

Greeting

The Global Asbestos Congress 2004 (GAC 2004) in Tokyo is a landmark event which will, for the first time, provide a forum for discussion of asbestos issues in Asia, a region in which the use of asbestos is increasing.

At GAC 2004 we will examine how to prevent and minimize asbestos risks to human beings and the environment. Lessons from health initiatives to cope with emerging asbestos problems and effective means of tackling asbestos contamination of national infrastructures will also be discussed. Particular attention will be paid to the transfer of hazardous asbestos technology from developed to developing countries.

Interest in the three-day conference has been high. Five hundred delegates, including 120 guests from 36 countries had registered by the end of October. Delegates include asbestos victims, family members, workers, citizens, health care practitioners, occupational hygienists, academics, attorneys, civil servants, decision-makers and others.

I extend Congress participants my best wishes for a successful conference.

I am confident GAC2004 will be an important step forward for working together for the future!



Dr. Yoshiomi Temmyo

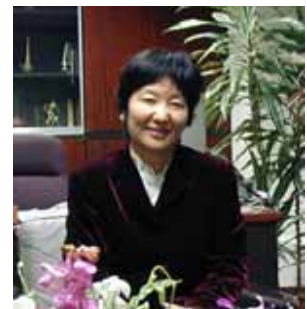
*Chair
GAC2004 Organizing Committee*

Main Theme: Together for the Future

Message

Millions of workers have been and continue to be exposed to hazardous asbestos dusts that cause serious illnesses and death. The ILO estimates that every year at least 100,000 workers die from asbestos-related cancers and many more are disabled or killed by asbestosis. Although its devastating effects on workers' health are well-known, about 2.5 million tons of asbestos are still manufactured every year. Past exposures in developed countries have caused a widespread epidemic of asbestos-related diseases that is impossible to control as they are incurable. The lessons learnt have not been properly applied but comprehension is growing today. Twenty eight countries have already banned asbestos, some are considering a ban and some have decided to phase it out. Despite huge human suffering of asbestos victims today, its use is increasing in countries in transition and in developing countries. Japan improved and implemented in October 2004, its regulation to ban certain materials / products contained more than one percent of asbestos taking into account their possible alternative product for asbestos materials.

Consequences might be far more tragic in these countries as the hazard controls are generally weaker there and exposure levels are higher. Thus, the most effective way to prevent asbestos-related illnesses is to eliminate exposure to asbestos with the ultimate goal to terminate its use worldwide.



Ms. Mitsuko Horiuchi

*Director
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