

**Resolution from the “International High-Level expert Conference
on Chemical Safety and Rotterdam Convention:
Policies and Practices in Russia”
Moscow, 14-15 October 2010**

The Conference focussed on three topics

- chemicals management and the relevance of the Rotterdam Convention to Russia
- chemicals under the Rotterdam Convention, and
- asbestos and asbestos-related diseases.

The Conference was attended by more than 50 participants, including representatives from the Russian, French and German Federal Government Executive bodies, Embassies of France, Germany, the Netherlands, representatives from international organisations, research institutions, the workers union, and non-governmental organisations (see list of participants in the appendix).

Based on the presentations and discussions during the conference, participants stress the importance of

- 1. Accession to the Rotterdam Convention by the Russian Federation as soon as possible;**
- 2. Immediate establishment and implementation of a national programme for diagnostics, reduction and elimination of asbestos-related diseases in collaboration with WHO and ILO;**
- 3. Reassurance of adequate protection of employees, citizens, , and the environment in Russia from the potential hazards arising from asbestos;**
- 4. Providing transparency through access to information and raising awareness on all aspects of the potential hazards of asbestos production and use;**
- 5. Identification and thorough health-related examination of all asbestos-related activities.**
- 6. The consideration by the Government of the Russian Federation the suitability of including, as proposed by the Chemical Review Committee, or not including chrysotile asbestos in Annex 3 of the Rotterdam Convention.**

7. Stimulating of epidemiological research in Russia to determine the spread of asbestos/related diseases.

Based on the presentations and discussions during the conference, participants agreed on the following conclusions:

1. The Rotterdam Convention promotes shared responsibility amongst its Parties and bases import and export of hazardous chemicals on adequate information on their risks. The reality of uncontrolled, and sometimes illegal import of hazardous chemicals calls for the prior informed consent mechanism provided by the Rotterdam Convention. According to the conference participants, implementation of the Rotterdam Convention should encounter no barriers in the Russian Federation, since relevant legislative provisions are already in place.
2. The establishment and implementation of a national programme for diagnostics, reduction and elimination of asbestos-related diseases are needed in collaboration with WHO and ILO. This requirement is part of the Parma Declaration on Environment and Health which was adopted by the WHO Europe regional conference in Moscow in September 2010.
3. Consideration should be given to the whole life-cycle of asbestos from its initial mining to its eventual management as waste. The reassurance should also encompass necessary remediation activities of buildings and sites containing asbestos. If needed, legislation and norms are to be updated.
4. The Government could contribute to the desired transparency by coordinating the production of scientifically sound, unbiased information for the public. Scientific research in safer and affordable alternatives should be promoted. Awareness raising is particularly necessary in Russia where asbestos is a significant industrial factor and asbestos-containing products will play a certain role in society for a long time.

5. There is strong evidence around the world and in international organisations on the severe health consequences of the use of asbestos. In the event of doubts about the validity of this evidence, at least application of the precautionary principle requires careful consideration and control of all steps of the asbestos life-cycle.

6. If controlled use of asbestos is claimed to be responsible, then this requires at least that information on adequate risk management measures is provided to everybody. Listing of asbestos in Annex 3 will assure that importing countries will have this information available. Russia should play a leading role in the process of listing.

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