



– Open Letter –

An Appeal to the 161 Parties at COP 9 of the Rotterdam Convention¹

‘No more delays, no more vetoes’

April 20, 2019

Dear Delegates,

We the organisations listed below, representing those most exposed to and suffering from deadly exposures to asbestos fibre:

- deplore vested interests blocking the listing of chrysotile asbestos on the Rotterdam Convention at the last six Conferences of the Parties (COPs);
- demand that recommendations of the Convention’s own Chemical Review Committee be respected and supported on the basis of the clear scientific and medical evidence presented;
- call on all Parties to COP9 to support reform of Article 22 of the Rotterdam Convention at this COP in order to allow a 75% majority vote of the Parties to include a chemical on Annex III should consensus fail;
- call on all Parties to support listing of chrysotile asbestos on Annex III of the Convention at COP9, the 7th time it has been recommended.

¹ The Rotterdam Convention (RC) is a United Nations treaty designed to protect human health and progress environmental justice by imposing controls on the international trade in dangerous substances; this is achieved through the implementation of a right to prior informed consent (PIC) protocol under which exporting countries must advise importing countries of the toxic nature of designated substances – those listed on Annex III of the RC – so that importers might make informed decisions about whether or not they can use those substances without poisoning populations or damaging the environment. Because a consensus is required for any decision to be taken by the Convention, the actions of just a few Parties can frustrate the desires of the many. The ninth Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention (COP9) will take place from April 29 to May 10, 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Asbestos vested interests, led by the International Chrysotile Association, have signalled their intention to block reform of the Convention and the listing of chrysotile asbestos via refusal of consensus by a small number of Parties who profit from its trade and who abuse the consensus system so as to veto any progress.

It is unconscionable that the financial interests of these few Parties can block the desires of the many to protect vulnerable populations from toxic exposures. The signatories of this letter are unanimous in their belief that to salvage the credibility of the Rotterdam Convention, chrysotile asbestos must be included on Annex III and the Convention's decision-making system must be reformed. It is time for action.

Signatories:

International Organisations (Executive Signatories)

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, on behalf of the *International Trade Union Confederation*

Sugio Furuya, Coordinator, on behalf of the *Asian Ban Asbestos Network*

Omana George, Program Coordinator, on behalf of the *Asia Monitor Resource Centre*

Ambet Yuson, General Secretary, on behalf of the *Building and Woodworkers International*

Sam Hagglund, General Secretary, on behalf of the *European Federation of Building and Woodworkers*

Laurie Kazan-Allen, Coordinator, on behalf of the *International Ban Asbestos Secretariat*

President Dr. Jukka Takala, on behalf of the *International Commission of Occupational Health*

Sascha Gabizon, Executive Director on behalf of *Women Engage for a Common Future*

Felix Gnehm, Co-Director on behalf of *Solidar Suisse*

Kate Lee, Executive Officer on behalf of *Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA*

Domestic Organisations, Individuals, and National Representatives of International Organisations

By Country:

Albania

Professor Dr. Romeo Hanxhari, University of Tirana

Argentina

Dr. Andrés Trotta, Institute of Collective Health, National University of Lanús

Australia

Professor Anna Nowak, Director, National Centre for Asbestos Related Diseases (NCARD) on behalf of the NCARD research team

Professor Emeritus Ken Takahashi, MD, PhD, MPH, Director, Asbestos Diseases Research Institute

Liam O'Brien, Assistant Secretary, on behalf of the Australian Council of Trade Unions

Dave Noonan, on behalf of the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union

Paul Bastian, National Secretary, on behalf of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union

Bangladesh

A.R. Chowdhury Repon, Secretary General, on behalf of Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress

Dr. S.M. Morshed, Jt. Coordinator on behalf of Bangladesh Ban Asbestos Network (B-BAN)

Ms. Saki Rizwana, Chairperson, on behalf of Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHE)

Arifur Rahman, Asst. General Secretary, on behalf of Bangladesh Building and Wood Workers Federation (BBWWF)

Asad Uddin, on behalf of the Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational and Environmental Victims (ANROEV)

