

# International Ban Asbestos Secretariat

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



*Press Release*

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## ***Asbestos Plague Reaches Asia***

LONDON July 27, 2007: The first anniversary of a landmark Asian conference (Bangkok, Thailand) is being marked with the publication of a dossier exposing the devastating repercussions of Asia's increasing consumption of asbestos, an acknowledged carcinogen.

Information and data previously unobtainable in the English language form the core of: [\*Killing the Future – Asbestos Use in Asia\*](#). An overview of asbestos issues in several countries is presented and regional trends are analyzed, all of which lead the author to conclude that:

“The transference of asbestos technology to industrializing countries is an imperialist act which exploits the world's most at-risk populations... The continuing use of asbestos is a crime against humanity and cannot be justified.”

The text of this report highlights the work of asbestos victims' groups, pioneering non-governmental organizations and global labor federations in the fight to expose the lethal machinations of the industry lobby. Photographs showing chaotic and hazardous working practices throughout Asia reveal that the reassurance of asbestos stakeholders that asbestos can be used safely under “controlled conditions” is a bald-faced lie.

Author Laurie Kazan-Allen, Coordinator of the IBAS, says:

“Millions of global asbestos victims have learned that when it comes to asbestos the polluter rarely pays; the real costs of using this toxic substance are borne by individuals, families, communities and countries. The best way to reduce the burden of asbestos-related disease is to ban asbestos; asbestos is yesterday's material and should be relegated to the dustbin of discredited technologies and discarded materials.”

## Notes to Editors:

- For further information, contact Laurie Kazan-Allen, the IBAS Coordinator by email: [laurie@lkaz.demon.co.uk](mailto:laurie@lkaz.demon.co.uk) or phone: + 44 (0) 208 958 38 87.
- Chrysotile asbestos, the most widely used type of asbestos in Asia, has been assigned a 'Group 1' cancer rating by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. It has been linked to greatly elevated levels of incurable cancers such as mesothelioma and lung cancer as well as other fatal respiratory diseases.
- As elsewhere, the vast majority of chrysotile asbestos consumed in Asia goes into the production of asbestos-cement building materials which are used by an unskilled, non-unionized and lowly paid workforce; throughout most of the region, hazardous asbestos exposures in the construction industry remain unregulated.
- Workers in the ship-breaking industry are routinely exposed to a cocktail of toxins, including asbestos, contained within redundant ships exported to Asia for scrapping.
- Only one government in the region has adopted a partial asbestos ban (Japan); other governments regard asbestos as just another raw material. The Indian Government is encouraging increasing asbestos consumption through tax breaks; the Sri Lanka Government recommended the use of asbestos in the post-tsunami reconstruction.
- The World Health Organization, the International Labor Organization, the European Union, the International Commission on Occupational Health, the United Nations, the Collegium Ramazzini, groups representing global labor, other international agencies and 40+ national governments agree that exposure to all types of asbestos is hazardous and should be prevented by banning the use of all types of asbestos.
- The International Labor Organization estimates that there are 100,000 occupational asbestos-related deaths annually, one person every five minutes. Other estimates put the global toll much higher.