

### \*\*\*Capa

Special Issue on the 12th National Meeting of Chrysotile Asbestos Workers  
October 18 to 21 • Recife – PE

Bulletin of the National Committee of Asbestos Workers

**(legenda da foto)** The Plant Supervisory Committees and Security Technicians from the Brazilian fiber cement segment and from the Cana Brava Mine participated in a joint meeting organized by CNTA, in Recife-PE, in October. The theme of the meeting was:  
“Employment with Health is achieved through an Organized Workplace.”

### **(Manchete)**

Workplace Organization (WO) is a spontaneous form of effective and active participation of workers in all the processes taking place in the work environment. This is a goal that several segments in the country aim to achieve. It is also a political-partisan cause adopted by the Workers Party and by workers unions worldwide.

### **Página 02**

#### THE SETTING

##### Greater Recife!

The XII CNTA Meeting was held in the Golden Beach Hotel, in the City of Jaboatão dos Guararapes, in the Greater Recife area. In addition to being a very enjoyable venue, which undoubtedly contributed to the pleasant atmosphere, this choice was a strategic one. The meeting also coincided with the first date set - October 20th - for the ruling on the Direct Unconstitutional Action, which the National Confederation of Industry Workers - CNTI filed at the Federal Supreme Court against the law that prohibits the use of chrysotile asbestos in the State of Pernambuco.

##### Massive turnout

Eighty-six workers from 16 plants in Brazil participated in the Recife Meeting. There were 59 members of internal supervisory committees, several union members and 14 safety technicians, including the only woman in the group, Ms. Mônica Ebes, from Eternit - Goiânia and Precon Anápolis. Twelve CNTA members and representatives from the Instituto Brasileiro do Crisotila were also present.

##### A Victory for the Workers

Participation in the XII Meeting of the Members of the Committees for the Controlled and Responsible Use of Chrysotile Asbestos in the mining company and in the Brazilian fiber cement plants was made possible thanks to clause 37 of the National Term of Agreement for the Controlled and Responsible Use of Chrysotile Asbestos, which states: “Members of the Supervisory Committee will have to attend yearly qualification courses coordinated by CNTA, comprising of at least 24 hours of classroom instruction. The company shall pay for any travel and hotel expense incurred by virtue of this clause. The companies shall also enroll work safety technicians in these courses”.

#### Legitimate representation

The National Committee of Asbestos Workers - CNTA, an organ of DEPACon, of the National Confederation of Industry Workers - CNTI, is represented by 24 workers unions and has the support of 15 Federations of Workers in the Civil Construction, representing 100% of the workers unions in the fiber cement and mining sectors, thus legitimating its representation of professionals who are active in this segment. CNTA works towards implementing controlled and responsible use of chrysotile asbestos in Brazil, in such a way as not to expose workers to the risk of contracting pulmonary diseases. Additionally, it serves as a spokesperson for the workers who state quite firmly: "We are not suicidal."

#### Special program

The program for the XII National Meeting of Asbestos Workers, held in October, in Recife-PE, was very broad in scope and offered the attendees the opportunity to take part in a communication course, and in eight conferences on current themes, focusing on up-to-date information on the use of chrysotile asbestos in the country from the social, economical, health and market standpoints. At the end of the meeting the workers came together for a comprehensive discussion on the terms of the National Agreement for the Controlled and Responsible Use of Chrysotile Asbestos. They also received information on the applicability of the agreement.

#### MASTHEAD

*CNTA Notícias* is a publication of the National Committee of Asbestos Workers for the purpose of disseminating information on the XII National Meeting of Chrysotile Asbestos Workers, held on October 18 to 21, in Recife - PE.

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## EDITORIAL

### **(LEGENDA)**

President of CNTA,  
Emílio Alves Ferreira Júnior

“Employment with Health is achieved through an Organized Workplace.”

Chrysotile asbestos workers in Brazil are exemplary in terms of union and concern for their health and for human life. A proof of that was the twelfth National Meeting of Chrysotile Asbestos Workers, which took place on October 18 to 21, in Recife-PE, with 86 attendees. The theme of this meeting was “Employment with Health is achieved through an Organized Workplace” and it couldn't have been more opportune because it reflects the reality that these workers experience on a daily basis, as well as the everyday efforts of the members of the Supervisory Committees on the Controlled and Responsible Use of Chrysotile Asbestos in Brazil.

The event surpassed every expectation that CNTA had, as the organizer, and the highlights of this meeting were the commitment and the interest shown by every participant. The participants were not all veterans, and for many, it was the first time they were attending this event, but the responsibility to learn and discuss the current issues was the motivating factor for all the workers there, without exception.