Belgium

Eric Jonckheere, President, on behalf of ABEVA, Belgium Society for Asbestos Victims

Brazil

President Eliezer João de Souza on behalf of the Associação Brasileira dos Expostos ao Amianto (ABREA) [Brazilian Association of the Asbestos-Exposed]

Fernanda Giannasi, Civil, Health and Safety Engineer, Retired Labour Inspector and Co-Founder of Associação Brasileira dos Expostos ao Amianto (ABREA)

Dr. Eduardo Algranti, Chief, Division of Medicine, FUNDACENTRO

Canada

Hassan Yussuff, President, on behalf of the Canadian Labour Congress

Jerry Dias, National President, on behalf of Unifor

Laird Cronk, President, BC Federation of Labour

Michaela Keyserlingk, mesothelioma widow and ban asbestos campaigner

Larry Stoffman, Trade Union Consultant (OSH)

Kathleen Ruff, Founder, on behalf of the Rotterdam Convention Alliance (ROCA)

Matt Hancock, CUPE National President, on behalf of the Canadian Union for Public Employees (CUPE)

England

Graham Dring, Chair, on behalf of the Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum UK

Tony Whitston, former Chair of the Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum UK

John Flanagan, Support Officer, on behalf of the Merseyside Asbestos Victim Support Group

Doug Jewell, Project Worker, on behalf of Asbestos Support Central England

Hilda Palmer, on behalf of the Hazards Campaign, Families against Corporate Killers and the Greater Manchester Hazards Centre

Joanne Gordon, Coordinator, on behalf of the Derbyshire Asbestos Support Trust

Lynne Squibb, on behalf of HASAG Asbestos Disease Support

Alan Reid, on behalf of Cumbria & Lancashire Asbestos Support Group

Bob Pointer, retired, formerly of Cumbria Asbestos Related Disease Support

Samantha Cox on behalf of the Paul Readhead Asbestos Support Awareness Group

Dan Shears, GMB National Health, Safety & Environment Director and Lynsey Mann,

GMB National Health and Safety Officer on behalf of the GMB trade union.

John McClean, on behalf of the Asbestos in Schools Campaign

Dr Linda Waldman, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex

David Gee, Visiting Fellow, Institute of Environment, Health and Societies, Brunel University

Georgina Marjorie Magee, Merseyside Asbestos Victim Support Group

Andy Turner, SARAG Coordinator/Development Worker on behalf of SARAG South Yorkshire Asbestos Victims Support Group

Liz Darlison, Head of Services for Mesothelioma UK

Bill Lawrence, Secretary, on behalf of the UK Construction Safety Campaign

France

Professor Annie Thebaud-Mony, Honorary Director of Research, National Institute for Health and Medical Research, on behalf of Ban Asbestos France and the Henri Pézerat Association

Jacques Faugeron, ANDEVA President, on behalf of Association Nationale de Défense des Victimes de l'Amiante (National Association for the Defence of Asbestos Victims)

Germany

Professor Emeritus Hans-Joachim Woitowitz, former Head of the Outpatient Clinic and the Institute of Occupational and Social Medicine of Justus-Liebig University of Giessen

Professor Dr. Xaver Baur, Specialist in Occupational and Environmental Medicine

Alexandra Caterbow, Olga Speranskaya, HEISupport International

Gerd Albracht, Advisor to the International Association of Labour Inspection

Hong Kong

Sanjiv Pandita, Regional Representative (Decent Work), on behalf of Solidar Suisse

India

Pooja Gupta, National Coordinator on behalf of Indian Ban Asbestos Network (IBAN)

Mohit Gupta, Program Officer Envionics Trust (New Delhi)

Kamal Tewary on behalf of Worker's Initiative - Kolkata

Jagdish Patel on behalf of Peoples Training & Research Centre and the Occupational and Environmental Health Network India (OEHNI)

Professor Qamar Rahman, Dean of Research Science and Technology, Amity University, Lucknow

Raghunath Manavar, Secretary of the Occupational Health & Safety Association (OSHA), Ahmedabad

Sanjay Chaturvedi, Professor and Head, Department of Community Medicine, University College of Medical Sciences, Delhi

