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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF
THE ASBESTOS INSTITUTE
CLAUDE E. FORGET
AT THE 6TH AIA BIENNIAL CONFERENCE
MONTRÉAL, MAY 19TH, 1987

SPEECH TO THE 6TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

A CONFERENCE THAT TAKES PLACE ONCE EVERY TWO YEARS PROVIDES AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW THE PAST AND TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE. THIS MEETING, COMING AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME, COULD BE USED BY THOSE INVOLVED WITH THE ASBESTOS ISSUE TO CONGRATULATE THEMSELVES ON RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS. AS THE NEW "BOY" ON THE BLOCK, IT IS PARTICULARLY FITTING FOR ME TO EXTEND MY CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU FOR OVERCOMING OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS A SERIES OF DIFFICULT CHALLENGES WITH A SUCCESS THAT MAY WELL HAVE SURPRISED EVEN YOURSELVES.

CONGRATULATIONS, COMING FROM ME, ARE NOT THE LEAST BIT SUSPECT BECAUSE I CANNOT CLAIM ANY CREDIT FOR ANY ONE OF THESE SUCCESSFUL ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

THESE SUCCESSES INCLUDE THE ADOPTION BY THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION, ALMOST EXACTLY A YEAR AGO, OF A CONVENTION ENTITLED SAFETY IN THE USE OF ASBESTOS. THIS DOCUMENT CONFIRMS THAT THE APPROPRIATE APPROACH TO ASBESTOS REGULATION IS THAT BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF CONTROLLED USE AND NOT TOTAL PRODUCT BANS.

LAST AUTUMN, THE ASBESTOS INSTITUTE TOGETHER WITH THE AIA/NA, ALSO SUCCEEDED IN DEMONSTRATING THE INACCURACIES, DEFICIENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES INHERENT IN EPA'S PROPOSED RULE TO BAN AND PHASE-OUT ASBESTOS USE IN THE UNITED STATES. THIS WAS A REAL AND IMPORTANT SUCCESS EVEN IF IT IS STILL NOT CLEAR WHAT THE FINAL OUTCOME WILL BE. IT IS VERY UNLIKELY THAT THE AGENCY WILL WITHDRAW ITS PROPOSED RULE. HOWEVER, THE FINAL RULE EXPECTED IN JUNE 1988, WILL LIKELY DIFFER SUBSTANTIALLY FROM THAT ORIGINALLY PROPOSED IN JANUARY, 1986.

AND, THOSE OF YOU PRESENT WHO SHARED IN THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAKING THESE DEVELOPMENTS HAPPEN, SHOULD ALSO SHARE IN THE CREDIT. LET ME POINT AS WELL TO ANOTHER SUCCESS WHICH IN A SENSE MADE THESE OTHER TWO POSSIBLE. THAT SUCCESS IS SYMBOLIZED BY THIS MEETING OF THE ASBESTOS INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION. FOR THE FIRST TIME, IT INCLUDES REPRESENTATIVES OF THE INDUSTRY, OF LABOR UNIONS AND OF GOVERNMENTS. NOT ONLY WERE THEY INVITED AND ARE WELCOME BUT, IT IS EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT THAT THEY HAVE COME IN SUCH SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS.

I KNOW IT MIGHT BE IMPRUDENT TO READ TOO MUCH INTO THIS FACT. AGREEMENT TO GATHER TOGETHER AND ENGAGE IN DISCUSSION CANNOT BE ASSUMED TO MEAN THAT THERE IS CONSENSUS ABOUT EVERYTHING.

HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO BELIEVE (AND I KNOW THAT MANY OF YOU SHARE THIS FEELING), THAT THIS GATHERING IS NO LONGER A DEFENSIVE LOBBY FOR AN INDUSTRY BUT RATHER REPRESENTS A CROSS SECTION OF PEOPLE FROM SOME 41 NATIONS THAT HAVE COME TOGETHER TO TACKLE ON A WORLDWIDE SCALE AND IN A RESPONSIBLE AND CONSTRUCTIVE MANNER HOW BEST TO SAFEGUARD WORKER HEALTH AND SAFETY SO THAT THE BENEFITS OF THIS UNIQUE MATERIAL CAN BE REALIZED BY SOCIETY.

