

OHN/LET/MAR-30

Date – 21-03-2015

To

Mr. Ram Niwas Jindal
Director, Hazardous Substances Management Division
Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change
Room No 556, Agni Wing; Level- III; Indira Paryavaran Bhawan
Jor Bagh Road, Aliganj,
110 003 New Delhi

Dear Sir

Subject: International statement of health scientists and scientific bodies on the 'scientific' study by National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) titled 'Study of Health Hazards / Environmental hazards resulting from use of Chrysotile variety of Asbestos in the country'

As you are aware, the Conference of Parties (COP 7) for the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent (PIC Convention) is going to be held May 3 – 15, 2015 in Geneva. India is a party to this Convention and has been actively participating in realizing the mission and goals of this Convention which calls for responsible trade, greater transparency, exchange of information and right of all countries including the smallest nation to have a say in an international treaty through a process of consensus.

The Convention's committee of scientific experts (the Chemical Review Committee), made up of over 30 scientists from around the world, has, after careful and thorough examination of the issue, recommended that chrysotile asbestos be put on the Convention's list of hazardous substances (Annex III). Parties to the Convention have agreed that chrysotile asbestos meets all the criteria to be listed in Annex III.

However, in the last Conference (held in 2013) of the PIC Convention, India played a role in blocking the recommendation of the Chemical Review Committee that Chrysotile asbestos (white asbestos) should be placed in the PIC list. As you are aware, the purpose of the PIC list is to ensure transparency in the exchange of information between the trading countries regarding the health and environmental impacts of a substance. The Convention does not ban on trade in hazardous substances. Its purpose is to promote responsible trade by requiring prior informed consent between importing-exporting countries through access to credible scientific information.

At the last COP, most of the developing world, including the African nations pleaded with India not to block the listing in the interest of humanity and environment. But unfortunately, India blocked the listing by stating that there is no 'scientific' evidence of 'harm' to Chrysotile asbestos to Indian workers or its population. India based its position on a study conducted by one of India's premier scientific institutions – the National Institute of Occupational Health.

The NIOH study, a draft of which was also critiqued in 2008, has now again been reviewed by a body of scientists and scientific organisations 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 list at the Conference of the Parties in May.

We enclose the statement signed by 16 scientific institutions/organizations and 78 scientists from across the globe. We do hope you will do the right thing and recall the study. We do hope that India will support the inclusion of Chrysotile asbestos in the PIC list at the upcoming COP 7 in Geneva.

Thanking you,

Mohit Gupta(OEHNI)
Madhumita Dutta (OEHNI);
Kathleen Ruff (ROCA)

Address/contact:

Occupational and Environmental Health Network of India
Secretariat – Environics Trust
K No 177, Neb Sarai
Shokeen Market, Main IGNOU Road
New Delhi-110068
Email – oejni.del@gmail.com

OHN/LET/MAR-31

Date – 21-03-2015

To

Mr. Bishwanath Sinha
Joint Secretary, Hazardous Substances Management Division
Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change
Room no 353, Agni Wing; Level- III; Indira Paryavaran Bhawan
Jor Bagh Road, Aliganj,
110 003 New Delhi

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Subject: International statement of health scientists and scientific bodies on the 'scientific' study by National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) titled 'Study of Health Hazards / Environmental hazards resulting from use of Chrysotile variety of Asbestos in the country'

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OHN/LET/MAR-32

Date – 21-03-2015

To

Ms. Vandana Jain
Director (Plant Protection)
Department of Agriculture and Cooperation
Ministry of Agriculture
Room No. 244A, Krishi Bhawan
Rajendra Prasad Road
110001 New Delhi

Dear Madam

Subject: International statement of health scientists and scientific bodies on the 'scientific' study by National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) titled 'Study of Health Hazards / Environmental hazards resulting from use of Chrysotile variety of Asbestos in the country'

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OHN/LET/MAR-33

Date – 21-03-2015

To
Mr. A.J.V. Prasad
Joint Secretary (Chemicals)
Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals
Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers
Room No. 340-C, 'A' Wing, Shastri Bhawan
110001 New Delhi
India

Dear Sir

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OHN/LET/MAR-34

Date – 21-03-2015

To
Director-in-Charge & Scientist-G
National Institute of Occupational Health
(Indian Council of Medical Research)
Meghani Nagar, Ahmedabad-380016, Gujarat

Dear Sir

Subject: International statement of health scientists and scientific bodies on the 'scientific' study by National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) titled 'Study of Health Hazards / Environmental hazards resulting from use of Chrysotile variety of Asbestos in the country'

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Secretariat – Environics Trust
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New Delhi-110068
Email – oehni.del@gmail.com

