



ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

Ms Nelisiwe Mildred Oliphant
Minister of Labour
Laboria Building
215 Francis Baard Street
Pretoria
0001
South Africa.

date: 09 February 2015

Dear Ms Oliphant

Re: Solidarity with South African Comrades

The Parliamentary Asbestos Sub-Group wishes to express its solidarity with the South African Government, the Asbestos Relief Trust, the Kgalagadi Relief Trust, the Asbestos Interest Group and other South African organizations working to: reduce the risk from environmental contamination within affected communities; bring justice to workers, their families and community members and; promote a healthy environment where children can learn and play without the risk of contracting an asbestos related disease.

We are aware of the deadly consequences to South Africans of asbestos mining which took place over several decades during the 20th century by British-owned firms such as Turner & Newall Ltd., Lonhro and the Cape Asbestos Company Ltd. These companies had little regard for their workers, customers or the communities surrounding their mine sites. As a result of their actions, entire communities and populations are living with asbestos in their lungs, homes, gardens, schools, playgrounds and roads. Neither Turner and Newall nor Cape Asbestos has volunteered to assist the South African government or at-risk communities in the monumental task of treating the injured or cleaning up the environment.

Research commissioned by the South African and provincial governments substantiates the hazard posed by the ongoing asbestos crisis. There are multiple examples of schoolchildren studying in contaminated classrooms and playing in highly polluted schoolyards. Individuals who are suffering from asbestos-related diseases receive little compensation or help with the immense medical costs, loss of income, incalculable physical and emotional damage caused by their illnesses from those who created the hazardous situation which led to their illnesses.

The Parliamentary Asbestos Sub-Group wishes to express its support for parties working to alleviate the suffering and decontaminate the environment.

Sincerely,

JIM SHERIDAN MP
Chair
All Party Parliamentary Group on
Occupational Safety and Health