

## Supporters for Health and Right of People in Semiconductor Industry(SHARPS)

SHARPS is a network of workers with occupational diseases, their families, and activists from unions, human right groups, OSH groups, and other social movement groups. Goals of SHARPS are; (1)to achieve worker's compensation which ought to be given to injured worker as a social right; (2)to achieve worker's fundamental right (freedom of association) in Samsung and other electronics companies; and (3)to challenge the globalization based on neo-liberalism which does not solve but transfer the problems into the weaker region.

The number of occupational victims that SHARPS has gotten by the end of February 2013 is 208, among which 79 already died. Most of them are from Samsung.

Company	Products	Victims	Deaths
Samsung Electronics	Semiconductor	104	37
	LCD	22	8
	Mobile phone, Electronic components	10	8
Samsung Electromechanics	Electronic components	11	7
Samsung SDI	LCD,TV,PDP	29	8
Samsung Corning	Glass for LCD	3	1
Samsung Techwin	Camera, Robot, Other microelectronics	2	0
Other (Hynix, Magnachip, ATK, QTS, etc.)		27	10
Total		208	79

Significant changes and achievements of the last two years are;

(1) in 2012, the Korean government recognized aplastic anemia and breast cancer of two female workers from Samsung semiconductor as occupational diseases for the first time in the history. In addition, in 2013, the government decided to provide compensation to the family of late Kim Jinki, who had worked in Magnachip semiconductor as a maintenance engineer and died from leukemia at the age of 38. It was the first recognition of leukemia from semiconductor industry as an occupational disease.

(2) SHARPS organized several occupational cancer victims in the subcontractor of Samsung Electronics. It could not be a big social issue, however has very important meaning to intentionally widen the scope of SHARPS' activity onto the supply chain.

(3) in the early 2012, OSHRI, the governmental research institute on OSH, announced its study result showing that toxic volatile organic compounds such as benzene, toluene, xylene, cresol, and phenol are produced from photoresists even in the normal production processes. The risk of being exposed to toxic byproducts in semiconductor plants is what SHARPS has argued for a long time, and finally the argument was proved.

(4) SHARPS' effort to raise awareness on the hazards of semiconductor industry got response from the academia, especially from the occupational health professionals. Korea Society of Occupational and Environmental Medicine and Korea Society of Industrial Hygiene had the official program on the issues of high-tech industry at their annual conference and invited speakers from SHARPS to share the knowledge and experiences.

(5) the struggle of SHARPS got supports from the people in art and culture. Two comic books based on the real story of Samsung semiconductor occupational disease victims were

published and have been sold thousands copies. Also, two movie have been made based on the victims' story, one is a documentary and the other is a film drama.

(6) according to increasing concern on the victims and the working environment, Samsung Electronics has been pressured to change its attitude from concealing the problems into solving them. In late 2012, Samsung Electronics sent a letter to SHARPS under the name of its CEO asking a dialogue. Based on the free and democratic discussion and decision among the victims and the activists, SHARPS has taken preparatory meetings with the company for the official dialogue.

On the other hand of these achievements, there are several big challenges still remained;

(1) it is too hard, and takes too long for the victims to get the legal compensation from the government. SHARPS has experienced failure to be recognized as occupational disease with more than twenty workers and their families. The legal system of workers' compensation should be improved to guarantee the right of workers.

(2) in January 2012, there was a leakage of HF(hydrogen fluoride) in Samsung semiconductor plant. Five workers of subcontractor maintaining the pipeline and supply facilities worked on that accident, and all of them fell sick at the next day, and one of them finally died. Through this tragedy, the Ministry of labor found there were more than 2,000 violations of OSH law in that factory. This reflects how badly the big companies shift the responsibility on OSH onto the smaller and weaker subcontractor, and how badly the workers pay the cost by their own health and lives. And the punishment is too weak to change the big company's policy and attitude.

(3) one of goals of SHARPS is to contribute to organize workers in the workplace in Samsung and other electronics companies, but it is still very limited. We need to make a strategy for organizing workers in the real setting including the subcontractors and branches both within and out of Korea.

(4) SHARPS has been asked a lot of roles in various aspects, but does not have enough manpower nor financial resources. How to build a stable structure for widened activities is a big challenge.