

Asbestos

100.000 deaths every year from asbestos: BWI President demands that asbestos be on the agenda of all governments

Eighty delegates from 33 countries meet in Vienna to discuss how to achieve a worldwide ban on the use of chrysotile. BWI President Wiesehügel, emphasized in his speech "Asbestos should be on the agenda of all governments as the consequences of an exposure to asbestos will be much more serious than we thought few years ago. "

A big problem is the aggressive worldwide lobby of the asbestos industry which focuses increasingly on developing countries now that asbestos is completely banned in more than 40 countries. In developing countries, there is still an increase in the import of chrysotile from Russia, Khazakstan, Canada and Brazil.

A parallel event was organised in the same venue by "trade unions" supported by the Chrysotile asbestos industry and was dismissed by the BWI as a "clear provocation". Wiesehügel told delegates "These people are looking for confrontation. We will not accept their provocation, our policy is crystal clear".

Johann Holper, President of our Austrian affiliate GBH added "This proves that the success of the BWI global campaign for a worldwide ban is feared by those in favour of asbestos. We will continue to work until we reach a worldwide ban!"

The asbestos industry wants to convince the public that asbestos is not dangerous. For Igor Fedotov from the international Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva: "All serious scientists are opposing this opinion. The best prevention is a worldwide ban! "

The figures are frightening: At least 100,000 people die from asbestos diseases every year, according to international estimates. For Fiona Murie, Director of the BWI Health and Safety programme "The real figure is certainly even higher than that, there is no reliable recording of the medical cases in many countries. Furthermore, many victims do not know that they were exposed to asbestos and, because of the long time lag between exposure and the emergence of the symptoms, asbestos diseases are not correctly diagnosed, treated, compensated or, most importantly, prevented."