



INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

Hong Kong, 9-10 December 2005

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**RESOLUTION**  
**ON**  
**GLOBAL ASBESTOS BAN**  
**ADOPTED 10 DECEMBER 2005**

**The ICFTU Executive Board, at its 124<sup>th</sup> meeting held in Hong Kong on 9-10 December 2005:**

**Considering That:**

- Over 100,000 workers die every year from diseases caused by exposure to asbestos;
- All forms of asbestos, including chrysotile, are classified as known human carcinogens by the International Agency for Research on Cancer and by the International Programme for Chemical Safety; A number of less hazardous alternatives exist for all uses of asbestos;

**And Considering That:**

**In December 2004 the ICFTU World Congress** instructed its member bodies, regional organisations, Global Union partners and affiliates, to *“campaign for a total world ban on the use and commercialisation of asbestos; promote ratification of relevant ILO Conventions; work with affiliates to apply pressure on national governments to cease the further use of asbestos; ensure proper, strengthened, safeguards to protect workers and communities that are or will be exposed to asbestos products; and implement employment transition programmes for workers displaced by the banning of asbestos, including economic support for regions that are particularly affected”*;

**The ICFTU Executive Board Calls on Governments and Social Partners To Support:**

- National bans and a global ban of asbestos and the promotion of alternatives, with support also for the activities of trade unions in each country to promote such bans;
- The improved protection of workers against asbestos exposure and as a first step, the ratification and implementation of ILO Convention No. 162, the Safety in the Use of Asbestos Convention, along with its accompanying Recommendation No. 172, as a minimum standard;
- The establishment of programmes to promote the trade of non-asbestos materials;
- Programmes which offset employment losses due to asbestos bans by developing positive employment transition plans, in concert with the ILO *Employment Policy Convention* No.122 and its accompanying Recommendation R No. 122, along with the ILO Resolution on the *Social and Economic Consequences of Preventative Action*;

- Effective job creation, retraining and compensation measures through financially supported programmes aimed, for example, at removing and eliminating asbestos, promoting alternatives and improving public sector functions for inspections, monitoring and regulation, etc;
- The institution of effective measures, along with the ratification of relevant ILO Conventions to care for asbestos victims and ensure decent compensation.

**The ICFTU Executive Board Calls on the International Labour Organisation to:**

- Adopt health-based policies in favour of the elimination of the use of all forms of asbestos and asbestos-containing materials, and to improve the ratification and implementation of ILO instruments that relate to such policies;
- Encourage Member States to ratify and implement the provisions of ILO Convention No. 162, its accompanying Recommendation No. 172 and Convention No. 122;
- Undertake a review to better understand the factors for non-ratification of the ILO Convention No. 162 and the lack of implementation of its accompanying Recommendation and to provide advice to the Governing Body for a course remedial actions;
- Resolve to promote a global ban on the production, import, export and use of asbestos;
- Assist Member States and regions in drawing up national policies and programmes for the management, control and elimination of asbestos from the working and community environment and for necessary employment transition measures;
- Work more closely within the United Nations family, and particularly with the WHO to raise awareness about the dangers of asbestos.

**The ICFTU Executive Board Calls on Workers' and Employers' Organisations to:**

- Initiate actions and programmes leading to a ban on future use of asbestos in all of its forms;
- Engage in actions, especially at the national level, to convince governments to adopt and promote asbestos bans and to develop Just Employment transition measures;
- Support and foster the development of negotiations between worker and employer organisations through collective bargaining or other means to ban the use of asbestos at the workplace and to promote employment transition;
- Establish health and safety programmes and effective regulation (including effective licensing, quality assessment and sufficient inspection by public authorities) focussed on the occupational groups most at risk, namely those required to work, in existing building and infrastructures, with asbestos in repair, maintenance, refurbishment, demolition, removal and ship-stripping;
- Ensure that those responsible for the manufacture and sale of asbestos do not avoid any legal responsibilities to the individuals who have been injured by the use of their products.