

International Ban Asbestos Secretariat

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Campaigning for a global asbestos ban and justice for all asbestos victims!



Shri Dinsha Patel
Union Minister of Mines
Government of India
New Delhi, India

December 7, 2012

Re: November 23, 2012 Parliamentary Response of Minister of Mines regarding Asbestos Mining

Dear Sir:

Having read your the response of November 23, 2012 to unstarred question number 254 to the Lower House of Parliament, I feel compelled to write to you.

The text of the response states that the Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) “in consultation with Central Pollution Control Board and Directorate General of Mines Safety has prepared draft guidelines laying down **the safeguards for mining of asbestos...**”

There is no such thing as “safeguards” when it comes to mining, using, working or living with asbestos. Such is the position taken by all reputable international agencies including the World Health Organization, the International Labor Organization, the International Agency for Research on Cancer and the International Commission on Occupational Health all of which believe that banning the use of asbestos is the only sure way to protect human beings from the dangers of asbestos.¹

The mining of asbestos will endanger not only the people working at the mine but also the people living in the communities nearby the mine who will be exposed to elevated levels of airborne asbestos. It has been well-proven that such exposures can and do lead to a variety of asbestos-related diseases amongst members of the public.

India is the world’s biggest importer of asbestos and the world’s second biggest consumer of asbestos having used around 321,803 tonnes of chrysotile asbestos in 2011. The situation in India has been described by Indian and international experts as a ticking “time bomb.”² I would urge you to uphold the previous decision which shut down asbestos mining operations as well as progress plans to phase-out asbestos use throughout India as has been done in more than fifty countries around the world.

Sincerely,

Laurie Kazan-Allen

Laurie Kazan-Allen
IBAS Coordinator

¹ Asbestos Policies of Major International Agencies.
http://ibasecretariat.org/lka_asb_polic_maj_int_agencies.php

² India’s Asbestos Time Bomb. 2008.
http://ibasecretariat.org/lka_asb_polic_maj_int_agencies.php