as Russia, Kazakhstan, Zimbabwe, Brasil etc.

Regarding specifically the issue of Canadian chrysotile export to developing countries like India and other developing countries, the question is : What would happen if Canada stopped exporting chrysotile to these countries? Answer : these countries would simply make up that 20% by importing the mineral from these other sources, again because of their obvious need to improve and develop their infrastructures. And so, this would not change one bit the situation regarding the health of some workers (which we all deplore), especially those working in some small « Pa & Ma shops » that do not give a damn about the basic, simple and proper work practices when using chrysotile (and many other products, incidentally!) But this is not the situation in the more important and major chrysotile-cement industry, where proper and controlled work practices are strictly applied.

Some trade unions and other lobbyists, who are asking Canada to stop exporting chrysotile to their country and are blaming Canada, should instead turn to their own authorities and demand to simply shut down those small plants that do not comply with the regulations in place.

As an exporter of chrysotile, and in spite of the fact that Canada's chrysotile production amounts to less than 8% of the world production, Canada recognizes that its responsibility is to make sure that all the information is available regarding the proper ways to use chrysotile. In addition to providing this information, Canada provides practical training sessions and specialized information for plant engineers, hygienists, occupational physicians and workers. In fact, amongst all the world producers of chrysotile, Canada is the leader in sharing its long-standing expertise in the safe and responsible use of this valuable material. And I am sure that your Canadian comrades, who have been successful in cleaning the mess they had to endure in decades past, would be quite willing to share their expertise with you.

But Canada cannot substitute for Indian and other national authorities in applying vigilance and inspection of their industrial activities. It is the solemn duty of these sovereign countries to see that their workers are protected.

The carcinogenic potency of amphibole asbestos varieties (crocidolite and amosite) has been established both epidemiologically and toxicologically, leading to it being no longer used in commerce. In 1989, a group of international experts convened by the World Health Organization (WHO) in Oxford (UK) had recommended that these asbestos varieties should be prohibited immediately, and that the use of chrysotile should be controlled and regulated at a permissible exposure limit of 1 fiber/ml in the workplace.

Today, the remaining practical concern is whether chrysotile can be produced and used safely, and if indeed this regulation carries a reasonable assurance that workers are adequately protected. Based upon current science, the short answer to this question is that in absence of amphiboles, the use of chrysotile at current Québec permissible exposure limits in the workplace carries no epidemiologically and clinically detectable increase in risk. Indeed, a number of recent scientific studies published in peer-reviewed journals have come to this conclusion. From these published studies, it can be seen that safety in the use of chrysotile is not a simple wish, but a reality.

Attached to this document, I will leave to your scrutiny a number of scientific references published over a 30-year period in peer-reviewed journals which attest to this reality. And I urge you to read them carefully.

IN CONCLUSION :

I will repeat again : Trade unions activists who are asking Canada to stop exporting chrysotile to their countries and are blaming Canada, should instead turn to their own national authorities and demand to simply shut down those small plants that do not comply with the regulations in place. I suggest that you follow the lead of your union comrades in Québec who succeeded some thirty years ago in cleaning up the mess they had to endure in decades past and in securing safe working conditions for their fellow workers.

Canada cannot substitute for your national authorities in applying vigilance and inspection of its industrial activities. You are coming from sovereign countries, and it is the solemn duty of your national authorities to see that your workers are protected.

**Jacques Dunnigan, Ph. D.
Professor (ret)
Université de Sherbrooke,
Ste-Catherine-de-Hatley, QC
Canada J0W 1W0**

JACDUN @ EGOCABLE. CA

(See attachment on the following pages.)

Worldwide national, regional and international campaigns

Actions supporting Solidarity Delegation from Asia to Quebec

<http://www.anroav.org/content/view/120/40/>

Online Petition against the opening of the Jeffrey Mines

<http://www.anroav.org/content/view/117/40/>

Indian Asbestos Victims Testimony

<http://www.anroav.org/content/view/119/40/>

Asian Solidarity Delegation Mission to Canada: Global Demonstrations

http://www.ibasecretariat.org/quebec_mission_2010_arch_demos.php

Social Media Action Alert: Help stop the Jeffrey mine

<http://www.gban.net/?p=1226>

Nov 29, Letter to the High Commissioner of Canada in Australia and Letter to the Consul General of Canada in Australia from Robert Vojakovic, President of the Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia

http://www.ibasecretariat.org/quebec_mission_2010_lett_australia_high_comm.pdf

Dec 2, BWI, Canada - Stop Exporting Chrysotile to Asia
<http://www.bwint.org/default.asp?Index=3183&Language=EN>

