

(your letterhead)

(date)

re: The **Rotterdam Convention** on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade

To: (Insert correct name and form of address, example: Honourable J. Smith, Minister of Health)

(Dear Minister Smith),

We write to you to express strong support for the Proposal to amend Article 22 of the Rotterdam Convention, submitted by the Governments of Botswana, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Swaziland, Tanzania, and Zambia.

It is our hope that our government will support this change during the upcoming Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention, which will take place 24 April – 5 May 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland.

As you are no doubt aware, the Rotterdam Convention is not effective for substances that have a strong national industry lobby. First, industry interest groups insisted that consensus decision-making under the Convention means unanimity. Then, using the requirement for unanimity, those same interest groups have blocked the listing of substances for Prior Informed Consent under the Convention. I refer in particular here to the International Chrysotile Association and the Chrysotile Alliance, which have managed to block the listing of asbestos for years, with the support of only a very few countries.

The proposed change would mean that in the absence of a consensus, a substance could be listed if a majority of 75% of the Parties voting, supported that action.

On behalf of (organization), affiliated to the Building and Woodworkers International, representing 12 million construction and building materials workers, we urge you to recognise that this situation is long overdue for correction. So long as any one party can exercise a veto over the huge majority of countries and the recommendation of the secretariat – as well as good science and common sense - the Rotterdam Convention is discredited.

Hundreds of thousands of workers die of asbestos diseases each year, and millions more suffer disability and pain. We count on your support to correct this.

Respectfully submitted,

(name and title)