The talks in this year's meeting were excellent. Each new information that was passed on to the participants and each piece of knowledge that was reinforced meant an advance in terms of protecting the health of the plant or mine workers. Everyone who took part in this Meeting took home the responsibility of passing on the newly-acquired knowledge to their co-workers who stayed in the plants, and more than that: they would also take home the commitment of practicing controlled and responsible use of asbestos with a Zero Disease Index - ZDI. This is what will make a difference.

In order to contribute to this mission taken on by the workers, CNTA has published this bulletin which brings important data presented and discussed during the Meeting. Among the new knowledge that was passed on to the participants is the fact that Brazilian workers had not been victims of asbestos in the past, but rather, victims of the misuse of this mineral. Consequently, we were able to change the Brazilian reality and nowadays, the scenario for the use of asbestos in Brazil can hardly be compared to European disaster cases.

CNTA would like to take this opportunity to thank its partners who contributed to this event: Instituto Brasileiro do Crisotila, National Confederation of Industry Workers - CNTI and the Association of Workers, Former Workers and People Affected by Asbestos and Asbestos Products in the State of Pernambuco - A.T.E.P.A.D. This year, for the first time, the Meeting was able to count on the participation of safety technicians, and that will greatly contribute, as of March, to the joint efforts that will be made in the plants and in the mine.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone!

Emílio Alves Ferreira Júnior  
President of CNTA

### **Página 03**

#### Work and development behind chrysotile

Brazil is the third largest producer of chrysotile asbestos in the world. The country produced 252 thousand tons last year alone, but it also has an installed production capacity of up to 270 thousand tons/year. This was one of the figures presented during the Recife Meeting, by the Chief Executive Officer of the Instituto Brasileiro do Crisotila, also known as Crisotila Brasil, Ms. Marina Júlia de Aquino.

Within the current Brazilian scenario for this mineral, other figures also become important for those who wish to know about the productive chain for chrysotile. From the current total amount of fibers extracted, 35% are absorbed by the domestic market and 65% are exported to more than 20 countries, such as Thailand, India, Indonesia and Iran.

The largest part of the asbestos consumed in Brazil, more than 96%, is used by the fiber cement sector, for the manufacture of roofing materials and water tanks. The remaining 4% are absorbed by the friction, filtering, textile and cardboard industries.

It is estimated that the chain of production for chrysotile in Brazil is responsible for approximately 170 thousand direct and indirect jobs. Annual income for this sector is estimated to be R\$ 2 billion.

#### Links of the productive chain

Brazil is part of a group of 25 countries with economically feasible asbestos deposits. Exports of chrysotile asbestos production, around 65% of the total, generates more than US\$30 million a year in income.

The chrysotile asbestos found in Brazilian soil is abundant and of exceptional purity and quality. The only chrysotile mine in Brazil in operation is the Cana Brava mine, located in the county of Minaçu, in the State of Goiás. This mine is managed by SAMA Mineração de Amianto and generates around 539 direct jobs, as well as 500 indirect jobs. The mining chain for chrysotile generates 10,131 jobs, 2,500 of them in Minaçu and the surrounding cities. Since the city has 35 thousand inhabitants, that is a significant figure.

The fiber cement sector, on the other hand, employs around 10 thousand workers. On the whole, there are 17 plants distributed throughout 10 states in Brazil, 12 companies generating a significant production and 25,000 points of sale. This sector has an installed production capacity of approximately 2.5 million tons a year of fiber cement.

The traditional roof shingles and water tanks made of fiber cement with chrysotile asbestos are extremely important to Brazil. The low cost of this material enables the low-income population to have access to affordable housing.

#### Asbestos in the world

Chrysotile asbestos is found in underground deposits, in water tables, rivers and lakes. These mineral fibers can also be cast in the atmosphere as a result of adverse meteorological events as well as human activities, such as agriculture and road construction work, and it can be found in two thirds of the earth's surface. Everyday we breathe around 17 thousand asbestos fibers, regardless of where we are in the planet, and this fact has already been proved scientifically.

#### Growing consumption

Asbestos consumption has been growing steadily, as humankind learned about the qualities of this mineral. Until the end of last century, global consumption represented 250 thousand tons a year, less than 10% of the current demand. Between the two world wars, there was a peak in consumption and this number reached five million tons a year. It has currently stabilized at 2.1 million tons, with an annual growth of 5%. The largest consumers are the countries that formed the former USSR. They are responsible for more than 50% of the total, and are followed by Asian countries, consuming 20%; Europe, 8%, and Africa and the Middle East, that together, consume around 12%.

