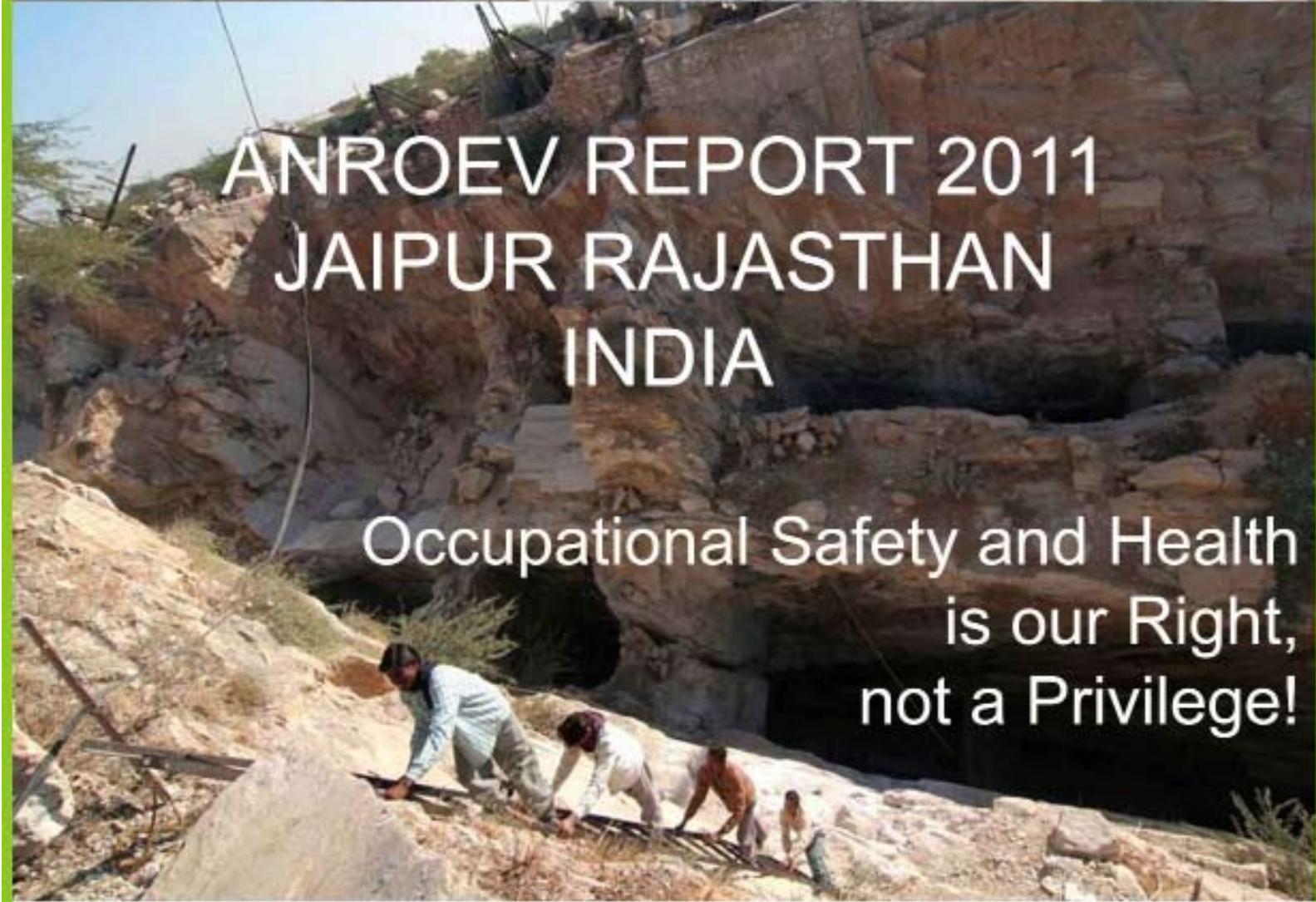




ANROEV REPORT 2011 JAIPUR RAJASTHAN INDIA

Occupational Safety and Health
is our Right,
not a Privilege!



This report of the ANROEV Conference comes in two parts. The first part deals on the issues that emerged from the discussions spanning over two-days. The second part is on the thematic / technical sessions. It deals with the proceedings of individual workshops and demonstrates the solidarity of the network in its dealing with the issues by the different working groups during the course of these individual workshops.

These six themes covered an array of issues. Specifically, the themes were as follows:

1. *Electronics Workshop - Strategy planning and strengthening of work in Asia*
2. *Organising for prevention - Silicosis - Legal and Medical Aspects for compensation*
3. *Social Media Advocacy*
4. *Victims and Community Organizing*
5. *Asbestos*
6. *Mining - Occupational and Environmental Effects of the industry*

A press conference was organised during the lunch break on the first day of the conference. It was attended by journalists from the local and national media. This covered the print and the electronic media. There was coverage of ANROEV 2011 in the media.

The opening Session of the workshop began with a brief welcome for the participants by **Omana George of Asia Monitor Resource Centre (AMRC), Hong Kong**. The conference began with a welcome/solidarity dinner the evening before where delegates were welcomed warmly to India by the host organizations.

