

Natural Threats – asbestos, the problem of the XXI century

Ilia Kalandadze

E-mail: ilia.kalandadze@ens.tsu.edu.ge

Department of Geography, Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences
Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University
#3, I. Chavchavadze Avenue, Tbilisi 0179, Georgia

In the modern epoch of urban development, both, natural and artificial materials are used intensely to meet the growing social-economic demands of the population. These materials pose more or less threat to a human health. Asbestos, the fiber mineral, is one such material. Asbestos does not conduct heat or electricity; it is fire-proof and is a good insulation. This is why it is widely used as facing and roofing material and drinking water and sewage pipes, as well as various industrial and domestic floor covers and partitions, paints and in production of other materials. The most common types of asbestos in industry, the crocidolite asbestos (blue asbestos) and amosite asbestos (brown asbestos), belong to the most hazardous asbestos type, the amphibol group.

This is why, at the General Assembly of the International Social Security Association in 2004, a declaration about asbestos banning the production, trade and use of any type of asbestos or asbestos-containing materials for all countries was adopted. Despite this fact, more than 2 tons of asbestos is produced in the world annually. Thus, the scale of asbestos production and use is increasing again. Among the major asbestos-producing countries are: Canada, Brazil, China and Russia.

The questions associated with the use of asbestos are problematic and much complicated. It is a complex chain of many inter-woven issues, starting from the economy and construction industry through the human health. However, there is only one goal – to minimize the use of asbestos and introduce alternative solutions in practice to maintain the safe environment for the world population.