#### **(legenda do mapa mundi)** Global Production

Russia 44%

China 18%

Brazil 12%

Canada 10%

Kazakhstan 10%

Zimbabwe 05%

Did you know that...

more than 50% of the roofs in Brazil are made of fiber cement with chrysotile asbestos, representing a practical, inexpensive and efficient alternative for low-income housing, agroindustrial plants and other buildings?

The Agreement of Safety and Organization in the Workplace, a significant victory of the Union of Miners of Minaçu have transformed SAMA into a reference point for the worker.

Conference:

Chrysotile Asbestos.

A Successful Experience

Speaker: Adilson Conceição Santana

Vice-President of CNTA

Date: 10.21.05

SAMA Mineração de Amianto, the company which is responsible for the Cana Brava Mine, has become an exemplary company for its good economic results, quality, work safety and environmental responsibility. This was the scenario presented by Adilson Conceição Santana, president of the Sindicato dos Mineiros de Minaçu (Union of Minaçu Miners) in his talk during the

Recife meeting. In an effort to ensure high production rates but most importantly, a healthy environment for the workers SAMA, is constantly investing in new equipment, such as modern water tank trucks, sprinklers, dust collectors filters and a humidifying system for the residues. The company also controls the emission of chrysotile asbestos into the work environment and the surrounding area. Additionally, the company does recovery work on waste embankments and maintenance work on the talus, to prevent erosion. The Cana Brava Mine is the only one of its kind in operation in the country. Initial production, in 1967, was of 400 tons a year. In 1971, production reached 17 thousand tons; in 1979, 140 thousand tons were produced, until it reached current average figures, of approximately 250 thousand tons of chrysotile asbestos a year.

#### Chrysotile asbestos worldwide

Here is a list of the main countries that use chrysotile asbestos

Angola  
Argelia  
Bangladesh  
Bolivia  
Brazil  
Canada  
Kasakhstan  
China  
Colombia  
South Korea  
Cuba  
Egypt  
Ecuador  
Philippines  
India  
Indonesia  
Iran  
Israel  
Malaysia  
Morocco  
Mexico  
Mozambique  
Nigeria  
Pakistan  
Turkey  
Russia  
Sri Lanka  
Thailand  
Taiwan  
Tunisia  
Ukraine  
Venezuela  
Zimbabwe  
Israel  
Malaysia

Morocco  
Mexico  
Mozambique  
Nigeria  
Pakistan  
Turkey  
Russia  
Sri Lanka  
Thailand  
Taiwan  
Tunisia  
Ukraine  
Venezuela  
Zimbabwe

Countries where asbestos use is restricted

El Salvador  
United Arab Emirates  
United States of America  
Vietnam

Countries where the use of asbestos is prohibited

South Africa  
Saudi Arabia  
Argentina  
Australia  
Chile  
Gabon  
Honduras  
Iceland  
Norway  
New Zealand  
Switzerland  
European Union  
Uruguay

## **Página 04**

Chrysotile is dosage-dependent and does not offer any risk to the population

Exposure-related diseases are connected to occupational situations and not to public health. These diseases are related to the high fiber content in the air, associated to a long exposure time to the mineral. And why aren't there any risks for society? Asbestos is a natural fiber and is present in two thirds of the earth's surface. There is scientific proof that people, regardless of where they are in the world, breathe up to 17 thousand asbestos fibers a day, and that does not represent any health hazard. -Therefore, fiber concentrations in the air, capable of causing diseases, could only occur in places where these fibers are being continuously manipulated, that is, in mining companies or in

asbestos industries. As a result of the controlled use of fibers - below the well-known tolerance indexes - the workers are not under any risk of contracting diseases.

According to Dr. Ericson Bagatin, from the University of Campinas - UNICAMP, it is also important to highlight that the carcinogenic potential of asbestos is mineral-dependent. The biopersistence rate for amphibole asbestos is more than a year, and that makes this type of asbestos more carcinogenic. As such, it has been banned throughout the world. The biopersistence rate for chrysotile asbestos, the kind used in Brazil, as Dr. Bagatin emphasized, is of two days at the most, and this value is well below the value that the European Community considers as carcinogenic. According to an European study, only fibers with a biopersistence of more than 10 days can be considered carcinogenic.

Asbestos-related diseases generally become manifest 20 to 30 years after the person has been exposed to the fibers and they can be diagnosed by means of clinical examination and tests, such as X-ray imaging, high resolution chest tomography (HRCT) and spirometry.

