

ITUC-AP Conference on Asbestos meets with members of the House of Representative of Indonesia

Representatives of the Conference met members of Committee IX (Demography, Health, Manpower and Transmigration Affairs) of the House of Representatives of Indonesia in Wednesday afternoon, 7 March 2018, including Mr. Dede Yusuf M.E., ST, M.Si and Ms. Dra. Hj. Ermalena, Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee accordingly.

Representatives included:

- Shoya Yoshida, ITUC-AP General Secretary
- Wawan Erfianto, KSPI Vice President
- Edward P. Marpaung, KSBSI General Secretary
- Michael Borowick JP, ACTU Assistant Secretary
- Michiko Miyamoto, Director of ILO-Country Office for Indonesia
- Francisco Santos-O'Connor, ILO Senior Specialist
- Kate Lee, APHEDA Executive Director

Having been advised how asbestos is still widely used in Indonesia, the Chair of the Commission told that most Indonesians, including himself, do not recognise that asbestos, no matter if it is chrysotile, crocidolite or any other form, is used for insulation in buildings and as an ingredient in a number of products and that people are exposed to asbestos not only in workplaces but also in homes. He was concerned that it causes cancer of the lung, larynx, and ovaries and mesothelioma.

The Vice Chair informed that she was once involved in an anti-asbestos campaign, but such campaign is not declining in recent years. She expressed the need to increase public awareness about asbestos and to this end law makers should be equipped with precise scientific data information and data. She also expected to learn from other countries about successful cases of attaining supports of trade unions, industry and people in general.

While the ILO Country Director offered further cooperation and suggested to request the WHO for its expertise, the ACTU and the APHEDA told that they would provide cases in Australia and other countries.

The Chair explained that it would be necessary to involve Commission VI (Trade, Industrial, Investment, Cooperatives and Small and Medium Scale Enterprises, and State-Owned Enterprises Affairs) as well Commission VII (Energy, Mineral Resources, Research and Technology, Environmental Affairs) so that anti-asbestos to mobilise relevant ministries and asked the representatives for further cooperation through KSPI and KSBSI.

ITUC-AP General Secretary concluded with appreciation: “the elimination of the use of asbestos is the most effective means to protect people from asbestos exposure and to prevent asbestos-related diseases and deaths. We need to further strengthen our efforts and cooperation with all relevant stake holders at national, regional and global levels toward an Asbestos-Free World”.



INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION-ASIA PACIFIC

ITUC-AP Regional Conference on Asbestos “Realising an Asbestos-free World”

Intensifying regional campaign awareness and activities

6-7 March 2018, Jakarta Indonesia

ITUC-Asia Pacific

The Joint Communiqué on Asbestos “Realising an Asbestos-free World”

- We, affiliates of the ITUC--Asia Pacific together with allied and partner organisations met on 6-7 March 2018 at the ITUC-AP Regional Conference on Asbestos in Jakarta, Indonesia, under the theme “Realising an Asbestos-free World”.
- We reaffirmed that a Healthy and Safe Workplace is a fundamental human right and workers’ right and that we as trade unions will continue to take immediate actions for workers’ Occupational Health and Safety as our top priority.
- We reaffirmed our support for the International Labour Organization (ILO) Resolution concerning asbestos (adopted by the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference, June 2006) that confirmed the ILO Convention on Safety in the Use of Asbestos (C162) does not provide a justification for the continued use of asbestos.
- We condemned the needless death of more than 107,000 workers every year from asbestos-related diseases and are deeply concerned that millions of workers, the majority now in developing or transition economies, continue to face serious risks of deadly cancers from asbestos exposure, when alternative safer products are available.
- We condemned attempts by the asbestos industry to misrepresent the evidence on the deadly health impacts of chrysotile asbestos on exposed workers and communities, including misrepresenting positions of the World Health Organisation (WHO), the ILO and the World Trade Organisation..
- We confirmed that the elimination of the future use of asbestos is the most effective means to protect workers from asbestos exposure and to prevent future asbestos-related diseases and deaths and that asbestos industry arguments of ‘safe use’ of this deadly fibre is invalid.

- We noted with concern the asbestos diseases among workers are already occurring in this country of our meeting, Indonesia. We noted also the likelihood of increased asbestos related cancers for workers, community and consumers in the coming decades as Indonesia has not yet banned chrysotile asbestos and remains in the world's top 3 importers of asbestos fibre.

Therefore, we decided:

- To organise international and national campaigns to promote the elimination of the use of all forms of asbestos and asbestos-containing materials in our countries and globally; and
- To resolve to campaign for the realisation of “an Asbestos-free World” for health and safety of all workers, their families and their communities.

Those specific priority actions should include:

- To call on governments across Asia to follow the advice of the WHO and the ILO on asbestos, in regard the most effective means to stop exposure and asbestos diseases is to stop using all types of asbestos, including chrysotile, as soon as possible,
- To lobby all governments which have not already done so, to ratify the ILO C162 while moving to eliminate the use of asbestos, to immediately take steps to reduce risk of exposure to asbestos fibres among workers and the community and to develop systems for safe asbestos removal and waste disposal,
- To lobby governments to list Chrysotile (white asbestos) as a hazardous/carcinogenic chemical within the Rotterdam Convention, Annex III and any other international agreements as appropriate,
- To campaign for improved diagnosis and just-compensation for workers and other victims of asbestos related diseases,
- To promote to workers and policy makers, independent evidence on the deadly health impacts of exposure to chrysotile asbestos and all other asbestos types; and
- To publically condemn the asbestos industry's misinformation in any forums they make these false claims.