OHN/LET/MAR-35

Date – 21-03-2015

To
Sr. Deputy Director General (Administration)
Indian Council of Medical Research
P.O. Box No. 4911
Ansari Nagar
New Delhi - 110029

Dear Sir

Subject: International statement of health scientists and scientific bodies on the 'scientific' study by National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) titled 'Study of Health Hazards / Environmental hazards resulting from use of Chrysotile variety of Asbestos in the country'

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OHN/LET/MAR-36

Date – 21-03-2015

To
Shri Ananthkumar
Hon'ble Cabinet Minister (C & F)
Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers
Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals
Shastri Bhawan
Dr Rajendra Prasad Road,
New Delhi-110 001

Dear Sir

Subject: International statement of health scientists and scientific bodies on the 'scientific' study by National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) titled 'Study of Health Hazards / Environmental hazards resulting from use of Chrysotile variety of Asbestos in the country'

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OHN/LET/MAR-37

Date – 21-03-2015

To

Shri Bandaru Dattatreya,
Minister of State for Labour and Employment (Independent Charge)
Ministry of Labour and Employment
Shram Shakti Bhawan
Rafi Marg, New Delhi-110001

Dear Sir

Subject: International statement of health scientists and scientific bodies on the 'scientific' study by National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) titled 'Study of Health Hazards / Environmental hazards resulting from use of Chrysotile variety of Asbestos in the country'

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To
Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda
Hon'ble Cabinet Minister
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Room No. 348; 'A' Wing,
Nirman Bhavan, New Delhi-110011

Dear Sir

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OHN/LET/MAR-39

Date – 21-03-2015

To
Dr Virendra Kumar
Chairperson
Standing Committee on Labour
Lok Sabha Secretariat
Parliament House Annexe,
New Delhi-110001

Dear Sir

Subject: International statement of health scientists and scientific bodies on the 'scientific' study by National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) titled 'Study of Health Hazards / Environmental hazards resulting from use of Chrysotile variety of Asbestos in the country'

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OHN/LET/MAR-40

Date – 21-03-2015

To
Shri Anandrao Adsul
Chairperson
Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilisers
Lok Sabha Secretariat
Parliament House Annexe,
New Delhi-110001

Dear Sir

Subject: International statement of health scientists and scientific bodies on the 'scientific' study by National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) titled 'Study of Health Hazards / Environmental hazards resulting from use of Chrysotile variety of Asbestos in the country'

As you are aware, the Conference of Parties (COP 7) for the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent (PIC Convention) is going to be held May 3 – 15, 2015 in Geneva. India is a party to this Convention and has been actively participating in realizing the mission and goals of this Convention which calls for responsible trade, greater transparency, exchange of information and right of all countries including the smallest nation to have a say in an international treaty through a process of consensus.

The Convention's committee of scientific experts (the Chemical Review Committee), made up of over 30 scientists from around the world, has, after careful and thorough examination of the issue, recommended that chrysotile asbestos be put on the Convention's list of hazardous substances (Annex III). Parties to the Convention have agreed that chrysotile asbestos meets all the criteria to be listed in Annex III.

However, in the last Conference (held in 2013) of the PIC Convention, India played a role in blocking the recommendation of the Chemical Review Committee that Chrysotile asbestos (white asbestos) should be placed in the PIC list. As you are aware, the purpose of the PIC list is to ensure transparency in the exchange of information between the trading countries regarding the health and environmental impacts of a substance. The Convention does not ban on trade in hazardous substances. Its purpose is to promote responsible trade by requiring prior informed consent between importing-exporting countries through access to credible scientific information.

At the last COP, most of the developing world, including the African nations pleaded with India not to block the listing in the interest of humanity and environment. But unfortunately, India blocked the listing by stating that there is no 'scientific' evidence of 'harm' to Chrysotile asbestos to Indian workers or its population. India based its position on a study conducted by one of India's premier scientific institutions – the National Institute of Occupational Health.

The NIOH study, a draft of which was also critiqued in 2008, has now again been reviewed by a body of scientists and scientific organisations 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 list at the Conference of the Parties in May.

We enclose the statement signed by 16 scientific institutions/organizations and 78 scientists from across the globe. We do hope you will do the right thing and recall the study. We do hope that India will support the inclusion of Chrysotile asbestos in the PIC list at the upcoming COP 7 in Geneva.

Thanking you,

Mohit Gupta(OEHNI)
Madhumita Dutta (OEHNI)
Kathleen Ruff (ROCA)

Address/contact:

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OHN/LET/MAR-41

Date – 21-03-2015

To
Sh Satish Chandra Mishra
Chairperson
Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare
Rajya Sabha Secretariat
Parliament House Annexe,
New Delhi-110001

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