#### More information

Uncontrolled use of asbestos can cause pulmonary diseases, such as asbestosis, lung cancers and mesoteliomas. According to the World Health Organization - WHO there is no evidence that asbestos can cause diseases when swallowed along with water. There are no records in the world of anyone having contracted asbestos-related diseases from the asbestos found in roofing tiles or water tanks.

#### Conference:

Asbestos Related Diseases

Speaker: Prof. Ericson Bagatin, Ph.D.

UNICAMP

Date: 10.20.05

#### Brazilian epidemiological study evaluates 10 thousand workers

The Brazilian physician Ericson Bagatin, a professor at UNICAMP, coordinated the first epidemiological study on occupational diseases caused by asbestos. The project analyzed 4,220 miners who had worked in close contact with asbestos fibers from 1930 to 1996. During the studies it was found that the mines in Poçoões, Bahia, and Cana Brava, in Minaçu, have the records for 10 thousand workers. According to Bagatin, diseases caused by dust, as is the case with asbestosis, are progressive, irreversible and can not be treated. Therefore, as soon as the disease is diagnosed, those who have been affected should be removed from the site where exposure had taken place. For this reason, it is of fundamental importance that asbestos plant and mine workers should have specific and regular check ups. The researcher concluded that there is no proof that chrysotile asbestos is as harmful as the asbestos used in Europe and in other regions of the world. This research was financed by the Fundo de Amparo à Pesquisa of the State of São Paulo, FAPESP, one of the largest agencies for fostering research in Brazil, both in terms of financial resources and integrity.

#### What it is Biopersistence

The term "biopersistence" means the time it takes the body to absorb or expel any type of foreign substance. In the case of asbestos, biopersistence means the time in which the inhaled mineral

fibers will stay in the lungs. And it is exactly this time in which the fibers remain in the lung that gives this mineral its carcinogenic potential.

#### Workers are confident

Alcides Gomes, 46 years, an electrician at Isdralit, in Sapucaia do Sul - RS, confirms the importance of worker participation in the control measures for the use of asbestos. "The epidemiological research carried out by Dr. Ericson Bagatin has concluded that the controlled use of this mineral actually prevents workers from becoming ill", he pointed out. The workers now have reliable data and can believe in the efficacy of the controlled use, according to this electrician.

**(legenda da foto)** Alcides Gomes, electrician at Isdralit

#### Clean air

Control measures for airborne chrysotile asbestos fibers adopted by the mining company and by the Brazilian industries:

#### Individual protection and training programs

Workers are made aware of the risks inherent to the operation and the control measures that should be taken. The worker learns how to use adequate protection equipment, as needed, such as a respiratory protective equipment (RPE) or dust masks and uniforms, which should be washed in the company.

#### Powder Removal

A complex set of measures taken to control dust where it is generated. It involves cowls, piping, process damping, ventilators and filters.

#### Storage and distribution

Chrysotile asbestos is packaged at the mining site in resistant plastic bags. The bags are placed on pallets and then covered with shrink-wrapped plastic for further protection. This procedure makes it easier for lift trucks and pallet trucks to handle the packages. Most companies and all the fiber cement industries incorporate the plastic bags used to package asbestos to their products as raw material.

#### Cleaning industrial facilities

A wet or vacuum process must be used to clean structures and machinery and the cleaning process includes portable vacuum cleaners or flexible hoses, connected to the central exhaust system. Industrial surfaces are cleaned by means of mechanical sweepers, in order to prevent dust from being generated. A customized cleaning program, catering to the needs of each plant and plant sector will serve as the guide for the type of equipment that should be used, the ideal interval between scheduled cleanings, and who should be responsible for the operation.

#### Waste recycling mill in chrysotile asbestos fiber cement plants

All the residues return to the productive process, in the so-called "zero residue cycle". This way, residues are recovered and totally recycled.

#### Moulding of small parts (roof ridges) of fiber cement with chrysotile asbestos

Wet technique is used in this operation. Cutting done over trays prevents the floor from becoming dirty.

Sealed booth for cutting chrysotile asbestos shingles

In fiber cement plants all the sawing operations are performed in a sealed environment equipped with an exhaust or wet system. This way the saw operator is not exposed to the dust. Usage guidelines are posted near the panel, in a visible place.

## **Página 05**

Promoting health is also the worker's responsibility

Inspecting work conditions in order to ensure that they are consistent with the preservation of the worker's health and physical and mental integrity is incumbent upon health authorities and agencies. The environment and work processes must also be inspected. This was one of the facts given to the asbestos workers, by Prof. Susiane de Pontes Bandeira Lopes, Ph.D., Head of the Work Environment and Toxicology Surveillance Units of the Department of Health of the State of Pernambuco. However, government inspection is only part of the process. "Workers have a primordial role in promoting health in the work environment", emphasized Professor Lopes.

