



Press Release

May 20, 2010

Brazilian Chrysotile Institute: Follow The Money

The criticism “North American Week Against Asbestos, a retrograde step”¹ which appeared on May 18, 2010 on a pro-asbestos blog² backed by the Brazilian Chrysotile Institute (BCI) highlights the ruthless determination which propels the asbestos industry’s agenda in Brazil. Disregarding the global consensus which condemns all types of asbestos as extremely harmful to human health, industry stakeholders continue their discredited attempts to progress the asbestos propaganda campaign in Brazil.

It is quite ironic that this despicable tirade appeared just a few days after the World Health Organization (WHO) issued another policy statement underlining the threat posed by current asbestos exposures to 125 million people worldwide: “All types of asbestos cause lung cancer, mesothelioma, cancer of the larynx and ovary, and asbestosis.”³ The WHO reinforced its 2006 policy statement on banning asbestos saying “**the most efficient way to eliminate asbestos-related diseases is to stop the use of all types of asbestos...**”

The BCI, which is funded by asbestos industry money, has clear cut reasons to force asbestos down Brazilian consumers’ throats; indeed, if it did not do so doubtlessly well-paid BCI employees would be out of jobs. The WHO, the International Labor Organization (ILO), the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and other independent and reputable authorities have other agendas; their remits are to protect public and occupational health from avoidable risks such as asbestos.⁴ Indeed, the United States Senate is in no doubt about the need to raise national awareness of the asbestos hazard. For this reason United States Senate Resolution 427 was issued on March 1, 2010. This is not a retrograde step – it is a rational and important initiative taken by a body of public spirited legislators concerned for the lives of U.S. citizens.⁵

¹ Portuguese text read: “Semana norte-americana de consciência anti-amianto é um retrocesso.”

² “Crisotila com certeza” (Translation: Chrysotile with certainty)

<http://www.crisotilacomcerteza.com.br/?p=287>

³ *Preventing Diseases Through Healthy Environments.*

http://www.who.int/ipcs/features/10chemicals_en.pdf

⁴ *Asbestos Policies of Major International Agencies.*

http://ibasecretariat.org/lka_asb_polic_maj_int_agencies.php

⁵ <http://www.opencongress.org/bill/111-sr427/text>

⁶ See: *Asbestos Policies of Major International Agencies:*

**International Ban Asbestos
Secretariat
(IBAS)**

**Associação Brasileira dos
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The BCI is not concerned about the lives of ordinary Brazilian workers or citizens exposed to dangerous asbestos products; neither is it concerned about the lives of Mexicans, Indians, Thais, Indonesians, Colombians or Sri Lankans exposed to the hazards of Brazilian asbestos exports. The BCI is concerned first and foremost with the industry bottom line. As long as there is money to be made, there will be people callous and ruthless enough to prioritize corporate profits over human life. When it comes to the asbestos hazard, civil society would do well to heed the warnings of impartial and reputable associations such as the WHO, the ILO and the IARC and to treat assertions made by the BCI and other asbestos apologists with the disregard they deserve.

Notes to Editors

1. For further information, contact:

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2. 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 and many other international agencies and national governments agree that as exposure to all types of asbestos is hazardous to human health, the use of asbestos should be banned).⁶
3. The International Labor Organization estimates that there are 100,000 asbestos deaths a year, one person every five minutes. Other estimates put the global toll much higher.
4. In the document it released on May 13, 2010, the World Health Organization called for urgent action to protect human health from exposure to 10 chemicals, amongst which is asbestos. The WHO said that "in 2004, asbestos-related lung cancer, mesothelioma and asbestosis from occupational exposures resulted in 107,000 deaths and 1,523,000 DALYs," "the sum of years of potential life lost due to premature mortality and the years of productive life lost due to disability."⁷

http://ibasecretariat.org/lka_asb_polic_maj_int_agencies.php:

⁷ *Preventing Diseases Through Healthy Environments.*

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