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## **London 2012 organisers must admit Dow mistake after ethics chief quits**

London 2012 Olympic organisers must admit their mistake in awarding a lucrative contract to the Dow Chemical Company, Amnesty International said today after the Games' ethics commissioner quit over human rights concerns about the company.

Meredith Alexander, appointed by London's Mayor Boris Johnson to monitor the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG), resigned in protest at the sponsorship deal with Dow due to its connection to the Bhopal disaster.

Dow owns US-based Union Carbide Corporation (UCC), the company that held a majority share in the Indian subsidiary that owned and operated the UCC plant responsible for the 1984 gas leak disaster, which killed thousands of people.

Dow is due to provide a plastic wrap that will encircle the London 2012 Olympic Stadium during the Games.

"This high profile resignation means the London 2012 organisers can no longer ignore human rights concerns about Dow, a company that has refused to meet its responsibilities in relation to the victims of Bhopal," said Seema Joshi of Amnesty International.

"Lord Sebastian Coe must publicly state that human rights concerns were never considered when awarding a contract to Dow and that LOCOG made a mistake."

Meredith Alexander was appointed by the London mayor Boris Johnson to serve on the Commission for a Sustainable London 2012 (CSL) – the ethics body that monitors the processes of all the bodies responsible for delivering the 2012 Games.

In recent weeks, CSL publicly defended LOCOG's decision to appoint Dow to sponsor the 900m wrap.

That decision, and the Olympic bodies' subsequent defence of Dow, enraged Alexander and human rights groups including Amnesty International.

Meredith Alexander said: "I don't want to be party to a defence of Dow Chemicals, the company responsible for one of the worst corporate human rights violations in my generation. It is appalling that 27 years on, the site has still not been cleaned up and thousands upon thousands of people are still suffering.

“I believe people should be free to enjoy London 2012 without this toxic legacy on their conscience.”

Corporate interest, legal complexity and government failures and neglect have proved huge obstacles to justice for the people of Bhopal.

Bhopal’s massive gas leak in December 1984 killed between 7,000 and 10,000 people in its immediate aftermath, and a further 15,000 over the next 20 years.

More than 100,000 continue to suffer from serious health problems as a result of the leak, while toxic waste at the plant site is yet to be fully cleaned.

UCC continues to defy Indian jurisdiction, failing to abide by repeated summons to appear before a Bhopal court.