

AI Index: PRE 01/089/2012
16 February 2012

IOC rejection of Dow concerns leaving toxic legacy for London 2012

It is extremely disappointing that Olympic organisers continue to side with Dow Chemical Company while refusing to listen to legitimate concerns over the company's sponsorship of the London games, Amnesty International said today.

On 16 February, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) rejected the India Olympic Association's (IOA) call to terminate Dow Chemicals' sponsorship deal with the IOC and for 2012 London Games.

"Unbelievably the IOC says Dow is committed to 'good corporate governance', shocking when you consider all the facts, and that the company refuses liability for a corporate disaster the scale of Bhopal, creating a toxic legacy for London 2012", said Seema Joshi, Amnesty International's Head of Business and Human Rights.

"London Olympic Organisers have failed to make a fair assessment of the issues surrounding Dow's responsibility to the victims of Bhopal," said Joshi. "They have repeatedly refused our requests to a meeting."

"Instead, they take a one-sided approach and rely on Dow's position."

Dow Chemical bought Union Carbide in 2001. Amnesty International does not claim that Dow's responsibilities for the Bhopal disaster emanate from any form of management of the Bhopal facility or Union Carbide at the time of the 1984 Bhopal gas disaster.

Union Carbide is a defendant in four legal actions related to Bhopal, including a criminal prosecution in which the company is accused of "culpable homicide not amounting to murder". Despite having been charged in 1987, Union Carbide never appeared before the Courts.

The Bhopal factory site continues to be heavily contaminated today.

"When Dow bought Union Carbide, it bought liability for the Bhopal disaster," said Seema Joshi.

"As the 100% owner of Union Carbide, Dow has the power to force its subsidiary to face justice, and has responsibility for the clean-up of the Bhopal site."