A condolence observation for the victims of the Japan Earthquake and Tsunami with a slide show of photographs was led by **Sugio Furuya, on behalf of JOSHRC, Japan**. He also spoke on the nuclear disaster following the Japanese Tsunami and earthquake; and, on the struggle of the developments in respect of the victims of asbestos exposure in Japan.

The Tsunami: Sugio said that while 16,000 people died, 6,000 were injured and 4,000 are still missing as a result of the tsunami that occurred at noon and many were at work, there is no word on the waste material and how much of the waste included harmful substances, such as asbestos. He said that 3,000 workers are still working at the plants and are exposed to radiations.

Crisis at the Fukushima: The predicament from the situation at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant has not been resolved, he said, highlight-

ing the chronic effects of radiation exposure. The plant has been workplace to some 20,000 people so far and even now, 3,000 people are working there, exposed, as they are to radiation. 10 cases of leukaemia have been reported so far (not including acute radiation injury cases) of nuclear plant workers (these are recognized as occupational ailments/diseases). Of these, two are cases of malignant lymphoma and another two of multiple myeloma - colleagues at JOSHRC are supporting at-least three of these cases. He also said that the Ministry of Labour has estimated that 5000 cases would be eligible for workers compensation insurance benefits - until August 15th, compensation has been awarded to 1535 cases. Saying so, he thanked all concerned for keeping a watch on the situation at the Fukushima nuclear power plant.

Asbestos workers: Not very dissimilar to the fate of the workers at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant is the fate of the asbestos workers, who have suffered from asbestos-related ailments/ diseases following their retirement. JOSHRC has supported retired former asbestos workers to organize themselves into trade unions and to negotiate with their former employers regarding the state of their health and its consequences. Some companies responded to negotiations and paid compensation while others, including the Honda automobile company, rejected the claims.

A positive note: The Japanese Supreme Court has finally affirmed the right to collective bargaining of retired workers - this is a great victory for asbestos workers, as well as other workers in similar situations.

This account by Sugio Furuya was followed by two victims of occupational health. These were two strong-willed women, showing resolute courage to make a difference to the small world they worked in, in a way that their work resounded across social and political barriers, the world over. The first was Raju Devi, a mine worker from Rajasthan (India) who was living with silicosis. The second was of Yuying Chen, convenor of the Chinese group of ANROEV.

Besides the grit displayed by both women, what was striking was their ability to remain focussed on their issues while not losing sight of the larger picture - neither was highly educated nor trained. Both were ordinary workers who have demonstrated the ability of ordinary people becoming leaders when faced by extraordinary situations.

Below is an account of what they said (translated from their own respective languages).

Raju Devi, a motivator for silicosis-affected people (speaking on behalf of other silicosis victims from the mines of Rajasthan):



About myself: I am from Jodhpur. My husband worked in a sand-stone mine. There he contracted silicosis of which he died. This meant financial hardships for the family. To bring up the children, I went to work in the same mines, with my three-month old son, Krishan. There, I was breaking sandstone (into concrete stone). After a year, I too contracted silicosis.

My learning: A survey by National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) found 22 widows whose husbands had died of silicosis. It also pointed out 52 people, with about four women, who were living with silicosis.

At first a petition was made to the District Collector of Jodhpur in which he was told that these people deserved compensation as per court order (following a NHRC writ in the Indian Supreme Court wherein the governments of the states of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat were ordered to provide a compensation of Rs 100,000 in cash and another Rs 200,000 in the shape of a Bank Fixed Deposit). It was expected that the same yardstick be applied for Rajasthan.

Not unexpectedly, there was dilly-dallying.

Our protest: A one-day fast-cum-demonstration (or dharna, as it is called in Hindi) with 50 women resulted in an assurance of some benefits from the District Collector. But there was no result.

So, people living with silicosis were organised for a second time. This was followed by an eight-day-long fast in front of the District Collector's office, coinciding with a visit by the Chief Minister to the district. A 10-women representation met the Chief Minister and updated him on the order from the NHRC

following which, the Chief Minister announced a Rs 100,000 compensation right away. Of 22 women, 21 women got compensation - one case was caught in official glitches which is yet to be resolved. Then, another fast followed with 250 men and women. The Chief Minister then provided an additional compensation of Rs 200,000 Bank Fixed Deposit.

Leadership: An eight-member team (two women and six men) called Silicosis Sangharsh Samiti was formed to pursue this work. I was made its leader. This team worked on creating awareness around silicosis. 958 affected people were reached by this campaign - their details were sourced from the KN Chest hospital in Jodhpur. Of these, almost 600 have died so far. For the rest, a post-card campaign was launched for finding out more of those who were affected by silicosis.

The struggle continues: I continue this work and have done a public hearing in Bhilwara and am moving to work in other nearby districts of Rajasthan.

Yuying Chen, Convenor of the Chinese group of ANROEV. As a coordinator, she communicates between all the members and the different organisations (15 of these organisations) in China. She also organises trainings for the members. Below is her account:

Fifty-seven workers were injured: Zhili toy factory fire in 1993. I was a factory worker and was among the injured. This provoked for the first time a discussion on the issue of labour rights in China. The labour laws were promulgated only after this incident and the advocacy that followed it.

For the right of the workers: I have been fighting

for compensation for the workers and support for school fees for their children. At that time there were no labour laws and so, it was not a legal issue at that time. Pressure from media, workers and overseas groups led to government intervention. It also resulted in an announcement of a compensation of Yuan 20,000 for deaths and from several thousand to 80,000 Yuan for injuries (depending on how disability is rated).