Dec 3, Statement on asbestos from the BWI World Council and World Board
<http://www.bwint.org/default.asp?index=3186&Language=EN>
BWI briefing on Quebec government proposed subsidy for asbestos export
<http://www.bwint.org/pdfs/ASBESTOS%20BRIEFING.pdf>

Dec 3, Press Statement from Mohit Gupta, Coordinator of Occupational and Environmental Health Network of India (OEHNI), and Anup Srivastava, Education Officer, South Asia Building and Woodworkers International
<http://www.oehni.in/news5.php>

Dec 5, Press release from the Ban Asbestos Network Korea (BANKO), Korea
http://www.ibasecretariat.org/quebec_mission_2010_korean_press_pack.pdf

Dec 6, Quebec action in Japan, video
http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/11297750?lang=ja_JP

Dec 6, Quebec action in Japan, photos
<http://picasaweb.google.com/109411723029547130835/101207QuebecActionInJapan?authkey=Gv1sRgCOPP88b2ia-nkgE&feat=email#>

Dec 6, TUCP Philippines - Asbestos protest calls for Canada to close Jeffrey mine
<http://www.tucp.org.ph/news/index.php/2010/12/asbestos-protest-calls-for-canada-to-close-jeffrey-mine/>

Dec 7, Statement from the Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum UK
http://www.ibasecretariat.org/quebec_mission_2010_press_rel_dec_7.pdf

Dec 8, Asbestos Victims' Organizations Joint Letter
<http://www.gban.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Honorable-Jean-Charest.pdf>

Dec 8, Press release from the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAO), USA
<http://www.gban.net/?p=1120>

Dec 8, Press release from the Association Nationale de Defense des Victimes de l'Amiante (ANDEVA), France
http://www.ibasecretariat.org/quebec_mission_2010_andeva_press_rel_dec_8.pdf

Dec 9, Protest in Hong Kong, photos

http://picasaweb.google.com/sanjiv.pandita/Asbestoscanadadec10?authkey=Gv1sRgCISNoPTin83q_gE#

Dec 9, Letter to Prime Minister Cameron from the Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum UK

http://www.ibasecretariat.org/quebec_forum_lett_to_pm_dec9_2010.pdf

Dec 9, Letter to Agent-General Pierre Boulanger from Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum UK

http://www.ibasecretariat.org/quebec_mission_2010_forum_lett_p_boulanger.pdf

Dec 9, TUCP Philippines - ALU, BWI, TUCP Statement against asbestos and the open of an underground mine in Quebec

<http://www.tucp.org.ph/news/index.php/2010/12/alu-bwi-tucp-statement-against-asbestos-and-the-opening-of-an-underground-mine-in-quebec-canada/>

Dec 9, New Democrats and Asian delegates urge asbestos ban

<http://www.ndp.ca/press/new-democrats-asian-delegates-urge-asbestos-ban>

Dec 9, Ban Asbestos Canada offers support to Asia Solidarity Delegation

<http://cupe.ca/asbestos/ban-asbestos-canada-offers-support-asia>

Dec 13, TUCP Philippines - Statement on asbestos delivered five levels below the ground

<http://www.tucp.org.ph/news/index.php/2010/12/philippines-statement-on-asbestos-delivered-five-levels-below-the-ground/>

Dec 14, Letter to Quebec Premier Jean Charest from Linda Reinstein, ADAO

<http://www.qban.net/?p=1187>

Dec 14, Letter to Consul General of Canada in Australia from the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)

http://www.ibasecretariat.org/quebec_mission_2010_actu_letter_consul_general.pdf

Dec 16, Letter to Quebec Premier Jean Charest from the International Mesothelioma Interest Group (IMIG)

http://www.ibasecretariat.org/quebec_mission_2010_imig_appeal.pdf

Dec 16, Letter to Mine Purchase Consortium Head Baljit Chadha from Barry Castleman

http://www.ibasecretariat.org/quebec_b_castleman_lett_to_chadha.pdf

Help ban Canadian asbestos

<http://action.davidsuzuki.org/asbestos>