I BELIEVE THAT WHAT HAS TAKEN SHAPE IN CONNECTION WITH ASBESTOS-RELATED PROBLEMS, MAY WELL REPRESENT A MODEL OF SPECIALIZED RISK MANAGEMENT ON A WORLD SCALE - ONE WHICH COULD SERVE AS A BENCHMARK FOR SIMILAR DEVELOPMENTS IN OTHER AREAS RELATED TO THE INDUSTRIAL USE OF TOXIC OR HAZARDOUS MATERIALS. THE PROBLEMS IN THE MINING AND USE OF ASBESTOS IN THE PAST HAVE THROWN UP VERY DIFFICULT CHALLENGES TO ALL OF US. THAT THESE PROBLEMS WERE SURMOUNTED IS NO SMALL ACCOMPLISHMENT.

LET ME BRIEFLY OUTLINE THESE HURDLES. THE FIRST ONE CONSISTED IN THE DISCOVERY OF SO MANY AND VARIED USES FOR THIS OLD AND WELL KNOWN MATERIAL.

IT SEEMS ALMOST "PASSÉ" TO MENTION THE MANY POTENT BENEFITS FLOWING FROM THE USE OF THIS INDUSTRIAL MATERIAL, YET THOSE BENEFITS ARE AS IMPORTANT AND OBVIOUS TODAY AS THEY WERE IN THE PAST, EVEN IF IT HAS BEEN FOR SOMETIME NOT SO FASHIONABLE TO MENTION THEM. THEY INCLUDE - THE CONTRIBUTION OF ASBESTOS TO SAFETY PRODUCTS, (TEXTILE PRODUCTS FOR FIREFIGHTERS, BRAKELININGS FOR CARS AND TRUCKS), ASBESTOS-CEMENT PIPES FOR POTABLE WATER, SEWAGE AND IRRIGATION SYSTEMS, SPECIALIZED INDUSTRIAL USES SUCH AS THE PRODUCTION OF CHLORINE, AS WELL AS CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS AND BUILDING PRODUCTS OF VARIOUS KINDS.

WE CAN ONLY AT OUR PERIL IGNORE THESE BENEFITS ESPECIALLY IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF COUNTRIES WITH STRONGLY RISING POPULATIONS, RAPID URBANIZATION AND LIMITED RESOURCES.

ASBESTOS USE HAS YIELDED REWARDS TO SOCIETY; HOWEVER, ITS UNCONTROLLED USE HAS ALSO RESULTED IN A LEGACY OF DISEASE - A COST WHICH IS STILL BEING FELT TODAY.

THIS TRAGIC DEVELOPMENT LED TO THE SECOND MAJOR CHALLENGE: THE DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY TO ENSURE SAFETY IN THE MINING AND MILLING OF ASBESTOS FIBRE AND ITS MANUFACTURING APPLICATIONS. BASICALLY, THAT TECHNOLOGY WAS DEVELOPED IN THE LATE FIFTIES AND HAS SINCE BEEN INCORPORATED IN THE LARGE MAJORITY OF ASBESTOS OPERATIONS AROUND THE WORLD. IT, WITH RELATIVELY MINOR IMPROVEMENTS, REPRESENTS TODAY THE TECHNOLOGICAL BASE UPON WHICH IS FOUNDED THE SOLID CASE FOR CONTROLLED USE.

THE THIRD HURDLE HAD LESS TO DO WITH TECHNOLOGY PER SE AND MORE WITH PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS. IT INVOLVED THE NEED TO DEVELOP SUPPORT AND AGREE UPON STANDARDS, AND REGULATIONS TO GOVERN THE WAY IN WHICH THIS TECHNOLOGY WAS TO BE APPLIED IN THE PRODUCTION AND USE OF THE ASBESTOS FIBER.

