

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION  
ITUC OnLine

Canada: Major Union Victory with Asbestos Ban

Brussels, 16 December 2016 (ITUC OnLine): In a major victory for Canada's trade union movement, the Trudeau government today announced a ban on the import, export, manufacture and use of asbestos. While Canada banned asbestos in 2012, imports of asbestos-containing products have been increasing over the past five years, and some asbestos-containing products have also been exported from Canada.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said "we congratulate the Canadian trade union movement for this success, and the government's move will increase pressure on other countries which still have not implemented a ban. Tens of millions of people are exposed to asbestos, and all governments need to act as Canada now has to stem the appalling toll of death and disease."

Hassan Yussuff, President of the Canadian Labour Congress, said "“Canada’s unions, along with survivors and health advocates, have been working hard for this ban for decades. We know this will strengthen occupational health and safety protections for workers and make workplaces and public spaces safer for everyone”.

In campaigning for the ban, the Canadian Labour Congress has also called on the government to establish a national registry of people affected by asbestos-related diseases, the implementation of a comprehensive health response covering early detection and treatment as well as measures for workers working in situations where asbestos is present such as building renovations, and harmonised standards across the country for asbestos disposal. The CLC has also called for the government to support demands at the United Nations that chrysotile asbestos be added to the list of hazardous materials under the Rotterdam Convention <http://www.pic.int/>. The government has also signalled that it will "update its position " on the convention against asbestos.

To see more:

<http://canadianlabour.ca/news/news-archive/canada's-unions-celebrate-federal-asbestos-ban>  
<http://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/government-of-canada-to-ban-asbestos-606782976.html>

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