Rehabilitation: As a survivor of the fire at my workplace, I was sent after this fire to a centre for the handicapped.

I believe that: I saw in an exhibition in the city yesterday. I am impressed with how asbestos victims have been organised and also the support from the museum by way of its support for this exhibition. I am also impressed on how issues of labour laws and occupational hazards are integrated into other aspects of life in India. Involvement of media and university students is interesting. The care about social issues was something to learn too.

These personal accounts were followed by welcome addresses by ANROEV representatives and the organisers of the conference in Jaipur, India.

It began with **Sanjiv Pandita**, welcoming all on behalf of AMRC followed by **Rana Sengupta of MLPC** and **R Sreedhar** who extended the delegates a welcome to India on behalf of OEHNI.

Rana Sengupta (MLPC): He regretted the difficulties in taking the participants to a nearby field area in Makrana, a place famous for its marble. While the Taj was made from marble from Makrana, the place also shows the worst that mining can do to workers. This is why MLPC wanted to welcome delegates at Makrana. He said the ANROEV annual conference will do a lot of good to the mining sector in Rajasthan. Rana's address was supported by a video documentary that is still in the making - to provide a mirror to see where we are from and from where we begin for a culture of working standards. The video highlighted that:

- Injury and death are a daily occurrence;
- It provided a narrative of a mine worker's widow;
- Illustrated the issue of bonded labour (a worker gets paid US\$ 2 for a day's work);
- The state of children with no care and a bleak future; and,
- The issue of mine labour protection in Rajasthan.

The last of the welcome addresses was of **R Sreedhar of OEHNI** who saw this as an opportunity for more information and to collectively find ways for-

ward - particularly in view of transition from occupational health to the wider spectrum of environmental health.

Sreedhar's address stressed on the need for understanding the human resource/ worker management techniques employed by industry to avoid any accountability towards either, safety at the workplace or the occupational hazards that could make managements liable for compensation.

He explained how Indian companies began contracting workers in face of stringent labour laws so that workers were not their employees and also so that they could set the terms for getting workers sans liabilities. In the face of this, the contract labour was initially effective, until industry began employing people on piece rate basis - so, technically, he was an entity to pick up a quantity of marble or whatever.

He stressed on the importance of the developments in India because this was influencing management-worker relationships in neighbouring countries in South Asia. In this respect, he said, this conference in India enables people working in India get exposure to what is happening elsewhere in the globe.

The next session was an update from the **ANROEV Secretariat by Noel Colina of IOHSAD** along with a report on the overall situation in Asia on OSH. The session provided an update on activities of the network. He mentioned of the two highlights of the previous ANROEV conference: the Bandung Declaration and the official name change of the ANROEV network to highlight the important work on environmental issues that the network was working on. There was also an update from Osaka on the case of 32 asbestos victims who first won their case in court but lost out on appeal in a higher court later. Apo Leong moderated the session. This was based on community reports and presentations from two countries - India and China. A short discussion on the presentations followed.

Sanjiv Pandita (AMRC) made a presentation that dealt with a brief overview of an ambitious project to collect data on OSH.

Through the presentation, Sanjiv stressed that ANROEV encompassed larger issues of occupational health and environmental victims. He said that while everyone knows that the situation in Asia is bad - what is more difficult is that the governments in Asia are not even acknowledging the problem. The network is facing the problems every day and people know the situation on the ground.

Sanjiv referred to the Bandung Declaration on occupational safety and environmental health passed at last year's meeting in Bandung. This, he said, be-

came the soul of the movement. It related to the Bandung Declaration for dignity for the citizens of the commonwealth group of nations - but the governments have forgotten it. Therefore, the spirit of the Bandung declaration remains with us, he said.

On a broader plane, Sanjiv pointed out that there was a dearth of credible data on the casualties and deaths at the workplace. Underlining the importance of a proper database, he said that so far the database, especially from the WHO, was far removed from the source of information that it could have been. This, according to him, was resulting in a lack of the basic information to conduct advocacy and policy interventions.

To explain this, he said ILO figures from 2011. He said that in the past many years, the figure of 2.34 million people dying due to occupational health and hazards has not changed. It is released quietly and does not appear in the media or anywhere. At the ground level, there is an absence of data on the no of people dying or getting sick.

For these reasons, he reiterated that, it was therefore important to advocate for credible information, and gather proper evidences, to document the realities of the hazards and vulnerabilities faced by workers at their workplace across Asia.

Noel then spoke on the situation in the Phillipines. Taking a cue from where Sanjiv left, he said that official data submitted to ILO was in 2007 and before that, in 2003, and 2001

For the rest of the years, there is no available data. These data do not include occupational disease - only accidents. So, there are thousands whose deaths are not being reflected. Order DO 5704 exempts industries with more than 200 workers of the need for inspection because the government has only 300 inspectors. So, the government has legitimised the absence of inspections.

The only obligation is a self inspection report -which doesn't work. Citing an example, he said that in one instance, inspections began only after 10 construction workers died at a site. The lack of safety standards was exposed. The same happened following the death of seven workers in a shipyard. Legalised non- inspection and lack of data poses a big challenge for the issue, he said.

Following these presentations, the floor was opened to questions and discussion.