SCIENTISTS AND TRADE UNIONS SPEARHEADED THIS EFFORT, DEVELOPING A GENERAL AWARENESS OF THE HEALTH PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE FIBRE AND GENERATING SUPPORT FOR HIGH STANDARDS AND APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENT REGULATION.

THE FOURTH AND MOST RECENT HURDLE, IS PERHAPS THE RESULT OF TOO GREAT A SUCCESS WITH RESPECT TO THE PREVIOUS ONE. IT WAS THAT OF COMING TO TERMS WITH A REGULATORY OVERKILL THAT WOULD HAVE LED TO A COMPLETE BAN ON ASBESTOS. IT DOES NOT MATTER FOR THIS PURPOSE THAT THE VERY NOTION OF BANNING A NATURALLY OCCURRING SUBSTANCE IS IN ITSELF AS RIDICULOUS AS WOULD BE AN ATTEMPT TO BAN RAINY DAYS OR EXCESSIVE TIDES. AS WE ALL KNOW, THE POSSIBILITY - AT LEAST FROM A REGULATORY AGENCY PERSPECTIVE - IS REAL ENOUGH.

THERE IS NO DENYING THE DIFFICULTY AND THE IMPORTANCE OF EACH OF THESE CHALLENGES THAT WERE SUCCESSFULLY MET ONE AFTER ANOTHER. NONE HAS BEEN ACHIEVED EASILY OR SMOOTHLY OR

WITHOUT ITS SHARE OF CONFLICT AND DEBATES. WHAT IS MORE IMPORTANT AND SOMETHING WHICH I WANT TO STRESS BECAUSE IT MATTERS FOR THE FUTURE, IT APPEARS THAT EACH SUCCESS CONTRIBUTED TO THE NEXT CHALLENGE. THIS IS TRUE IN TWO WAYS. FIRST, EACH SUCCESS PAVED THE WAY FOR THE NEXT PROBLEM TO BE TACKLED. AT THE SAME TIME, EACH CHALLENGE MET SUCCESSFULLY MADE IT SOMEWHAT MORE DIFFICULT TO RECOGNIZE AND ACT ON THE NEED TO OVERCOME YET ANOTHER HURDLE OR OBSTACLE.

FOR INSTANCE, INITIALLY SOMEWHAT MESMERIZED BY THE MANY ADVANTAGES OF AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ASBESTOS IN SO MANY USES, PRODUCERS FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO CONCENTRATE ON THE NEED TO DEVELOP SAFER TECHNOLOGIES FOR ITS USE. SECOND, WHEN THAT TECHNOLOGY WAS AVAILABLE AND IN USE IN AT LEAST SOME INDUSTRIAL INSTALLATIONS, IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT THERE WAS NO NEED FOR OUTSIDE CONTROL.

HOWEVER, THIS PROVED NOT TO BE THE CASE AND AS SOON AS THERE WAS A GENERAL RECOGNITION OF THE NEED FOR GOVERNMENT REGULATION, IT BECAME DIFFICULT TO PREVENT AN OVER-REACTION AND TO GAIN RECOGNITION THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO AIM FOR A RISK-FREE WORLD. A LESSON SHOULD BE LEARNED FROM ALL THIS. WE MUST BE CAREFUL NOT TO ASSUME THAT BECAUSE WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY MET THE MOST RECENT CHALLENGE THAT THERE IS NOTHING FURTHER TO DO EXCEPT TO ENJOY THE FRUITS OF OUR LABOUR.

THEREFORE, WE MUST TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY PROVIDED BY THIS CONFERENCE TO ASK OURSELVES WHAT WILL BE TOMORROW'S CHALLENGES. WE MUST AVOID THE TEMPTATION TO BELIEVE THAT BECAUSE THERE IS AN EMERGING INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY CONSENSUS ON CONTROLLED USE AND THAT THE TECHNOLOGY TO PROVIDE IT IS GENERALLY ACCESSIBLE THAT NOTHING FURTHER NEEDS TO BE DONE.

I BELIEVE THAT TOMORROW'S MOST IMPORTANT CHALLENGE LIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONTROLLED USE PHILOSOPHY ITSELF. INDEED; IF ASBESTOS IS TO HAVE A LONG-TERM FUTURE, WE MUST MAKE CONTROLLED USE AN EFFECTIVE REALITY EVERYWHERE.