Workers must be aware of their work environment, follow health and safety regulations and wear adequate protection equipment for the job they have to perform. Companies should provide a safe and healthy work environment and take adequate measures to prevent accidents and health hazards.

The Brazilian Example

Since the 80s the chrysotile asbestos chain of production has adopted a system for the controlled and responsible use of asbestos. This environment-friendly system has proved that it ensures that the worker will remain healthy through processes that involve the manipulation of the mineral using wet technology, since no dust is generated. This system also provides for sealed compartments, thus ensuring that no mineral fibers are released into the work environment.

The country has accumulated extremely important experiences in the area of occupational health. The Tripartite Agreement, signed by government representatives, workers representatives and mining and fiber cement plant owners has resulted in strict legislation, advanced joint agreements, high-technology and highly efficient control measures.

Constitutional law

Aiming at ensuring working conditions which will preserve the workers' health, as well as their physical and mental integrity, the federal and state governments have developed the Workers' Health Program. This Program is characterized by a set of activities whose objective is to promote and protect the workers' health. It also aims to recover and rehabilitate workers who have been submitted to health risks and hazards derived from their working conditions.

The implementation of this program is guaranteed by the Federal Constitution, which establishes that it is the responsibility of the Brazilian Health System (SUS) to carry out health inspection and epidemiological actions and provide for the protection of the worker's health. It is also responsible for effecting actions aimed at protecting the environment, including the work environment.

State Constitutions determine that these actions must include inspection, prevention and service providing, with the aim to ensure measures that will eliminate the risk of accidents and

occupational diseases. Additionally, Law No. 8,080/90 stipulates that the Brazilian Health System has the added responsibility to provide full therapeutic assistance, including pharmacological support.

Conference:

Workers' Health Program

Speaker: Prof. Susiane de Pontes Bandeira Lopes, Ph.D.

Head of the Surveillance Unit of Work Environments and Toxicology of the Department of Health of the State of Pernambuco

Date: 10.20.05

What is controlled use of chrysotile asbestos?

The most complete concept of "Controlled Use" applied in Brazil refers to the use of chrysotile asbestos. It is a system for using natural fibers of this mineral without affecting the workers health or the environment, and involves:

Industrial technology in the case of mineral extraction, production and application of materials that use chrysotile asbestos fibers as raw material,

Increasing workers' awareness through information

Medical control

Continuous inspection and supervisory actions carried out by the company, by the worker and the government and above all, by the Organization of the Work Place

Agreements signed by workers and employers from the Mine and the industries using chrysotile asbestos as raw material.

Control is a Reality

Instituto Brasileiro do Crisotila has received official information from SAMA and from the 16 member plants and companies to the effect that there have been no records of asbestos-related diseases among the employees hired after a program for dust removal was implemented at the end of the 1980s. Medical tests and reports for every worker still employed in the company are available upon request to any party who may wish to confirm that the company is committed to these control measures and with the worker's health.

## **Página 06**

Chrysotile is a natural fiber that is hard to replace

Chrysotile asbestos has a unique set of properties, which distinguishes it from other substances. Several other substances would be necessary to replace it, and that has hardly represented an advantage in terms of the final product.

Moreover, some of the alternative products that have already been developed are not economically feasible, since their final cost is comparatively higher, according to geologist Cláudio Scliar.

Another factor that has to be taken into consideration is the technical difficulty in terms of the performance of any possible replacement, especially with regards to applications in the chlorine-sodium industry, brakes for heavy-duty vehicles (trucks and trains), fiber cement roofing, leak-containment and insulation systems for the air and space industry. To date, no other product has proved to be comparable to chrysotile in terms of efficiency and safety, claims Mr. Scliar.

According to Cláudio Scliar, there is a need for an educational campaign to clarify that diseases caused by asbestos are directly related to the presence of high concentrations of airborne fibers in the work environment for a long period of time, and these conditions have been controlled throughout the country since the 1980s, as a result of the dust removal policies that have been adopted.

Conference:

The Asbestos Industry and the Replacement War

Speaker: Geologist Cláudio Scliar

Date: 10.20.05

Biopersistent respirable fibers must also be controlled

The World Health Organization - WHO, the International Labour Organization - ILO and the United Nations Organization - UNO have published, jointly the Environmental Health Criteria (EHC) 151, which makes the following recommendations: "All fibres that are respirable and biopersistent must undergo testing for toxicity and carcinogenicity. Exposures to these fibres should be controlled to the same degree as that required for asbestos".

