

The Trade Union Campaign for a World-Wide Ban

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Slide presentation

Abstract

The trade unions attending the Global Asbestos Congress in Osasco, Brazil in September 2000 proposed clear campaign action points, summarized below. The ICFTU, meanwhile, has committed to strengthen the global campaign to ban asbestos and have organised a Round Table discussion on asbestos between the ILO and WHO and the Global Unions, scheduled for September 2004. This session will examine has been achieved in these four years since Osasco, and will highlight initiatives to intensify the trade union campaigning work.

Asbestos ban: Trade unions should lobby their national governments to introduce a ban on asbestos, as part of an international initiative to ban asbestos throughout the world.

Protection of workers: Trade unions should lobby their governments to apply ILO Convention 162 as a minimum standard to protect workers who may be exposed to asbestos through their work.

Awareness raising: Trade unions should develop a broad-based international campaign to educate workers and the public about the risks of exposure to asbestos and the measures to be taken to prevent ill-health.

Alternatives: Trade unions should seek the replacement of asbestos with alternative substances that are less harmful to human health and the environment.

Information exchange: Trade unions in countries that manufacture and use asbestos substitutes should disseminate information on these.

Just Transition: Where workers may be displaced because of the introduction of an asbestos ban, trade unions should lobby to protect the income, employment and welfare of those affected and their communities.

Legal action: Trade unions should seek through their legal systems to bring to justice those employers whose negligence has caused asbestos diseases.

Compensation: Trade unions should seek appropriate and prompt compensation for workers who suffer from asbestos related diseases.

Treatment: Trade unions should campaign to ensure that the victims of asbestos related disease have access to medical treatment, support services and information.