AT THE ROOT OF THIS CHALLENGE IS ONCE AGAIN A PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL PHENOMENON: NAMELY THE VERY WIDESPREAD DISTRUST OF OUR SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS BY THE PEOPLE. ALL OF OUR HUMAN ORGANIZATIONS, WHETHER THEY BE BUSINESS ENTERPRISES, SCIENTIFIC OR ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS, GOVERNMENTS OR TRADE UNIONS ARE REGARDED WITH SKEPTISM AND OFTEN CYNICISM. THAT STATEMENT IMPLIES NO DISRESPECT FOR ANYONE AND NO FAILURE ON MY PART TO RECOGNIZE THE VERY REAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND HIGH PERFORMANCE OBSERVED BY THESE INSTITUTIONS. BUT WE MUST NOT IGNORE THIS "CREDIBILITY CRISIS" IN OUR EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE CONTROLLED USE OF ASBESTOS.

IN MANY COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD, IN MANY FIRMS, CONTROLLED USE OF ASBESTOS IS A REALITY AND THAT CERTAINLY DESERVES TO BE STATED AND EMPHASIZED. HOWEVER, IN SOME COUNTRIES AND IN SOME FIRMS, CONTROLLED USE REMAINS AN IDEAL.

AS WE ALL KNOW, EMPLOYERS' GREEDINESS, GOVERNMENT INDIFFERENCE AND UNION RADICALISM MAY MAKE COMPLIANCE WITH ANY IDEAL DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE. AND THE OBSTACLES ARE NOT ONLY IN THE MINDS AND HEARTS OF PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS. THE UNFORGIVING BATTLE FOR MARKET SHARE, THE LACK OF EXPERTISE, THE SCARCITY OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND A HOST OF OTHER FACTORS CAN ALL WORK TO FRUSTRATE EVEN THE BEST OF INTENTIONS. IN ORDER TO OVERCOME THE "CREDIBILITY CRISIS" WE MUST DEMONSTRATE BY ACTIONS NOT WORDS THAT WE CAN AND WILL EFFECTIVELY CONTROL THE USE OF ASBESTOS.

UNIVERSAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONTROLLED USE APPROACH IS A VERY SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE. IT IS A CHALLENGE THAT CAN ONLY BE SUCCESSFULLY MET THROUGH A NEW AND UNUSUAL COMMITMENT TO EXTENSIVE COOPERATION. THAT COOPERATION HAS SEVERAL DIMENSIONS. BY DEFINITION, THE WORLDWIDE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE

CONTROLLED USE APPROACH CANNOT BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ANYONE COUNTRY. IT MUST BE AN INTERNATIONAL EFFORT. AT A MINIMUM, THAT EFFORT HAS TO BE SPEARHEADED BY THOSE COUNTRIES THAT HAVE THE GREATEST STAKE IN THE ISSUES SURROUNDING ASBESTOS. ALSO, THIS LIST CANNOT BE LIMITED TO THOSE WHO PRODUCE AND SELL THE FIBRE. IT MUST ALSO INCLUDE THOSE WHO MAKE THE MOST EXTENSIVE USE OF IT - MANUFACTURERS OF ASBESTOS PRODUCTS.

COOPERATION IN THIS INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT ALSO SHOULD INVOLVE A SIGNIFICANT PARTICIPATION NOT ONLY OF FIRMS BUT OF GOVERNMENTS AND LABOR UNIONS. BY NOW, WE SHOULD ALL RECOGNIZE THAT THIS IS AN ESSENTIAL CONDITION FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF RULES DESIGNED TO PROTECT WORKER HEALTH AND SAFETY. BY ITSELF, THIS CONDITION SOMEWHAT COMPLICATES THE SITUATION IN THAT IT HAS TO BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE DIVERSE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL TRADITIONS OF THE VARIOUS COUNTRIES INVOLVED.