Vipul Pandya from the Bandkam Mazdoor Sangathan narrated his experience of collecting data. *"For the past three years, we are seeing the lack of data from the director of industries. But we are collecting data from police reports using our right*

to information (RTI). Every year, we are seeing 200 injuries and 90 to 100 accidents and deaths. This is only construction workers," he said, imploring other organisations to make similar efforts.

Jagdish: Here is a very serious issue of statistics and data being created by the governments. We need solutions on how to deal with the situation. We have no data on occupational diseases and we have been struggling for long.

Yusuf from Panna, MP: There is no data with the Madhya Pradesh government on occupational diseases. Environics Trust organised a medical camp and we saw 40 cases of silicosis on one instance. No resources for us to work. There is need for more work at the grassroots level. Is there any plan?

Amulya Nidhi, MP: Working on silicosis - MP government has initiated (6 months ago) to compile data on the number of people affected/ infected by silicosis. This process is about to come to an end.

The next presentation was by **Rana Sengupta** who gave example of organising victims in Rajasthan. He spoke of the mine labour protection campaign which is working for influencing policy on occupational health and safety.

According to Rana, NHRC fact finding team agreed with our stand and pointed out that workers were dying of silicosis and not due to TB as the Rajasthan government wanted to project. 987 silicosis victims were identified in one single hospital.

Upon prodding from the NHRC, the state government released a compensation of Rs 100,000. This became a recognition for the work of organising the workers. Compensation orders for 300 workers in Gujarat as ordered by NHRC was pursued in Rajasthan as well and 21 victims got an additional compensation of Rs 200,000 per worker.

Now government has incorporated these issues in its budget. A sum of Rs 25.60 crores has been allocated for mine worker health. 19 of 33 districts hospitals are covered and equipments are being upgraded and outreach is increasing.

Becky Fung, from a member organisation in China gave a report of the work in China.

Becky Fung's presentation mentioned of coordinating meetings of the working group, the training and exchange activities. She spoke of the research conducted by the group and the planning and programme management and the communication platforms such as e-groups, and an instant messenger programme the group had undertaken. The group has also published OSH booklets, information kit for migrant workers and has a legal assistance promotion.

The group has carried out hospital visits and handled injury and disease cases from factories and coal mines besides conducting OSH trainings and also holding an OSH conference. There have also been OSH trainings at vocational schools, she said.

It was interesting to hear of the work done to organise an email group of members - they learn from exchange of information from each other and solicit opinions from members from different parts of China. It helps doing an analysis and coordinate meeting. This helps responding to accidents and report. This helps in advocacy besides our work with hospitals, factories and mines.

An example offered was that of labourers leaving villages are provided pamphlets on OSH so that people have prior knowledge. Prevention is important. This information before going out to work is of immense help. We also distribute pamphlet on legal issues and legal aid. Labourers in industries like mines and factories are visited and told about OSH related issues.

Asbestosis and silicosis: Visits are made to the victims and applications are written/ submitted for subsidies for their daily living and education for their children. Self help groups are also organised. We also have workshops on rights and conduct rehabilitation programmes for workers returning to their villages.

OSH exchanges and trainings were organised in July besides seminars and workshops sponsored by AMRC.

QUESTIONS:

Vipul Pandya, Bandkam Mazdoor Sangathan: In Vipul's opinion, the construction sector is the second most dangerous after mines with eight times more casualties than factories. In this respect, Vipul said, his union tried to organise construction workers. Mostly, it is the casual workers who are affected. Any proof is difficult to get. Getting compensation is doubly difficult. The contractors provide some 15,000 to 20,000 rupees and ensure that there are no cases/ complaints in labour courts.

Jagdish: What Vipul has missed is the problem of the labour boards not functioning. These are formed as part of the Act. We are advocating for the victims being compensated even if they are not registered with the board. This is our demand. Jagdish said that his group have so far got compensation for two workers.

A representative from China said that all factory workers are to be covered, but though this is mandatory, not all are covered.

The next was a presentation by **Omana George,**

AMRC on the asbestos campaign. She spoke of the work of the ABAN network set up in 2009 in HK and the formation of the Indonesian Ban Asbestos Network last year in October at Bandung.

On the issue of the business of reopening of the Jeffrey mines in Canada, she felt that there was something to write home about considering that nothing has happened as yet (November 2011). In that sense, that is an achievement.

She said that it was the only one mine in Canada that produced asbestos and no production was happening right now. One of the achievement was the campaign in Canada wherein, efforts to sneakily push the deal was derailed due to the stir, thanks also to the awareness created through the media. There is a petition on www.aawaz.org

She summarised the activities of the network during the past year in Indonesia. Ina-Ban had an education and awareness raising campaign in schools in and around Bandung. They had a painting competition to highlight Asbestos and its hazards to workers, community and environment. Likewise in Philippines, IOHSAD had a graffiti competition in four areas to draw public attention and to increase youth awareness on the hazards of Asbestos. This campaign was also publicized online. Associated Labour Union (ALU) in Philippines have incorporated Asbestos hazards in their agenda. Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC) is also working on a ban on use of Asbestos in Malaysia.

