



Asian Solidarity Delegation to Quebec

Z Bldg. 5F, Kameido 7-10-1, Koto-ku, Tokyo, 136-0071, Japan

Phone +81-3-3636-3882, Fax +81-3636-3881

E-mail 2009aban@gmail.com

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Dear Mr Chadha:

Further to our letter to you of November 26, we are extremely disappointed by your refusal to meet with us to hear the serious information that we wished to put before you. We consider your failure to even reply to our letter to show a lack of common human courtesy.

You have provided no answer whatsoever as to why you refuse to listen to the strong, clear, unanimous voice of Quebec's medical authorities and public health experts who have said that the mining and export of asbestos are medically indefensible and that it would be immoral for the Quebec government to provide your consortium of anonymous investors with \$58 million financing to revive the bankrupt Quebec asbestos industry.

We are shocked that you refuse to heed the leading scientific authorities and instead are employing disreputable tactics that, in our view, gravely dishonour you.

1) We have already asked you to apologize for and correct the false information that you gave to India Abroad regarding chrysotile asbestos and the list for SuperFund sites of the US Agency for Toxic Substances.

2) We ask that you retract and apologize for your absurd accusation that those calling for a ban on asbestos (such as the Canadian Cancer Society, the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Public Health Association, The Lancet, the World Health Organization) are "screaming, shouting and demonstrating". It is indefensible conduct, particularly in someone who donates to universities, to refuse to address the clear evidence put forward by these highly respected organizations, and instead vilify them with ugly insults.

This is the irresponsible tactic of the mob or the bully; not the conduct of a person who respects knowledge and fact-based information.

3) We understand that asbestos represents for you an opportunity for financial profit. There is nothing wrong with financial profit, provided it does not override basic human rights. Gandhi listed commerce without morality, science without humanity and politics without principle among the deadly sins.

While this may be difficult for you to understand, we are not motivated by financial profit. We are motivated by our commitment to defend public health and to prevent an increased epidemic of asbestos-related deaths in Asia. You need only look at the positions we hold and the work we do in public health organizations and trade unions to know this.

We came to Québec in the middle of winter, at great personal sacrifice, in order to try to prevent the financing of the Jeffrey mine and prevent harm being caused to people in Asia for decades to come. International and Canadian trade unions, asbestos victims groups around the world, health groups working to ban asbestos, human rights groups and others committed to public health donated to cover the costs to get the delegation from Asia to Quebec. Around the world, it was seen as crucial to have voices from Asia heard as a desperate, last effort to stop this evil project from going ahead.

Your insinuation that we are being paid by vested interests is offensive and utterly without foundation. It is a sordid tactic, reminiscent of the McCarthy era, to avoid a discussion of inconvenient facts by seeking to discredit people with slurs.

We demand that you retract and apologize for your ugly, unfounded slurs. This is disgusting behaviour on the part of anyone. On the part of someone connected with Quebec universities, it is unconscionable.

We await your prompt response to the factual information we have put before you in this letter.

On behalf of the Asian Solidarity Delegation to Quebec
Coordinator of the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (A-BAN)
Sugio FURUYA



Liaison Person of the Asian Solidarity Delegation to Quebec
Kathleen Ruff