ASBESTOS AND THOSE WHO LIVE BY IT ARE, IN A SENSE, UNDER PROBATION. THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL CASE FOR A CONTROLLED USE APPROACH THROUGH REGULATION, HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BUT, ONE SUSPECTS, THAT ACCEPTANCE IS CONDITIONAL UPON PROOF OF GOOD PERFORMANCE.

IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTROLLED-USE IS NOT, UNFORTUNATELY, THE ONLY CHALLENGE THAT WE HAVE TO CONFRONT IN THE YEARS AHEAD. A MAJOR EFFORT NEEDS TO BE MADE TO REBUILD THE IMAGE AND MARKETS FOR ASBESTOS AND ASBESTOS PRODUCTS WORLDWIDE. THE RELATIVE DECLINE IN THE USE OF ASBESTOS BASED PRODUCTS IS QUITE PROBABLY NOT ONLY THE RESULT OF A FEAR FOR THE HEALTH OF WORKERS OR ASSOCIATED HEALTH RISKS IN GENERAL, BUT ALSO REFLECTS A SLACKENING OF EFFORTS TO UPDATE, IMPROVE AND EVENTUALLY REPLACE OBSOLETE PRODUCTS WITH NEW ONES.

NOT MUCH EFFORT AT IMPROVEMENT, LET ALONE INNOVATION, HAS BEEN ATTEMPTED WHILE ASBESTOS HAS BEEN IN THE SHADOW OF A POTENTIAL BAN. YET WE ARE OFTEN TOLD THAT WE ARE IN THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA FOR COMPOSITE MATERIALS. IN A SENSE, ALL THE TRADITIONAL ASBESTOS-BASED PRODUCTS WERE THE FORERUNNERS OF COMPOSITE MATERIALS, GENERICALLY DEFINED AS FIBRES IMBEDDED IN A MATRIX. THEREFORE, IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT FRESH EFFORTS APPLIED TO SUCH A WELL-ENDOWED MATERIAL AS ASBESTOS, IN A FAVORABLE CONTEXT OF RECEPTIVITY TO NEW MATERIALS, COULD YIELD AN INTERESTING HARVEST OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES. ASBESTOS-BASED PRODUCTS NOW COMPETE AGAINST NEW PRODUCTS ON WHICH TENS OR HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS HAVE BEEN SPENT IN THE LAST TWENTY YEARS. SO FAR, NOT ENOUGH HAS BEEN DONE TO COUNTERACT THAT OFFENSIVE.

OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS, THE MAJOR EFFORT HAS BEEN TO FIGHT THE BATTLES ON THE REGULATORY FRONT. THIS MAY HAVE BEEN APPROPRIATE AS LONG AS DEFENSIVE STRATEGIES WERE TOTALLY ABSORBING AND A CLEAR PRIORITY. HOWEVER, SUCH A NARROW APPROACH IS NO LONGER APPROPRIATE. WE MUST MOVE OUT OF THE STRICTLY REGULATORY ARENA, AND PUT RENEWED EMPHASIS ON PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT.

THE ASBESTOS INSTITUTE CONSIDERS IT IMPORTANT TO PLAY A ROLE IN AROUSING INTEREST AND SPARKING IDEAS IN CONNECTION WITH PRODUCT IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT. YOU ARE ALREADY AWARE OF THE EFFORT MADE LAST YEAR THROUGH THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ASBESTOS-CEMENT TO REKINDLE THE ENTHUSIASM FOR THAT MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL ASBESTOS USES.

THIS YEAR, AN ANALOGOUS EFFORT IS BEING MOUNTED IN CONNECTION WITH FRICTION PRODUCTS. A CONFERENCE UNDER THE JOINT AUSPICES OF THE SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND THE FRICTION MATERIALS STANDARDS INSTITUTE WILL BE HELD IN ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY, ON OCTOBER 7 AND 8. CONFERENCES ARE FINE AND INDEED INDISPENSABLE TO STIR IDEAS AND ASSESS OVERALL PROSPECTS. BUT MORE SPECIFIC AND CONCRETE EFFORTS ARE NEEDED FOR WHICH WE WILL SEEK TO MOVE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHERS.