In Brazil, there is no research on the effect of the use of the alternative fibers and no policy that would establish if these fibers are being used in a controlled way by the companies in this segment. Since the use of alternative fibers is more recent (10 to 20 years), we will need more time (30 to 50 years) to learn about their effect on human health.

On the other hand, chrysotile asbestos has been extensively studied for more than 100 years. Currently, the limits of the effect of this mineral under different conditions are already well known. This knowledge allows for their controlled use and, consequently, ensures that health is preserved.

The Replacement war

For those who advocate replacements,

the responsibility for occupational diseases falls upon chrysotile, as a raw material. They do not take into consideration the fact that insufficient knowledge and flawed plant safety policies have a role.

They champion the sale of replacement products whose patents are held by a handful of companies. They advocate the replacement of a raw material that has a solid set of legislation and updated technical knowledge in favor of materials that, in some cases, 'can cause a negative impact to the health'.

Those who defend the use of chrysotile

consider the system for controlled use an absolute necessity throughout the chain of production.

They champion the use of this material which has been known for a long time and has been extensively studied for the last 100 years.

For chrysotile advocates, the only acceptable criterion is proof that a given material is safe and will be used in a responsible manner.

#### Environmental concern

The fibers used in Brazil as a replacement raw material for chrysotile asbestos, such as fiber cement, are not biodegradable and use a great deal of cellulose. The result is a significant environmental impact, caused by the consequent deforestation process. From the point of view of resistance, the result of different tests have shown that replacement materials are less efficient and are 50% less durable, relative to products containing chrysotile asbestos. Therefore, in terms of environmental preservation, creating landfill sites for twice as much solid residue than we have today would be irresponsible.

On the other hand, actions aimed at controlling exposure, conservation of natural reserves and recovery of the Cana Brava mine waste embankments, as well as the cycle of "zero residue or total recycling" in the fiber cement industry using chrysotile asbestos are examples that Brazil counts on technologically capable companies that are able to preserve nature and its harmony. SAMA Mineração de Amianto, the company responsible for the mineral extraction at the Cana Brava Mine, in the city of Minaçu GO, is the only chrysotile asbestos mining company in the world that has been awarded the ISO 14001 - Environmental Management certification.

Since it is a natural fiber, chrysotile asbestos and fiber-cement products that contain asbestos can be safely disposed of and will not harm the environment. In the European Community, a decision from the Council deals with residues containing this mineral, as follows:

Council Directive 99/31/CE 2.33

Asbestos Residues:

“Construction materials containing asbestos, and other asbestos-base residues, can be disposed of, without prior inspection, in landfill areas for non-hazardous residues, as stipulated in article six, of the directive for landfill sites”.

#### **Página 07**

The National Agreement for Chrysotile Asbestos is an example to the world

The National Agreement for the Controlled and Responsible Use of Chrysotile Asbestos that has been in effect in Brazil for 16 years is seen by the productive sector as an empowerment of the workers as the parties in charge and responsible for supervising the use of this mineral in their respective plants, in such a way that it does not represent a health hazard to the workers. On June 21<sup>st</sup> of this year, four Federations, 10 Workers Unions and four Trade Unions signed the Agreement with the National Confederation of Industry Workers - CNTI, the National Committee of Asbestos Workers - CNTA, the National Confederation of Industries - CNI, Instituto Brasileiro do Crisotila and 12 member companies. The Agreement will be effective for two years and was registered and filed at the Ministry of Labor, with full acknowledgement of its content and scope. The Agreement has 62 specific clauses which define the employee-employer relationship, collective protective measures, individual protection equipment, in addition to environmental, occupational evaluations,

medical check up and follow up, and industrial residues. The Agreement also states the responsibilities of the Supervisory Committee on the Controlled and Responsible Use of Chrysotile Asbestos and establishes duties and penalties.

Among its ground breaking terms, clause 24 ensures that all the workers that perform or have performed tasks connected to occupational exposure to asbestos, will undergo specific and periodical medical tests, as well as another medical test when he/she leaves the company. In addition to the clinical examination, these exams will necessarily include chest teleradiography, and pulmonary function tests.

The technique used in the chest teleradiographs should comply with the standard established by the International Labour Organization), as specified in the International Classification of Radiographs of Pneumoconiosis (ILO - Review 2000). For pulmonary function tests, every company should have spirometry equipment in good working condition which can be used to test forced vital capacity (FVC) and forced expiratory volume in one second (FRV1). High resolution computerized tomography will be requested in every case in which there is a need to clarify any unclear diagnosis.

