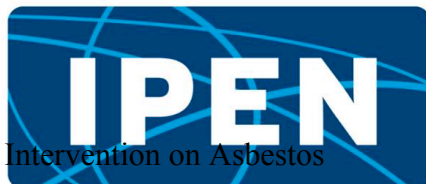


13 May, 2015



IPEN and National Toxics Network Intervention on Asbestos

Given by Mariann Lloyd-Smith (Australia) **atoxics-free future**

I make this intervention on behalf of IPEN and Australia's National Toxics Network. It is clearly evident that chrysotile asbestos has fulfilled all the criteria for listing in the Rotterdam Convention and it is deeply disturbing that it has not been listed in the previous meetings. Mr. President, as you have heard, Australia has banned all forms of asbestos including chrysotile or 'white asbestos.' Nevertheless, we must endure for decades to come the legacy of our past use of chrysotile asbestos.

We have an epidemic of victims suffering terrible health impacts, with many newly diagnosed victims exposed when renovating or upgrading their homes. And as climate change-induced extreme weather events occur more frequently in my country, resulting in breakage and damage to old chrysotile roofing and fencing, we see villages and suburbs evacuated as men in white hazard suits move in to clean up the broken chrysotile asbestos sheeting and its deadly fibres. Mr. President, the waste phase of chrysotile asbestos is neither controlled nor safe and can never be, as has been highlighted by a number of Parties.

If a developed country like Australia struggles to address the historical legacy of its use of chrysotile asbestos, how can developing countries, small island states or indigenous communities ever be expected to manage ongoing life cycle impacts of this cruel carcinogenic substance?

IPEN urges all countries to heed the warnings of the World Health Organisation and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), these are well respected scientific expert bodies; and we urge Parties to ignore the unsubstantiated claims of safety by the well-funded chrysotile asbestos industry and their affiliates. To conclude, we appeal to Parties- please take positive action and find a way through this mire to finally list this dangerous substance in the Rotterdam Convention. Thank you.