



Bangladesh Ban Asbestos  
Network (B-BAN)

# বাংলাদেশ ব্যান এ্যাজবেসটস নেটওয়ার্ক

## Bangladesh Ban Asbestos Network

Secretariat:

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16 April 2019

**Mr. Md. Shahab Uddin**

Honorable Minister  
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change  
Bangladesh Secretariat  
Dhaka

**Att:** Mr. Abdullah Al Mohsin Chowdhury, Secretary, MoEFCC  
(National Focal point of the Rotterdam Convention)

**Subject: Appeal for voting on listing of Chrysotile Asbestos (white asbestos) at COP 9 of the Rotterdam Convention, May 7-10 2019, Geneva**

Dear Sir,

Greetings.

Asbestos is a type of mineral raw material used at production facilities which is harmful for public health and environment. By inhaling, flying particles of asbestos enter into the body and cause serious damage to lungs, create deadly lung cancer.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated 100,000 people die each year from work-related asbestos exposure; most of them are from developing countries. According to World Health Organisation (WHO), all types of asbestos cause lung cancer, mesothelioma, cancer of the larynx and ovary, and asbestosis (fibrosis of the lungs).

66 Countries around the world already have issued a nationwide ban on import and use of all forms of asbestos. In South Asia, Nepal is the first country declared ban of it and Sri Lanka is on the road to ban of it.

Available data shows, in Bangladesh the import of white asbestos diametrically increasing on last five years. In 2015, its import was 14,620 metric tons which increased to 22,180 metric tons in 2018. It is predicted that, in 2019 it will rise to 24,700 metric tons, which is alarming.



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Primary source of asbestos exposure and asbestos-related diseases among workers and peoples living nearby communities in Bangladesh are: Ship Breaking, Tea Plantation, Railway sector (residential facilities contained with asbestos roof tiles), Construction, Mine Industries, Automobile sector (break shoe production, repairing and maintenance) etc.

There is no official data in Bangladesh on number of person exposed each year by asbestos and suffering asbestos related diseases. In 2017, a medical surveillance carried-out by OSHE foundation in Chittagong among 100 Ship Breaking workers and found 33 workers out of 100 suffering with asbestosis (Asbestos related diseases).

As a growing nation under the direction to achieve 2030 agenda of sustainable development goal, we cannot afford the long term health and environmental burden and cost of it in the society.

Therefore, it is high time for government to take action against this killing fiber at national and international level, and role of relevant different stakeholders in Bangladesh in this regard is also crucial.

As per the constitution of Bangladesh the government has an obligation to ensure the health rights of people. It has also a commitment towards promoting decent work and healthy jobs in the country and assist just transition of manufactures to use safer alternatives in Bangladesh than asbestos and asbestos contained materials.

**Under above context, B-BAN is appealing to the government as a party to take following role and actions at upcoming COP 9 of the Rotterdam Convention, May 7-10 2019, Geneva, Switzerland:**

- (1) Vote in favour of listing of Chrysotile asbestos (white asbestos) as a hazardous/carcinogenic chemical within the Rotterdam Convention, Annex III at the COP 9 meeting of the Parties to the Convention.
- (2) Voting to reform Article 22 of the Rotterdam Convention to introduce 75% approval for a chemical to be listed onto Annex III and break the hijacking of the convention by single countries.

We hope Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change under your leadership will consider this appeal and advice the Bangladesh official delegates from you ministry to act accordingly at COP of the Rotterdam Convention, Geneva (7-10 May 2019).

With best regards,

**On behalf of Bangladesh Ban Asbestos Network (B-BAN),**

A.R. Chowdhury Repon  
National Coordinator

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**C.C:**

1. Secretary, Ministry of Health, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
2. Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
3. Secretary, Ministry of Industries, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
4. Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
5. Director General , Department of Environment , Paribesh Bhaban, E/16 Agargaon, Dhaka
6. Inspector General, Department Inspection , Factories and Establishments (DIFE), Dhaka
7. Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Environment (Contact person of Conventions), Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
8. Concerned Desk Officer, Bangladesh Permanent Mission in Geneva, Switzerland.
9. All Member Organisations, B-BAN, Dhaka