Jagdish raised the following issues through his presentation on Silicosis:

- India's National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) identified silicosis as an important health issue in 2006.
- NHRC brought out a document on the entitlements of people living with silicosis - but, he opined, this should have been brought out by the health ministry.
- This was followed by a NHRC order to pay Rs 300,000 to 238 confirmed cases in Gujarat. But this order has not been implemented by the Government of Gujarat.
- Rajasthan is the first state to make budgetary allocations for silicosis.
- But there are limitations as the government hospital in Jodhpur has not adequately identified victims of silicosis.

This was followed by a presentation on OSH and silicosis from China. The highlights of the presentation were as follows:

- More than 26,000 cases of occupational health diseases in China.

- Coal mines - where most of the silicosis prevails - are in the far off regions and in mountains where people are not well-informed.
- A law covering occupational diseases only came into force in 2002.
- Interestingly, it was revealed, former railway workers are reporting symptoms of silicosis that they have suffered over years. There is a historical perspective to these cases:
 - The workers were unpaid labourers making railways in other countries
 - They were working as volunteers during the Mao era.
 - Awareness of silicosis has grown over the past two years
 - This has meant that these people are now reporting with their symptoms for a health check-up and discovering that they have silicosis.
 - 140,110 people dying of pneumoconiosis since 1949 - roughly, this means that six to seven people are dying daily.

Supporters for the Health and Rights of People in Semiconductor Industry (SHARPS) presented their activities over the period. Their presentation provided information on the instances of workplace-related hazards. It said, mainly:

- There were 146 victims in Korea
- Of these, 58 had died.
- 50 of the 58 deaths were of workers from Samsung
- 55 of the total number of 63 cases of blood cancer were reported from Samsung
- There were 31 deaths due to blood cancer - of which, 25 could be attributed to workers from Samsung
- The presentation spoke of stress due to long hours at work and inhumane treatment

The expectation from SHARPS were also presented. These were as follows:

- Workers compensation to injured worker as a social security
- The rights of workers in Samsung
- To expose and change the dark side of globalisation based on neo-liberalism

In the second part of the conference, the report deals with six simultaneous workshops held in different halls in the same venue. The themes of the workshops were as follows:

1. Electronics Workshop - Strategy planning and

strengthening of work in Asia

2. Organising for prevention - Silicosis - Legal and Medical Aspects for compensation
3. Social Media Advocacy
4. Victims and Community Organizing
5. Asbestos
6. Mining - Occupational and Environmental Effects of the industry

The first three workshops were conducted post-lunch on the first day and the rest of the three simultaneous workshops were conducted in the pre-lunch session on the second day. The proceedings of these workshops were presented during the plenum following lunch on the second day. In that sense, the following pages offer an account of these six simultaneous workshops as presented during the plenum.

WORKSHOP 1 - Electronics Workshop - Strategy planning and strengthening of work in Asia

The participants got divided into groups to:

1. Identify the key issues and targets - short term and long term for next year
2. Discuss strategies
3. Develop clear plan and time line with key responsibilities

The groups brought their discussion points to the room and with this, they also finalised the key activities that included:

1. Research - what needs to be researched and who can carry this out.
2. Training - how to conduct the trainings and, the need for a training manual
3. Campaign
4. Lobbying Advocacy
5. What do people need for Capacity building?
6. Mapping
7. Communications strategy and platform

Given that the next ANROEV Conference will only be held after two years, the group also discussed the possibilities of a meeting in the intervening future. One idea was that 2012 being the 10th anniversary of the ICRT meeting in San Jose, the question arose if a 10th anniversary meeting should be organised in the Asia and if so, where.

There was a question and answer session. Issues dealt at this session included:

1. How to integrate people from other parts of the supply chain - i.e. e-waste

2. What is next for mapping?
3. What did we decide that we have not followed through on?
4. How do we build our communications network?
5. How do we improve our capacity to translate?
6. Usefulness of identifying the most toxic chemicals used in various kinds of production.
7. Match diseases with specific chemical exposures - and further, should we start with the chemicals or the diseases? What are the mechanisms for hazardous chemicals to cause the damages in humans and the environment?
8. Defining a “needs assessment” was also discussed.
9. Should we be doing trainings with workers, organizers and trainers?
10. How does A-BAN communicate? What can we learn from them?
11. We can do our own resource map - who has access to which resources - who can share it?

Key questions:

- ✓ Technology platform that works for all of us?
- ✓ Language translations issues
- ✓ Technical, legal, medical translations

We could have a web site that has sections for each of the countries in the language of that country - we could at least have the abstracts of info available and more info on how to get the full document. The possibility of coordinating with Wiki was also discussed.

WORKSHOP 2 - Organising for prevention - Silicosis - Legal and Medical Aspects for compensation

The workshop, moderated by Earl Brown had six presentations - though the session mainly centred on the presentation on the medical aspects of silicosis by Dr H N Saiyed. (The discussion following this also looked at the legal issues that accompany the



subject, especially on the trend of treatment for TB versus a compensation for silicosis.) According to the presentation by Dr Saiyed, silica dust does not give any warning on its toxicity and silicosis is rampant in an array of occupations, its risks being as widespread - mainly, cancer, obstructive diseases, kidney diseases and TB. He also explained the challenges since there were no distinct features accompanying silicosis that would help differentiate it from other respiratory diseases.

