April 15, 2013

Dear Parties to the Rotterdam Convention:

We call on every country attending the 6th Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention to support putting chrysotile asbestos on the Convention’s list of hazardous substances, as the Convention’s expert scientific body (the Chemical Review Committee) is, for the fourth time, recommending.

Chrysotile asbestos represents 100% of the global asbestos trade today and, over the past one hundred years, 95% of all asbestos traded was chrysotile asbestos. There is an overwhelming scientific consensus that all forms of asbestos, including chrysotile asbestos, are hazardous to health. Yet, for the past many decades, the asbestos industry covered up and denied the scientific evidence that all asbestos can cause disease and death. As a consequence, many thousands of people have lost their lives, including our loved ones and comrades.

In February 2012, an Italian court sentenced two Eternit asbestos executives to 16 years in prison for their criminal conduct in having covered up the hazards of asbestos, thus causing a human and environmental catastrophe. Yet today, the asbestos industry is exporting asbestos to developing and middle income countries, while continuing to deny its hazards.

The Rotterdam Convention requires that countries exporting hazardous substances practice responsible trade and obtain prior informed consent before exporting a hazardous substance on the Convention’s list, thus enabling countries to protect the health of their citizens and the environment.

All Parties to the Convention have a duty to practice responsible trade and to respect the right of prior informed consent.

We, who have witnessed at first hand the terrible suffering and death caused by asbestos, urgently call on every Party to the Convention to support placing chrysotile asbestos on the Convention’s list of hazardous substances.

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ENDORSED BY THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS THAT REPRESENT THOUSANDS OF ASBESTOS VICTIMS AROUND THE WORLD:

- National Association of Asbestos Victims (ANDEVA), France
- Association of Asbestos Victims (ABEVA), Belgium
- Asbestos Victims Support Groups’ Forum (AVSGF), UK
- Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAO), USA
- Brazilian Association of Asbestos Exposed People (ABREA), Brazil
- Spanish Federation of Associations of Asbestos Victims and Communities (FEDAVICA), Spain
- Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia (ADSA), Australia
- Canadian Society for Asbestos Victims (CANSAV), Canada
- Korean Federation for Asbestos Victims
- Occupational Health and Safety Association (OHSA), India
- Asbestos Interest Group in Kuruman, South Africa
- Krantikari Majdoor Sangh, Mumbai, India
- Agrupación Peruana de Expuestos y Víctimas del Asbesto (APEVA), Peru
- German Asbestosis Victims Group
- Dutch Asbestos Victims Committee
- Committee for Asbestos Mine Victims in Korea
- Busan committee for asbestos Victims in Korea
- Merseyside Asbestos Victims Support Group, UK
- Northeast Asbestos Support and Awareness Group, UK
- A Walk to Remember Victims of Asbestos – Canada and USA
- Victims of Asbestos/Industrial Disease, Canada
- Canadian Voices of Asbestos Victims, Canada
- Saskatchewan Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (SADAO), Canada
- Japan Association of Mesothelioma and Asbestos-related Disease Victims and Their Families, Japan
- Hong Kong Association for the Rights of Industrial Accident Victims (in the ARIAV), Hong Kong
- Gippsland Asbestos Related Diseases Support Inc. (GARDS), Australia
- Asbestos Victims Society of South Australia Inc. (ADSSA), Australia