THE POINT OF THESE EFFORTS SHOULD NOT BE AIMED AT WAGING A WAR ON BEHALF OF ASBESTOS AGAINST ITS SUBSTITUTES. AS WE ALL KNOW, IN AN EXPANDING MARKET, THERE IS OFTEN ROOM FOR ALL. IT WOULD BE WRONG TO USE A HEALTH SCARE AS A MARKETING STRATEGY IN AN ATTEMPT TO PIT ASBESTOS AGAINST SUBSTITUTE FIBRES. THAT WOULD BE IN NO ONE'S LONG TERM INTEREST.

MARKETING HAS TO BE CARRIED OUT ON THE BASIS OF RELATIVE PERFORMANCES AND COSTS. THAT IS THE ONLY FAIR AND RESPONSIBLE APPROACH AND THE ONLY ONE WHICH MAKES SENSE. JUST AS IT IS BAD MARKETING, IT IS BAD PUBLIC POLICY TO USE GENUINE CONCERNS ABOUT PUBLIC AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN A SPECIFIC AND HIGHLY DISCRIMINATORY WAY. I BELIEVE THAT TO DO SO WOULD DIVIDE US AND LEAD TO A BACKLASH FROM THE PUBLIC AND CONSUMERS.

THE PROPER REGULATORY APPROACH TO THE HEALTH AND OCCUPATIONAL RISKS POSED BY RESPIRABLE BIOLOGICALLY ACTIVE FIBRES IS A GENERIC APPROACH. WE NEED TO SUPPORT REGULATIONS THAT ARE COMMON TO ALL RESPIRABLE FIBRES WHICH ARE KNOWN TO BE BIOLOGICALLY ACTIVE.

IN SUM, THE LAST FEW YEARS HAVE SEEN A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS FOR ASBESTOS PRODUCING AND CONSUMING COUNTRIES. THERE IS NOW AN INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS THAT CONTROLLED USE AND NOT TOTAL PRODUCT BANS IS THE APPROPRIATE APPROACH TO ASBESTOS REGULATION.

OUR BATTLES ARE FAR FROM OVER ON THE REGULATORY FRONT. WORK REMAINS TO ADDRESS REGULATORY ISSUES IN A FEW SELECT COUNTRIES OF WORLD - EPA'S PROPOSED BAN AND PHASE OUT BEING THE MOST NOTABLE.

HOWEVER, I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT A MAJOR TURNING POINT HAS BEEN REACHED. THE ILO CONVENTION PROVIDES FOR THE LONG-TERM FUTURE OF THE WORLD'S ASBESTOS INDUSTRIES. WHETHER OR NOT THIS LONG-TERM FUTURE IS REALIZED, HOWEVER, WILL BE DEPENDENT UPON MOBILIZING A DEGREE OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION WHICH HERETOFORE HAS NEVER BEEN SEEN.

MOST IMPORTANTLY PRODUCER AND CONSUMER COUNTRIES MUST PULL TOGETHER AND MAKE CONTROLLED USE EFFECTIVE REALITY EVERYWHERE. IN THIS REGARD, THE FIRST STEP MUST BE WIDESPREAD RATIFICATION OF THE ILO CONVENTION FOLLOWED BY THE APPLICATION OF APPROPRIATE DUST CONTROL MEASURES, FIBRE MEASUREMENT AND MEDICAL SURVEILLANCE PROGRAMS, TO ENSURE THAT IN PLANTS AROUND THE WORLD WORKER HEALTH AND SAFETY IS PROTECTED.

SECONDLY, A RENEWED AND VIGOROUS EFFORT MUST BE MADE TO DEVELOP NEW PRODUCTS AND IMPROVE EXISTING ONES.

THIRDLY, A MAJOR EFFORT MUST BE MADE TO REBUILD THE IMAGE OF ASBESTOS AND ASBESTOS PRODUCTS WORLDWIDE.

THESE ARE OUR CHALLENGES. I LOOK FORWARD TO DISCUSSING HOW BEST WE CAN COORDINATE OUR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THEM.

THANK YOU!