A presentation by Shilpi Kendra narrated their advocacy strategy with regard to silicosis. Different government agencies were approached for diagnosis and all confirmed silicosis. They made two documentary films and published reports of the survey they carried out to reach out to the policy makers. They effectively used media and that also helped the cause. They made petition with NHRC and later with the Supreme Court of India which is still under hearing.

The presentation Jagdish Patel was mainly comments on the NHRC document published January, 2011. He expressed need for a national debate to further improve and develop the document. The idea of compensation being legally based on Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALY) found support from the panel as well as the floor. The many gaps in the document were discussed and there was an opinion that the Ministry of Health should have had a role in the



formation of such a document.

The presentation from China narrated the situation of silicosis in Foshan, China where Silicosis is found among the workers in mining, metal, engineering, construction and pottery (*200 of 500 ceramic workers examined in 2005 confirmed for silicosis*). The Presentation highlighted the problems of victims (treatment expenses, compensation, physical and mental torture and family burden). The work being done in China centres on counseling, legal case handling, legal education, awareness and media advocacy.

The presentation from the **Patthar Khadaan Mazdoor Sangh (Panna, India)** was about the first ever diagnosis camp held few months ago wherein 39 workers were found living with silicosis. There are hundreds of thousands in the Chambal area. Panna is known for sand stone mining and diamond mining.

The presentation on the work done among stone crushers of Birbhum by **Uthanu** was a narration of over 400 stone crushers in the illegal mining business rampant in West Bengal. As in most cases, doctors rarely address the real environmental or occupational causes of disease due to ignorance, apathy and fear. This is despite mounting evidence of thick dust exposure 24x7 that has resulted in prevalence of pneumoconiosis and the gradual conversion of farm lands into quarry and crusher sites. 28 illegal quarries and 16 illegal crushers in the region were closed down as result of UTHNAU's campaign and the reestablishment of the system of self rule. This was done by organising Santhal tribal people to stop work for six months in 2009, forcing business to come to an agreement with the community on compensation for death and injuries at work, controlling dust (fry-fog spraying technologies) etc. A medical check-up was organized and a large numbers of people were found having silicosis.

The presentation and discussion around the issues in Asian countries vis-a-vis silicosis veered around identification and diagnosis, medical education, training, tools and equipment, reporting, recording, maintaining, publishing data, legal provisions for prevention and its enforcement, social justice including proper rehabilitation, awareness programs and organizing affected communities.

WORKSHOP 3 - Social Media Advocacy

This workshop deliberated on how best to harness digital technology and the accompanying proliferation of social media networks that have changed the face of modern communication and interaction. It gave participants the opportunity to effectively develop, implement, and leverage integrated social media in any organization's advocacy strategy.

Workshop exemplified and demonstrated simple, effective, affordable, and replicable methods of communication using new media.



Examples of the use of social media in campaigns in Asia were also offered. The session explained new trends in how these initiatives can revolutionize international communication and collaboration for disease prevention, besides building and sustaining a culture of collaborations and leveraging platforms.

Advocacy and the art of effective messaging dealt with in this workshop gave space to the role of traditional media and education. Best practices of harnessing social media were also discussed.

WORKSHOP 4 - Victims and Community Organizing

A presentation from **CRS** sharing outreach workers in industrial zone and organise activities to engage workers was made. The methodology was **VIVA**. It helped raise awareness and change attitude towards industrial accidents and enabled seeing the reason behind occupational accidents.

Another presentation from **Asbestos Victims Support Group** spoke of how they supported victims, including victims of cancer, in closed communities. They mobilised professionals like lawyers, docs and nurses. In monthly gathering, the victims and families have established good level of attachments. They also organised them to campaign for policy change and for public awareness raising. Three presentations on victim organisation: Silicosis from India; others were evocative as these were spoken sessions by victim themselves.

Finally the presentation on organising support group was a long story of organising waste pickers to form a union and tried to change the community's attitude. This group provides assistance to child workers and use methods that fit into the understandings of the workers.

The workshop also identified important reminders - reached marginalised workers who do not have adequate literacy levels with the aid of graphics and pictures rather than words. The challenge was to

make Occupational health and safety an issue, in the face of the bread and butter issue that it is for many.

It was an interesting question-answer session that followed - a sure way to gauge not only the interest the subject of the workshop evoked in the participants, but also the solidarity the group (and the network at large) lent to the victims and the communities that were organising themselves in their struggle. Some of the question that arose, as also the answers that emerged, are reproduced hereunder:

Outreaching occupational victims Eunice Chan (CLSN)

Q1: Question from India: The VidaViva seems a good tool, hope it can be translated into English and shared. But in India, especially in the construction industry, most of the workers are illiterate. How do we overcome this difficulty to reach out and intervene in a crisis.

A: Even though most Chinese workers can read and write, they still find it difficult to express and share their ideas. VidaViva needs a lot of drawing, which is followed by many questions on what they have drawn. This lets them explain.

Q2: What are the sources of funding support for these outreach activities?

A: We have many sources of funding. Some are local. There is support from HK. There are some sources of funding from western countries.

Q3: It's seems that most of the activities are talking more on educating the workers how to protect themselves, but not for organizing. But how do you let the worker identify the dangers at the workplace? What are the legal issues? And what about the training? In long term, what is your plan?

A: It was mentioned at the beginning of my presentation, all the VidaViva, outreach bus and our legal consultation are working on it.

