



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Government Banned Import, Sale, Distribute and Use of Carcinogenic Asbestos**

Kathmandu, 24 December 2014, Government of Nepal, Ministry of Science Technology and Environment (MOSTE) as per the provision of Environment Protection Act 1997 (Section 7 and Sub-section 3) **Ban of Import, Sale, Distribution and Use of Asbestos ( Corrugated , Non Corrugated Sheet, Tiles , Insulators)** by publishing a notice in **Nepal Gazette (Khand 64, Number 30, Part 5, Date December 22, 2014, Notice No. 4)** . This decision helps to protect human health as well as environment from negative consequences of Asbestos. This decision of will automatically come into effect on 181 days from the date of gazette notification.

Based on numerous researches, World Health Organization (WHO) and International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) already identified that **all form of Asbestos** are carcinogenic to human. With known fact, asbestos being one of the major causes of cancer as well as various other health implications, the import, export and use has been prohibited in 40 countries globally. In context of Nepal, there are not any firm research activities to denote the number of cancer patients in the country. However, it is believed that there are tentatively around 35000 to 40000 cancer patients in the country. Among the 10 major reasons behind the death, ARI/Lower Respiratory Tract Infection and Upper Respiratory Tract Infection lie at fourth and fifth major reason. There is a proven close inter-relationship between the asbestos with these respiratory tract infection related problems stating the critical situation. In such critical scenario, the decision from Government of Nepal, Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment has come in very right time.

Even with numerous health impacts, in absence of any relevant plans, policies, laws and regulations regarding the import, sales, distribution as well as use of asbestos has been recklessly happening. Many places of Nepal and specifically in all Terai region, human health and environment were under high risk of getting impacted from these carcinogenic Asbestos sheets used massively due to the large import sale, advertisement, promotion and uses. In this critical condition, the decision by Government of Nepal to **ban the Import, Sales, Distribution and Use of Asbestos** is praiseworthy, timely and visionary towards health conscious and environment friendly future.

“Since last years, Center for Public Health and Environmental Development (CEPHED) has advocated to address the related public health and environmental problem possibly resulted from



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unscientifically burying of asbestos wastes in Maitighar Mandala in Kathmandu to its massive import and use in Terai region. CEPHED has taken this decision of MOSTE as appropriate response to our raised concerns and hence would like to congratulate for this timely decision and acknowledge the effort made by Government of Nepal, MOSTE. Mr. Ram Charitra Sah, Executive Director and Environment Scientist at CEPHED further request for the effective implementation of this health and environment friendly decision.

Once again, CEPHED like to bring Government of Nepal into notice about the import of asbestos in large quantities and wide distribution and use of asbestos in Terai region. CEPHED also urge with all concerned government to conduct the comprehensive inventory to identify the exact quantity of newly imported asbestos as well as other from the old existing uses and envision environment friendly management and final disposal so as to prevent further exposure and environment degradation.

Lastly, CEPHED would like to request all the citizens to be aware about the known and identified health impacts associated with asbestos including its carcinogenicity and immediately stop using asbestos sheets especially as the roofing materials.

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### **Section (7). Prevention and Control of Pollution of Environment Protection Act 1997**

**Sub Section (1)** Nobody shall create pollution in such a manner as to cause significant adverse impacts on the environment or likely to be hazardous to public life and people's health, or dispose or cause to be disposed sound, heat radioactive rays and wastes from any mechanical devices, industrial enterprises, or other places contrary to the prescribed standards.

**Sub Section (3)** if it appears that the use of any types of substance, fuel, tools or device has caused or is likely to cause significant adverse impacts on the environment, the Ministry may, by a notification in the Nepal Gazette, forbid the use of such substance, fuel, tools or device.