Indonesia

Muchamad Darisman on behalf of the Indonesia-Ban Asbestos Network (Ina-Ban)

Firman Budiawan, Coordinator of Local Initiative for OSH Network (LION), on behalf of LION

Zulmiar Yanri, MD, Occupational Medicine Specialist, Ph.D. OSH Expert, Chairman of OSH Professional Certification Institute of Indonesia

Italy

Dr. Daniela Degiovanni, Oncologist, Casale Monferrato

Professor Benedetto Terracini, University of Torino

Japan

Sugio Furuya, on behalf of Ban Asbestos Network Japan (BANJAN)

Sarah Y.Nagamatsu RN, PHN, MS, PhD, St.Luke's International University

Nepal

Ram Charitra Sah, Executive Director on behalf of Center for Public Health and Environmental Development, Kathmandu

Netherlands

Jan Cremers, Associated Researcher Tilburg Law School

Yvonne Waterman, European Asbestos Forum Foundation

New Zealand

Deidre van Gerven, Mesothelioma Widow

Norway

Prof. Oluf Dimitri Røe, MD PhD, Specialist in Medical and Radiation Oncology, Cancer Clinic, Levanger Hospital, Nord-Trøndelag Health Trust. & Department of Clinical and Molecular Medicine, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Axel Wannag MD, Chief Medical Officer Norwegian Labour Inspection (retired)

Pakistan

Khalid Mahmood, on behalf of the Labour Education Foundation

Russia

Elena Vasilyeva, on behalf of Volgograd-Ecopress

Scotland

Kathleen Jenkins, Secretary, on behalf of Scottish Hazards and the European Work Hazards Network

Andrew Watterson, Occupational and Environmental Health Research Group, Public Health and Population Health Research Group, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Stirling, Stirling

Slovenia

Professor Metoda Dodič Fikfak, MD, PhD, Clinical Institute of Occupational, Traffic and Sports Medicine

South Africa

Dr Jim te Water Naude, Public Health Medicine Specialist

Prudence Kotoloane on behalf of the Asbestos Interest Group, Kuruman

Spain

Juan Carlos Paúl on behalf of AVIDA Madrid and the Spanish Federation of Associations of Asbestos Victims

Sri Lanka

Velayutham Ruthiradeepan, Vice President of the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF) on behalf of the NTUF

Velayutham Ruthiradeepan, Administrative Secretary, on behalf of the Lanka Jathika Estate Workers Union (LJEWU)

Subash Karunaratne, General Secretary, on behalf of the National Building and Wood Workers Union (NBWU)

Sundaralingam, General Secretary, on behalf of the National Estate Services Union (NESU)

S.Pushparani, Secretary - National Organisation for Informal Sector Employees (NOSE)

V.Thineshkumar, Chairman - The POWER Foundation (POWER)

Switzerland

David Azoulay, Senior Lawyer, Center for International Environmental Law

Vasco Pedrina, former Co-President of the Inter-professional Union, UNIA/Swiss Trade Union Confederation

Klaus Thieme, Head of Development Cooperation, Solidar Suisse

Bernhard Herold, Desk Officer Asia, Solidar Suisse

Taiwan

Paul Jobin, Associate Research Fellow, Academia Sinica

Thailand

Pornchai Sithisarankul, MD, MPH, DrPH, Professor of Preventive Medicine, Department of Preventive and Social Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University & Assistant Director of Health Promotion, King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital

United States

Mary Hesdorffer, on behalf of the Mesothelioma Applied Research Fund

Charles Levenstein, Ph.D., M.S., Professor Emeritus of Work Environment, University of Massachusetts Lowell

Linda Reinstein, President/CEO, on behalf of the Asbestos Diseases Awareness Organization

Vietnam

Hoang Xuan Luong, on behalf of the Justice for Environment and Health Network

Dr. Nguyen Trong An, Coordinator, on behalf of the Vietnam Non-Communicable Diseases Prevention Alliance (NCDs VN)

Dr Tran Tuan, Director, on behalf of The Research and Training Centre for Community Development (RTCCD)

Wales

Cenric Clement-Evans, Right2Know Asbestos Campaign