[Experience from BARDS] Helen Clayson

Q1: Tell us how did the programs start from the very beginning?

A: In the first stage, we started by research, and provided services.

Q2: You know we have to face the fact that some of the victims will pass away. How do we deal with this situation?

A: Usually, we get the news in the monthly gatherings with the victims. We discuss what we can do for them and how to fight and to protect the victims.

Q3: In the process, they may be out of shape and facing death. What can we do to help?

A: One intervention is the support of the doctor and nurses, and the other one is their family members who have to learn how to provide essential, home-based, primary health care.

Q4: Other than the monthly gathering, are there any other activities to organize?

A: Because it a close and traditional community, most of the discussion, sharing and organizing happening in their daily life, like gatherings and conversations with neighbours over tea and organizing other similar activities. One of the family have bought an estate car, and they also share with the other as and when they need it. The most importance is the community itself. It is a very close community.

A discussion following from the sharing of experiences from China and the BKKTT presentation from India, outlined the difficulties being faced as under:

1. How to persuade workers to enter the legal process?
2. How to prove the working relationship?
3. How to persuade workers to diagnose earlier?
4. When worker stand up to stick they also face losing their job?

Solutions to these were sought from the experience from Hong-Kong wherein, retrain program for the worker help solve their living problems.

WORKSHOP 5 - Asbestos

The workshop discussed the reason behind some countries banning asbestos - and the reasons behind some countries not doing so. This offered an opportunity to share country experiences. This came in the backdrop of a presentation on recent global asbestos and asbestos-related diseases scenario including recognition and compensation in developing countries.

Domyung Paek presented ideas in measuring change the ban campaign tries to achieve. He tackled the subject "Why some, but not all countries, have banned asbestos." Paek presented a framework involving politicians, professionals, bureaucrats, stakeholders, victims, non-government organizations, and the general public.

In some other case, Paek showed that there were countries which have banned asbestos in their shores because of a strong and mature healthcare mechanism. He cited Mongolia and Saudi Arabia as examples.

Sugio Furuya of Japan Occupational Safety and Health Resource Centre gave attendees global scenarios of asbestos production and asbestos-related diseases. He gave audience the annual developments and trends of asbestos usage and the accompanying asbestos-related diseases. He also introduced the compensation system in the US, UK, Japan, Taiwan, Hongkong, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Philippines, Thailand, China, and India.

The workshop also was opportunity to discuss ban asbestos campaign goals. **Yeyong Choi of Ban Asbestos Network Korea**, laid out long and short-term goals of ban asbestos campaign globally. The ban campaign ideally aims to reduce asbestos consumption of countries from 2 million tons to one million tons in five to 10 years hence. He emphasized as well a considerable focus should be given on reducing the price and accessibility of safer alternatives.

Choi also voiced out the need to organize victim groups and other schemes in creating public pressure and harness these towards ban. This resonated in the presentation of Paek who highlighted the importance of organizing the victims and attending to their needs. The stories and plight of the victims can be transmitted to catalyze support and persuade policy-makers to a change towards asbestos ban.

Another thrust is for the network to collectively work toward listing of Chrysotile asbestos in the Prior Informed Consent List of the Rotterdam Convention in 2013.

WORKSHOP 6 - Mining - Occupational and Environmental Effects of the industry

The workshop began with a short film “*Driving Evil Out - Eco Debt Audit on NALCO*”. The film shot in one of the bauxite mining areas in Orissa showed a balance sheet of ecological footprint as a consequence of mining activities - a total ecological debt estimated at USD 1755 million. The film provided an insight into how the tribal population viewed the project in the light of its impacts and how socio-cultural environmental changes accompany such projects. The film tries to address the following self-sought questions:

- Who Owes Who?
- How Much?
- How do we Recover?

This film was followed by a country presentation on Thack Khe Iron Ore Project by the **Thach Ha Women Union (THWU)** from Vietnam. The union, aiming on empowering its women members, was established in 1930s and has a sizable women membership (35,000).

The presentation gave a glimpse of the environmental and social impact of iron ore mining. As per this presentation, mining for 544 million tons will impact 4000 hectares of land (40 km²), impacting over half of the six communes. A large proportion (4,000 households) of affected population has to be resettled.

A dialogue was initiated by the union at all levels i.e. village, commune, district to make people aware, strategise and negotiate. The union felt that dialogues or participatory methods resulted in good results. The union, along with other mass organizations, went into generating awareness on livelihood policies, monitoring and dialogue spaces. The process involved

- Meetings with people and sharing and exchanging information; and,
- Joint meetings with provincial leaders and mining project holders & managements.

In all, 67 people’s meetings took place and six commune meetings were held as dialogue meetings with the investors to put forward the concerns across these communes. A larger meeting with people’s representatives from six communes to analyse the impact of project on lives, livelihoods and environment was held as well. All these led to four district policy dialogues and brought more transparency in the process of decision-making by the mining company and the government - by no means a great achievement.

The union reviewed the resettlement plans, placed arguments with the government that local community be allowed to continue their farming on land which was explored by the mining company, to which the government agreed. Besides this, the investor was also asked to compensate the damages done to the environment.

A long question and answer session followed, with an animated discussion on the various issues surrounding the mining industry’s impact of lives and livelihoods.