Clause 58 recognizes the legitimacy of the National Committee of Asbestos Workers to initiate class suits in Labor Courts and in General Courts, actions on behalf of the workers, should any of the clauses of the Agreement are violated, and also to file petitions in the Labor Court system, on behalf of the workers, requesting compliance orders regarding any provision of the Agreement.

#### PAC: Seeking certification

The Partnership Program for the Controlled Use of Asbestos - PAC started to be implemented by Instituto Brasileiro do Crisotila, in March of this year. It was thought and created with the aim to organize a system for managing the controlled use of chrysotile asbestos by systematizing and expanding the process that is already being applied, since the 1980s, in several sectors of the chain of production for this mineral. The basis of this Program is a management manual where all the procedures that must be followed by the 16 units of the participating companies are stipulated.

Crisotila Brasil ended the first stage of the audits in December, 2005, after visiting all the companies that participate in this program. The next step, after the end of this stage, will be to implement the new management system on the controlled use of chrysotile asbestos and the improvements pointed out in the audit reports. The system counted on the participation of the plant workers who were represented by an internal team of auditors.

#### Workers receive orientation on the Agreement during the Meeting

The national Agreement for the Controlled and Responsible Use of Chrysotile Asbestos is not merely a document containing rules and procedures that should be followed by workers and employers involved in the productive chain of chrysotile asbestos. Rather, it is an effective instrument that ensures a healthy workplace for thousands of workers in Brazil, according to Airton José Canevari, a moulder at Decorlit Ind. & Com Ltda, of Leme-SP. "I have been working with fiber cement for 43 years and I am in excellent health. I am the living proof that we, the workers, are also responsible for our own health", warns Airton. According to this moulder, his health comes first, and he makes sure he has annual check ups. For the moulder, who has always performed this job in more than one fiber cement plant in Brazil, and who is currently a member of the Supervisory Committee at Decorlit, the guidance that was provided for the applicability of the

National Agreement for Chrysotile Asbestos, during the XII Meeting of Workers of Recife was very important for the veterans and for the new members of the plant committees. This initiative certainly served to raise their awareness in terms of their responsibilities.

**(legenda da foto)** Airton José Canevari, moulder at Decorlit

Portuguese Study compares asbestos with PVA

In May of 2004, at the request of Cimianto - Sociedade Técnica de Hidráulica S.A., the Instituto Nacional de Engenharia e Tecnologia Industrial - INETI (National Engineering and Industrial Technology Institute), from Portugal, carried out a study with the aim to provide concrete information for the legislation on the use of chrysotile asbestos fibers.

The study evaluated the set of processes included in the mineral life cycle, from the production of the raw material until the resale of the final material and takes into consideration environmental impacts and costs, as regulated by the ISO 14040 norms - Eco-efficiency. Two types of plates produced by Cimianto were analyzed: AT fiber cement, with chrysotile asbestos, and NT fiber cement, with PVA fibers. The results from the survey showed that the AT plates containing chrysotile asbestos are economically efficient and ecologically friendly.

According to the study, energy consumption for the NT plate with PVC fibers is 13 times higher than for the AT; and energy consumption in the pre-production phase for NT plates is more than 100 times higher than that consumed during the production phase.

Additionally, an analysis has also shown that for a service life of 50 years, NT plates containing PVA fibers cause 35% more environmental impact during the component manufacture and during the pre-production phase, relative to the AT plate, containing chrysotile asbestos. In a 30-year service life for both, this figure goes up to 90%.

Knowing more about Crisotila Brasil

Founded on October 15, 2002, the Instituto Brasileiro do Crisotila, or Crisotila Brasil, is an Organização da Sociedade Civil de Interesse Público - OSCIP, (Organization of the Public Interest Civil Society), Headquartered in Goiânia-GO. Crisotila Brazil counts on the support of mining companies, the fiber cement sector, workers unions in addition to federal, state and municipal governmental agencies. It is, therefore, a tripartite organization each party is equally empowered to make decisions. Crisotila Brasil signed, along with CNTA, the National Agreement for Chrysotile Asbestos. Their representatives take part in the inspection visits to fiber cement plants. They have the right to evaluate the work environment, when necessary, or challenge the results of evaluations previously performed.

[Instituto Brasileiro do Crisotila has workers at the base of its actions.](#)

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Folha de Pernambuco is questioned

On October 20th, the daily newspaper Folha de Pernambuco, in its weekly Real Estate & Construction page, published a vexing piece, not only because of its factual errors, but also because

it advocated terror: a cartoon represented a skeleton dressed as a worker carrying an asbestos bag on its back.

