



SEVENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Report of the Thirteenth Session of
the Joint ILO/WHO Committee on
Occupational Health
(Geneva, 9-12 December 2003)**

1. In accordance with the decision taken by the Governing Body at its 285th Session,¹ and in agreement with the World Health Organization, the Thirteenth Session of the Joint ILO/WHO Committee on Occupational Health was held at ILO in Geneva from 9-12 December 2003. Fifteen experts, of whom nine were appointed by the ILO and six by the WHO, participated in the meeting.
2. The agenda of the meeting, as determined by the Governing Body and with the agreement of WHO, were as follows:
 - Integrated approach to occupational safety and health;
 - Occupational safety and health management systems;
 - Advice on priority fields in occupational health.
3. The Committee reviewed the follow-up by the ILO and WHO on the conclusions and recommendations adopted at its previous session in 1995 and discussed the global practice on integrated approach to occupational safety and health and on occupational safety and health management systems. In view of the means of action available to the ILO and the WHO, the Committee reviewed priority areas for the global strategy on occupational safety and health² and for the development and implementation of international instruments on occupational safety and health. The Committee identified areas for field collaboration and research and for promotion of occupational safety and health management systems. Other priority fields reviewed by the Committee also included national occupational safety and health profiles, control banding (control of exposure to chemicals in small and medium-sized enterprises), basic occupational health services, the Joint Effort on Occupational Safety and Health in Africa, prevention and control of pneumoconiosis and work-related

¹ GB.285/205, para. 87.

² International Labour Conference, 91st Session, 2003, *Provisional Record* No. 22, pp. 39-44.

psychosocial issues. At the end of its work, the Committee adopted a set of conclusions and recommendations, which are appended to this paper. Copies of the Committee's report are available on request.

4. The main areas of intensified joint ILO/WHO activities proposed by the Committee were as follows:
 - supporting the launching of national occupational safety and health programmes;
 - national strategy to effectively implement occupational safety and health instruments; and
 - ratification of ILO Conventions.
5. The Committee proposed that WHO and ILO headquarters and their regional offices should be actively involved in annual events or campaigns (world day or safety and health week) aimed at raising widespread awareness of the importance of occupational safety and health and the need to improve it. The Committee recommended that in future ILO/WHO collaboration, special attention be given to global occupational safety and health issues such as a list of occupational diseases and ergonomics.
6. The Committee proposed that the ILO and WHO work together to provide models for the organization of occupational safety and health services at national or provincial levels. The Committee concluded that it was essential for the ILO and WHO to work collaboratively on occupational health, both at international and at regional/national levels. Their task was not only to steer but also to assist national institutions and occupational safety and health representatives on occupational health, and to help strengthen collaboration between ministries of health and ministries of labour. The two organizations should jointly involve other stakeholders such as social security, education, trade associations, workers' compensation insurance bodies, as well as employers' and workers' organizations at both international and national levels. The importance of collaboration with employers' and workers' organization was highlighted by the Committee.
7. The Committee requested both the ILO and WHO to report the conclusions and recommendations of this meeting to their Governing Body and Executive Board respectively, and to plan their collaboration in the field of occupational safety and health based on the conclusions and recommendations formulated by its Thirteenth Session. The Committee asked the Governing Body of the ILO and the Executive Board of the WHO to invite respectively the Directors-General of the ILO and of the WHO to prepare a statement addressed to ministers of labour and health to ensure implementation of the global occupational safety and health strategy at country level adopted at the 91st Session of the International Labour Conference.
8. ***The Committee on Sectoral and Technical Meetings and Related Issues may wish to recommend that the Governing Body –***
 - (a) ***take note of the conclusions and recommendations of the Thirteenth Session of the Joint ILO/WHO Committee on Occupational Health;***
 - (b) ***authorize the Director-General to communicate the conclusions and recommendations to governments and, through them, to employers' and workers' organizations, to the non-governmental organizations with consultative status and to other institutions and services as appropriate;***

- (c) invite the Director-General to prepare, distribute and implement policy guidance to the ILO's field structures in respect of cooperation between the ILO and WHO in occupational safety and health;*
- (d) invite the Director-General to bear in mind, when drawing up the future programme of work of the Office, the conclusions and recommendations made by the Joint Committee at its Thirteenth Session.*

Geneva, 23 January 2004.

Point for decision: Paragraph 8.

Appendix

Joint ILO/WHO Committee on Occupational Health (Thirteenth Session, Geneva, 9-12 December 2003)

Conclusions and recommendations

1. The Committee recognized the need to raise occupational health issues at the global, regional and national levels, and that the development of national OSH programmes was essential to achieving this goal. The Committee called for special attention to be given to the needs of vulnerable groups (for example, migrant workers, children, and the elderly at work and the growing informal sector), and the special needs of women at the workplace.
2. There should be top-level commitment within the WHO and ILO for collaboration between the two organizations on occupational health, and this should be communicated to the regional and national levels.
3. The Committee recommended that WHO and ILO collaboration should focus on the following key areas:
 - (1) Guidance and support for national OSH programmes, including:
 - providing models for organizing OSH at national or subnational levels;
 - providing basic occupational health services;
 - promoting OSH management systems and tools, including control banding;
 - developing national profiles and indicators;
 - assessing the cost effectiveness of OSH interventions;
 - establishing effective enforcement agencies.
 - (2) Enhancing regional collaboration and coordination, including:
 - the development and dissemination of models for cooperation, such as the Joint Effort on Occupational Safety and Health in Africa.
 - (3) Coordination and enhancement of information and educational programmes and materials, such as:
 - the development of a joint Internet-based global portal;
 - statistics.
 - (4) Awareness-raising activities and instruments, through:
 - campaigns;
 - events;
 - special days.
4. The Committee recommended that special attention should be paid to the following global occupational safety and health issues in future ILO/WHO collaboration:
 - the elimination of silicosis and asbestos-related diseases;
 - ergonomics;
 - violence at work;
 - list of occupational diseases;
 - occupational injuries.
5. HIV/AIDS should be addressed through the cooperation of both agencies in a global perspective, including occupational exposure.