The Final Plenum session began with a film on the practice of using toxic gas in sea containers - benzene, Methyl-bromide, 1,2 Di-chloro-ethane - from Netherlands. This was presented by **Jan De Jong** who explained that though there are very strict safety laws that prohibit use of certain chemicals and substances in Holland, yet CEO of big companies order import of the very same goods (manufactured elsewhere, mainly in Asia) because of their lack of responsibility for health and safety. This poses problems spanning from producers to consumers as chemicals are being used in the wrong way, unnecessarily and people in positions are not concerned.

Last year, according to Jan De Jon, Holland saw 65 victims from containers. But, he argued, there could be many more in Asia due to direct and long-term exposure. These chemicals, the film illustrated (and documented very well) affect the Central Nervous System and can damage our brains, muscles and cause much more than just headaches. *“We banned solvents and whatever, but big companies and their CEOs managed to outsource these,”* Jan De Jong said, adding that, *“We need a ban on fumigation. But we also need a ban on unnecessary use of solvent.”*

Earl Brown, in the chair commented at the end of the film that *“Disregard of workers by employers is seen everywhere. It includes lack of concern for consumers. We need a global solution.”*

Chair Earl Brown then called for presentations from all the six workshops over the two days. This was followed by a short session of questions, answers and discussions.

The broader discussion during the plenum was divided into the following issues:

1. Direction of Network
2. Current Campaigns
3. Building the network/ other regions
4. Communication strategies
5. Role of ANROEV

Earl: Opened the session for dialogue and Sanjiv (AMRC) took to the floor with his suggestion for presence of ANROEV at international bodies such as the UN, ASAEN and SAARC.

Jagdish’s idea was that advocacy campaign for environmental victims will serve victims and also give space to environmental groups within ANROEV. Advocacy for environmental laws for compensation for environment victims is still a need, he said, adding that we have not really approached international bodies like the ILO in this respect. Perhaps in addition to the regional bodies that Sanjiv suggested.

Mohit added that we need to think of environment monitoring. We have laws in this respect now and also bodies like the green tribunals. But there is a lack of knowledge and experience and the network can help in this direction.

Another participant suggested a network inclined more towards grass-roots networking rather than the elitist groups. Very often the grassroots network goes missing when we begin thinking of the international bodies, the participant opined, suggesting a rally march, like handing over a baton. That will be effective for networking.

Yet another participant felt that ANROEV should also try mobilising organisations working for unorganised and construction workers. There are also other mass based organisation working for workers and there is a need to coordinate with those networks as well.

Sreedhar’s opinion was that in alternate years, we could think of activities that happen in the countries during that period. E.g., common programmes across different countries. Secondly, there are several other networks in the region, like the NGO forum on ADB. Are labour laws followed on Bank funded groups. It may also be a good idea, he said, to look at Jubilee South Asia Pacific Movement on Debt and Development (JSAPMDD) which looks at how debt impacts workers in different countries

A third suggestion, according to Sreedhar, is to extend what Jagdish said about a law for environment victims. The national green tribunal in India - so far populated only with cases of environmental clearance, it also enables compensation for substantial environmental damage. We still have to prepare evidential material that can be taken before the court.



Voravidh(Thailand): We need to make the work visible. We have a network, victims group etc. But it is not prepared for trade unions to work with us.

Many issues regarding occupational health will also come up in the coming days. For instance, floods in Thailand will be followed by construction. We need to think of construction site accidents. But, I agree if we make our work more grassroots, the victims lives can be highlighted, that can help change the law, he said.

A participant from China said that there was a need to go beyond NGO circles and get workers to realise OSH issues. Need to expand further.

Jagdish said that the campaign is not looking at many more countries not covered so far. He pointed out that even in South Asia, a number of countries are not represented. There are a number of groups working on environment. Probably working on en-

vironment issues is easier than occupational health and safety. His concern was how to be balance between environment groups and occupational health and safety groups.

A participant from MP, India said that apart from these issues, we are not in contact with the public health movement. He wondered aloud if they are aware of ANROEV. We need to have contact with these.

A Chinese participant questioned if ANROEV is inclusive. He questioned: Are we speaking for workers? Are we going to workers communities? There was a need for more grassroots building up from the bottom.

Yet another participant from China felt that OSH are not isolated incidents. We would like to mobilise more core members to pay attention to core issues. While OSH should integrate with the larger movement, we should not forget that OSH issues are not being raised by any other.... and we need to work with trade unions.

Earl, in the chair remarked that ANROEV needed to understand and learn how to advocate, we need specialists (doctors and lawyers) and we need victim stories. For example, he spoke of using Indian doc-

tors before Chinese courts because there are very few doctors for this purpose in China who can help in legal issues.

Earl ended the session summing up some very substantive proposal bulleted hereunder:

- Take the advocacy to UN and regional bodies
- Focus on compensation and bring that to the legislatures - domestic and international
- Relate to health networks - need to relate to docs and legal professionals.
- Talk to the grassroots. Talk to the trade unions.
- No representation in Nepal, Myanmar, Pakistan, Bhutan.

After this, the conference broke up for giving way to the constitutional process and formalities for ANROEV.

This was preceded with a recognition to three persons for their contribution in the area of occupational health and safety in Asia. The awards went to Raju Devi from Rajasthan, India, Yuying Chen from China and Apo Leong acknowledging his work as a lifetime achievement award from Hong Kong.

