

The Duty of Care

The **Responsible Care** program was created in response to the 1984 Union Carbide gas disaster in Bhopal, India, which killed more than 20,000 people and permanently injured 50,000 more due to toxic exposure. Twenty-one years have passed since the tragedy. The factory remains abandoned and continues to leak chemical poisons into the community's groundwater. Neither Union Carbide nor Dow Chemical, which bought Carbide in 2001, has properly cleaned the site.

Residents of Bhopal were never fully compensated for their losses. Those whose health was impacted by the accident have not received adequate medical treatment. Uncontained and unprotected toxic wastes have remained at the Bhopal site for 20 years, often at locations accessible to neighborhood children. Residents of Bhopal continue to be exposed to toxic chemicals. Even those born in Bhopal since the gas leak suffer health impairments related to the disaster.



Abandoned Union Carbide Plant, Bhopal India 2005

This is not Responsible Care

Revisions to the Responsible Care program are welcome if they truly increase the commitment of the chemical industry to fully accept and discharge its responsibilities. Bhopal, however, is one of many experiences that demonstrate voluntary programs alone are insufficient. While industry may create voluntary programs, it is an obligation of all governments to *ensure* the Duty of Care.

Duty of Care should not be voluntary!

Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Purush Sangharsh Morcha (India), Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Stationery Karmachari Sangh (India), Bhopal Group for Information and Action (India), Bhopal ki Aawaaz (India), International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal (India), THANAL (India), The Other Media (India), Toxics Link (India), AGENDA for Environment and Responsible Development (Tanzania), Arnika Association (Czech Republic), Associação de Combate aos POPs (Brazil), Day Hospital Institute for Rehabilitation and Development (Egypt), Development Indian Ocean Network (Mauritius), Earthlife Africa (South Africa), Eco-Accord (Russian Federation), Environmental Health Fund (USA), Foundation for Realization of Ideas (Belarus), Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, International Chemical Secretariat (Sweden), International Society of Doctors for the Environment, Pesticide Action Network Africa, Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific, Pesticide Action Network Latin America (RAP-AL), Pesticide Action Network North America, Physicians for Social Responsibility Kenya, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Tanzania Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union

For more information about Bhopal, visit www.bhopal.org.