

Joint Declaration from the International Building Trade Union Federations, made at the Global Asbestos Congress, Tokyo, November 2004.

The International Federation of Building and Wood Workers (IFBWW), the World Federation of Building Workers (WFBW) and the International Union of Building and Wood Workers (UITBB) are committed to actively promote the global ban of all forms of asbestos from the construction industry and from all other industrial sectors, and to promote the effective regulation of work with in-situ asbestos in demolition, conversion, renovation and maintenance works by law.

Considering that:

- All forms of asbestos, including chrysotile, are classified as known human carcinogens by the International Agency for Research on Cancer and by the International Programme for Chemical Safety.
- 90% of chrysotile asbestos is used in asbestos cement materials.
- 100, 000 workers die every year from diseases caused by exposure to asbestos.
- It has taken three decades of protracted efforts and the emergence of suitable alternatives for a comprehensive ban on the manufacture and use of asbestos and asbestos-containing products to be adopted in a number of countries. Furthermore that these countries now permit the handling of in situ asbestos only during asbestos removal, demolition, renovation and maintenance work carried out under strictly controlled working conditions.

The IFBWW, the UITBB and the WFBW call upon the governments and social partners of all countries to:

- Take immediate steps to ban all mining, manufacture, recycling and use of all forms of asbestos and asbestos-containing materials as soon as possible.
- Undertake and support all measures intended to eliminate asbestos and asbestos-containing products from the economic cycle and to replace asbestos with less harmful products.
- Make the protection of workers against asbestos exposure a priority.
- Ratify and implement the provisions of ILO Convention 162 (1986), Safety in the Use of Asbestos, and to implement the provisions of its accompanying Recommendation 172 as a minimum standard not to be fallen below.
- Ensure proper compensation to the victims of asbestos related diseases

The IFBWW, the UITBB and the WFBW further call upon the International Labour Organisation to:

- Adopt a clear health-based position in favour of the elimination of the use of all forms of asbestos and asbestos containing materials.
- Continue to encourage Member States to ratify and implement the provisions of Convention 162 (1986), Safety in the Use of Asbestos, and to implement the provisions of its accompanying Recommendation 172, as a minimum standard not to be fallen below.
- Make an explicit statement clarifying to all member States that Convention 162 does not provide a justification for, or endorsement of, the continued use of asbestos.
- Resolve to promote the elimination of the use of all forms of asbestos and asbestos-containing materials in all Member States.
- Assist Member States by drawing up national action programmes for the management, control and elimination of asbestos from the working and social environment.