This piece, published soon after the same newspaper had already published a story on the Workers Meeting, reflects to degree of misinformation of special editor Dalton Flores. And it gets worse: it serves to confirm that as a whole, journalists think that imposing a ban on asbestos is the solution to prevent work-related diseases. After a difficult meeting between the public relations person for Crisotila Brasil, who followed the event, with the director of the newspaper Folha de Pernambuco, Henrique Barbosa, the editor of the Real Estate & Construction page, Dalton Flores, went to the hotel where the CNTA Meeting was being held to hear what the workers had to say. Once there, the editor met with CNTA President, Emílio and with other Committee members.

After presenting his formal apology for the factual errors that the story carried, editor Dalton justified himself by saying that he had received those data one year previously. At the end of the meeting, editor Dalton guaranteed that on Thursday, October 27th, his page would carry a full story on the controlled use of chrysotile asbestos. The story was published with the title: “Workers discuss asbestos” and came with a correlated story: “Health is a result of prevention”.

### **(legenda arte das matérias)**

Stories published in the newspaper Folha de Pernambuco

#### Positive evaluation

The XII Meeting in Recife helped to clarify doubts the workers had on the different aspects of the use of chrysotile asbestos in Brazil. According to Edmo Casagrande, 44 years, a safety technician at Imbralit, of Criciúma SC, in addition to clarifying many obscure points, the Meeting was an opportune moment to exchange information on experiences from other plants. Edmo suggests that CNTA should organize an opportunity for an exchange among safety technicians, who are also responsible for the health of workers in the chrysotile asbestos segment. Workers from Santa Catarina rated the Meeting in a positive manner. “The Plant Committee and I, after participating in the Recife Meeting, will present a joint detailed report on the program content for the safety engineer at Imbralit”, he said.

For Tiago Cunha, CNTA regional director, the exchange of ideas and information that took place during the Meeting, helped to further qualify the committees that participated in the Meeting. “The high level of the talks contributed for a better absorption of the information. Additionally, this year, the participation of safety technicians represented a great step forward, because in practice, these professionals carry out the same work performed by the Plant Committee: ensure that workers will remain healthy”, explains Tiago.

#### A book signing event with the author of a book on asbestos

After giving a talk on “The Asbestos Industry and the Replacement War”, geologist and writer Scliar presented to the workers three books he wrote: “Amianto: Mineral Mágico ou Maldito?”, “Mineração Base Material da Aventura Humana” and “Três Dias Descobrimo a Terra e o Amor”.

The book, “Amianto: Mineral Mágico ou Maldito?”, endeavors to be a comprehensive study of the extraction and processing stages of asbestos in Brazil, describes its physical and chemical properties, possible effects on the workers health and its economic importance.

The book also deals with regulatory instruments for asbestos mining in Brazil, the organization of both employers and workers active in this sector, the attempts to replace this mineral, and policies geared towards the controlled and responsible use of chrysotile.

#### Special Guests

In addition to the Meeting participants, professors Dorival de Carvalho Pinto, José Lins Rolim Francisco and Elvira Rolim, from the Federal University of Pernambuco, also came to the book signing event; as did the Regional Superintendent of the Company for the Research of Mineral Resources of Recife, José Wilson de Castro Temóteo, and the secretary of the Company, José Pessoa Veiga Jr. The event was also honored by the presence of representatives from the Committee for the Preservation of the Environment, Virgínia Menezes, a representative of FECOMERCIO-PE, Waldomiro Costa and the secretary of the Association of Workers, Former Workers and People Affected by Asbestos and Asbestos Products in the State of Pernambuco - A.T.E.P.A.D., Albertina Farias.

#### Who is Cláudio Scliar?

Cláudio Scliar is a geologist, who graduated in 1972 from the University of Rio de Janeiro. He worked in Brazil and abroad, prospecting for oil and other mineral goods.

In 1994 he published the book “Geopolítica das minas do Brasil”, (Geopolitics of Brazilian Mines) whose second edition was published in 1996. He earned his doctoral degree from the Department of Administration and Mineral Resources Policy, of the Institute of Geosciences of the State University of Campinas / UNICAMP. He is currently the Secretary for Geology, Mining and Mineral Processing of the Ministry of Mines and Energy.

#### A New Meeting

After the XII Meeting of Asbestos Workers, in Recife, and after the positive balance of activities, both the workers and CNTA members have already begun to plan for the next Meeting. According to the CNTA-RJ regional director, Tiago Cunha, as of December, the program for the 2006 Meeting will begin to be drafted, along with an annual calendar for plant inspection, aimed at ensuring that the Agreement for the Controlled use of Chrysotile Asbestos will be upheld.

**(legenda foto)** Tiago Cunha, CNTA Director – RJ