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Testimony of Siti Kristina for COP 8 – Convention Rotterdam

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Full testimony of Siti Kristina. Written to be shared at the Rotterdam Convention COP 8. Because the time limit to speak was 2 minutes, then only part of it that shared.

Testimony of Siti Kristina for COP 8 – Convention Rotterdam

My name is Siti Kriteria. I am a former worker of a textile company that uses asbestos for its material. The product we produced was asbestos cloth, an insulator to wrap pipes in oil and gas mining.

I worked for 23 years in the department of insulating. There were 65 people who worked in this department. It is in this department the asbestos cloth was produced, from the mixing to packing process. This department consisted some units, i.e. mixing, carding, spinning, twisting, winding, weaving, inspection/QC and packing. For these 23 year, I was being exposed with asbestos.

At the workplace, we used asbestos chrysotile. The asbes is mixed with polyster using dry process. The asbestos sack was lifted by hand to the mixing machine to pour the asbestos manually. The mix of asbestos and polyster then goes to the carding machine to produce rolls of raw asbestos thread. The asbestos thread rolls go to twisting machine to add the layers of the asbestos thread. The twisted thread go to weaving machine to be an asbestos cloth.

When we were interacting with asbestos, some of use gloves and some of us did not use it. If the asbestos fibre pierces and went inside under the skin, it is difficult to remove and hurt. We used simple mask cloth once a week. We took our wearpack to home for laundry. We ate, drink and rest in a room where asbestos product produced.

In the begining in the early years, I felt safe and okay. But after more than 10 years, I started coughing. Whenever cough, I saw a doctor and got better. But the coughing was a routine for me. I coughed for a week or two then I started coughing again after a month or two.

The company performed medical examination regularly. It called a rontgen service unit to the factory. All workers have to participate. The company held the results and if we asked the resulted, the company said we are okay.

In 2008, there was a medical examination by Korean experts. All workers participated. We had blood test, sputum test, spirometri and rontgen. The company said the result was good.

At the same year, I was participated in an independent medical examination with two other workers. We had it at an hospital in Rawa Mangun, Jakarta. We had blood test and CT-scan. The result was sent to Korea.

In 2010, I participated again in an medical examination in RSCM, Jakarta. We did blood test and CT-scan. The result was sent to Korea. It is from this result that the Korean and Japanese doctor diagnosed me with early asbestosis. Two other workers also diagnosed with asbestosis.

In 2012, I had bad health situation. I had typhoid. I had dry coughing. I lost my bodyweight. I also experienced difficulties in breathing. I checked myself to a clinic in Bogor. I did rontgen, blood test and sputum test. From the result, I was diagnosed with lung disease. I had to take medicine everyday for 6 months.

In 2013, I was invited to Korea for a victim meeting. In Korea, I took another medical examination dan the result was I am still a positive asbestosis patient. Returning from Korea, I wrote a letter to the company about my condition. I could not enter the company so I give the letter to the security. I do not know what happen to the letter.

After being dissmised in 2013, I do not have any more money to buy medicine. If I have cough, I just go to a cheap clinic.

In 2016, I and friends participated in medical examination again at Rumah Sakit Pertamina, Jakarta. From this examination, 10 people out of 20 were diagnosed with asbestos related disease. In this year, this is the first time Indonesia doctor have courageous to diagnose us with occupational disease related to asbestos.

In this year, 2017, I and friends finally found a light to our case. For years I and my friends have been struggling to be recognized by the Govt and Indonesian doctors. It is not easy. Finally this year, occupational disease related to asbestos was recognised. We hope this is not just an empty recognition. We hope we will get better and appropriate treatment from stakeholders that deal with asbestos victim.

And in our country, in Indonesia, many people still do not know about the dangers of asbestos. I am just one from many of my friends that being exposed to asbestos in Indonesia. There are many of my friends that do not have the opportunity to participate in a medical examination. It is very possible that they have asbestos related disease too.

I am here representing my friends, the sufferers of asbestos in Indonesia and in the world. We hope there is no more people suffer from asbestos. We hope, in this meeting, all delegates support for the listing of asbestos chrysotile onto Annex III by supporting the amendment to article 22 of the Rotterdam Convention.

Terimakasih

Thank you very much