



OCCUPATIONAL & ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NETWORK OF INDIA

Press Release

[India blocks listing of Chrysotile Asbestos in Rotterdam Convention: Hides behind smokescreen of bogus science](#)

India along with a handful of countries including Russia, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Cuba once again blocked the listing of Chrysotile Asbestos in the Prior Informed Consent list (PIC) at a UN convention meeting currently underway in Geneva, using bogus science and advocating “controlled use”. We would like to point out that “Controlled” or “safe” use of all varieties of asbestos including Chrysotile is a “myth” and that all major independent scientific bodies including the WHO and ILO have categorically stated that Chrysotile (white) asbestos cannot be safely used. Mere listing of chrysotile in the PIC list does not constitute a trade ban or ban on use but it helps the importing country to get information regarding the hazardous effects of the chemical and empowers them to take an informed decision. The Indian delegation should be directed to act with the knowledge that listing chrysotile asbestos under the Convention does not constitute a trade ban on chrysotile asbestos.

More than 800 victims of Chrysotile asbestos related disorders have been diagnosed by independent doctors across the country. One of these victims has also travelled to Geneva to participate in the conference and urged the delegates to allow the listing.

The Indian officials participating in the convention have based their position on a study done by National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) which was conducted with active funding and participation by the asbestos industry. This study has been reviewed by a body of scientists and scientific organizations from across the world, who have found serious flaws in the design, methodology and interpretation of the results. They have written a statement regarding the flawed nature of the study and requested India to recall the study and to support the inclusion of Chrysotile Asbestos in the PIC list¹.

The Indian position is contrary to the rules and regulations of the country and is untenable, unscientific, and unpardonable. It is only going to lead to a disaster of unimaginable proportions.

We urge the Prime Minister to ensure that Indian government officials take a stand which is favourable to the health and safety of Indian workers, the community and the environment and not be influenced by the asbestos industry at the UN meeting. We urge the Prime Minister to re-adopt India’s 2011 position on chrysotile asbestos and favour its listing at the UN Convention.

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¹ <http://www.anroev.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Statement-of-scientists-re-chrysotile-asbestos-March-21-2015.pdf>