

Report about Workshop on Countermeasures against Asbestos in Asian Countries in FY 2008

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The Ministry of the Environment has held “Workshop on Countermeasures against Asbestos in Asian Countries” in Tokyo on January 20th and 21st, 2009.
This is the report about the summary of the results for the Workshop.

1. Date:

Tuesday, January 20th – Wednesday, January 21st, 2009.

2. Place:

Mita Kaigisho, etc.

3. Host:

The Ministry of the Environment

4. Participants:

Person in charge of practical business from Japan, China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Viet Nam, and Japanese academic experts, etc.

5. Purpose:

Main purposes of the workshop

- Providing information about countermeasures against Asbestos in Japan.
- Exchanging information about current situation of Asbestos issues and future efforts in Asian countries.

6. Subjects:

- Providing information from Japan about:
 - ◇ Approach to the Asbestos issue
 - ◇ Measuring method of Asbestos
 - ◇ Buildings demolition and Asbestos-containing waste treatment
- Providing information from Asian countries about:
 - ◇ Current situation of Asbestos issues
- Exchanging information about future efforts of Asbestos issue in Asian area

The summary of the results are as follows.

(1) Subject 1: Efforts against Asbestos issues in Japan

Japan has explained the following contents:

- ◇ Utilities and risks of Asbestos
- ◇ Outline of countermeasures against Asbestos issue by Japanese government mainly on Air Pollution Control Law
- ◇ The health impacts of Asbestos and its assessments by international organizations
- ◇ Countermeasure techniques such as Asbestos substitutions and Asbestos-removal technologies

(2) Subject 2: Monitoring Methods etc.

At Yokohama Environmental Research Institute (hereinafter referred to as "YERI"), participants have received an explanation about outline of countermeasures against Asbestos, and about outline of Asbestos monitoring in general environment.

In addition, YERI has demonstrated measuring atmospheric concentrations of Asbestos and analyzing Asbestos content found in building materials. Participants have experienced using microscope and counting Asbestos fibers for real.

(3) Subject 3: Measuring Methodologies of Asbestos

Japan has explained the following contents

- ◇ Measuring Asbestos content rate found in building materials
- ◇ Measuring Asbestos concentration in general environment
- ◇ Phase contrast microscopy
- ◇ X-ray diffractometry
- ◇ Various type of devices such as microscope that are used by measuring Asbestos.

(4) Subject 4: Asbestos-containing Waste Management

Japan has explained the following contents

- ◇ Definition of Asbestos-containing waste
- ◇ Treating methods of earth filling, diffluence and detoxifying
- ◇ Assignment of Asbestos-containing waste treatment

(5) Subject 5: Current situation of Asbestos issues in Asian countries

Participants have explained their countries' current situation.

◇ China:

They have explained that they are pushing forward enhancement of the regulation of the Asbestos even though China is one of major Asbestos-producing and Asbestos-using countries in the world.

✧ Indonesia:

They have explained that regulatory status of Asbestos from the viewpoint of environmental conservation and have explained about using status of chrysotile that is allowed to use in their country.

✧ Malaysia:

They have showed that the results of the survey on exposure situation of workers and have showed suggestions to ban the use of Asbestos which are discussing in their government.

✧ Viet Nam:

They have explained about regulatory status and using status of Asbestos. Also they have told about assignments and suggestions for the enhancement of countermeasures in the future and have told about expectation for global cooperation.

(6)Subject 6: Future Efforts against Asbestos issue in Asian countries

Participants have had a question-and-answer session with respect to status of Asbestos issue in their countries and the whole Asia region.

They have also had exchange of views about information/knowledge/the technique that it is thought it will be necessary in future in participants and about an ideal method of desired global cooperation.

About the information that it is thought it will be necessary in future is prevention technique of Asbestos exposure, development of and dissemination of Asbestos substitutions, approach to the Asbestos issue in Japan, chrysotile and the toxicity of Asbestos substitutions that are used in many countries.

About Asbestos substitutions, many participants have insisted that it is necessary to confirm not only the quality but also the cost and the security.

And also they have suggested that it is effective to utilize the internet for information sharing.

About an ideal method of global cooperation in future, they have suggested that it must be taken account into each countries situation, the participable forum for discussion which for not only government officials but also companies and workers from more countries must be held, the workshop about methods of analysis must be held, etc.

Participants agreed on an opinion that continuous holding was expected because the workshop was very significant.