

47th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CIS NATIONAL, COLLABORATING AND REGIONAL CENTRES

Geneva, Switzerland, 22-23 October 2009

1. Introduction

The 47th Meeting of CIS National, Collaborating and Regional Centres took place at ILO Headquarters, on Thursday and Friday, 22-23 October 2009. This anniversary Meeting, which celebrated CIS's 50th anniversary, was attended by representatives of 31 National, 8 Collaborating and 2 Regional Centres. There were also observers from three other organizations. A number of ILO colleagues from outside CIS attended, as well as a former Head of CIS. The list of participants is attached in Annex I.

2. Opening remarks

Mr Gábor SÁNDI (CIS Coordinator) welcomed the participants and introduced **Mr Assane DIOP** (Executive Director of the Social Protection Sector and representative of the Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO)).

In officially opening the Meeting, **Mr Assane DIOP** said that he was pleased to be able to open a CIS Meeting for the eighth time, and especially so in this anniversary year. He reminded participants of the large number of occupational accidents and diseases that still happened in the world, and wished CIS well in its efforts to reduce these numbers. He emphasized the particular needs of the informal sector, of particular importance in the developing world.

Mr Assane DIOP went on to pay homage to the founder of CIS, **Mr Marcel ROBERT**, who had died in 2007. He congratulated CIS on being able to continue the innovative approach to information processing that **Mr Marcel ROBERT** had started.

Mr Assane DIOP called attention to some of the new trends in CIS activities, in particular to renewed work on the ILO Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety and on the Occupational Hazard Datasheets, with collaboration by the Italian and Israeli National Centres.

Mr Assane DIOP thanked **Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI** for her role in organizing the first-ever joint Meeting of the CIS Centres and the WHO Collaborating Centres for Occupational Health and Safety. In concluding her remarks, she thanked the participants for their presence and encouraged them to strengthen and enlarge the Network.

The full text of **Mr Assane DIOP**'s speech is available in Annex II.

Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI, Director of SafeWork, addressed the Meeting next. She said that she had by now participated in three CIS Meetings, and it was a special pleasure for her to see so many participants again, considering them as friends. She also welcomed the many participants for whom this was their first CIS Meeting.

Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI looked forward to the group discussions scheduled for the second day of the Meeting, which she had the privilege of facilitating.

The full text of **Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI**'s speech, entitled "ILO Network of Safety and Health Information Centres: Roles, ways of working, major initiatives" is available in Annex III.

3. Election of Chairperson

Mr Gábor SÁNDI asked for nominations for the position of Chairperson of the Meeting.

Ms Barbara SZCZEPANOWSKA (Poland), seconded by **Ms Elly GOOS** (Netherlands) nominated **Ms Irja LAAMANEN** (Finland) to be the Chairperson of the Meeting. There being no other proposals, **Ms Irja LAAMANEN** was elected by acclamation.

4. Adoption of Agenda

The Agenda of the Meeting was adopted as proposed.

5. Adoption of the Report of the 46th Meeting of CIS Centres (2008)

The report of the 2008 Meeting of CIS Centres was adopted without amendments.

6. Mr Gábor SÁNDI's presentation on CIS

Mr Gábor SÁNDI started his presentation referring to the recently published monograph: **CIS – 50 Years of History** (http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---safework/documents/publication/wcms_116863.pdf), which had been made available to all participants of the Meeting. This book covers most of CIS's achievements since it began in 1959, and Mr Sándi saw no reason to go over its contents in detail.

He took this opportunity instead to talk about the future, and – in particular – about the sustainability of CIS's present-day activities and those foreseen for it in the future. The presentation was accompanied by a PowerPoint slide show entitled: **CIS - 50 years: What we have done, what we do, and what we would like to do in the future**. (See Annex IV for all the slides)

The presentation started with an overview of CIS's present activities, involving both database and other documentation work on one hand and networking/conference activities on the other.

On the documentation work, **Mr Gábor SÁNDI** then asked how many participants actually used CISDOC, the online Encyclopaedia and other CIS products. A number of people raised their hands for each item, demonstrating that these products were actually used by some of CIS's constituents.

To illustrate the way in which CIS was able to contribute to the supply of OSH information, **Mr Gábor SÁNDI** selected the subject of "Nanotechnology". One would expect there to be little information on this relatively new subject area in traditional

OSH information sources, and it might be necessary to look in sources dealing with related subject areas, such as Public Health and Environment Protection.

Mr Gábor SÁNDI then showed the actual search results when looking for information on the hazards of nanotechnology through various sources:

- The ILO Encyclopaedia provided no hits at all.
- PubMed Central provided 764 hits in all, but only an estimated 5% of these seemed to be relevant to OSH. In addition, PubMed Central provides information only on English-language materials.
- Google of course provides a much higher number of hits: 655,000 on English-language sources when the search terms are “nanotechnology safety health”. However, these hits are all, by the nature of the source, restricted to materials found on the Internet, and few if any are from serious journals or monographs, since these are copyrighted documents, not locatable by Google even if online. On the plus side, Google does provide access to non-English language materials, as long as separate search terms are entered for each language searched.
- The Wikipedia also offers information on the subject, under the heading “Health implications of nanotechnology”. Here the problems are the rather unscientific nature of the text, the potential lack of reliability and the small number of links and cited references.
- Many of CIS’s National Centres have put up pages on the subject on their web sites, quite often of high quality. Here the problem is that the information is partial and restricted to materials of national interest.
- Finally, CISDOC. Here, there were just 37 hits. All of these are relevant and from reasonably reliable sources, since CIS does not select any documents that do not fit these criteria. Most of the material is from peer-reviewed journals, monographs or web-pages. In addition, CIS covers many languages, and in fact half of the materials recovered in the search are in languages other than English. (A CIS Bibliography based on this search is in Annex V).

The conclusion to be drawn from this comparison of search strategies is that CISDOC remains among the best, if not the best, source in the world for reliable scientific and technical OSH information. Other sources are too unfocused, haphazardly selected or unreliable, making the work of separating the useful items from a hit list that much harder.

Having summarized CIS's principal database, **Mr Gábor SÁNDI** went on to provide an overview of CIS's present information products as well as of its other activities, mostly in the area of organizing international Meetings involving institutions active in OSH.

For the future, **Mr Gábor SÁNDI** foresaw the continuation of most of CIS's present products and activities. Aside from relatively minor changes in the databases, he saw two major new developments:

1. The integration of CIS databases and other online documents in the structure of the ILO Encyclopaedia.
2. The development of regionalization in the structure of the CIS network of Centres.

7. Presentation by Ms Annick VIROT on the CIS Centres Network – its history and its achievements in the last year

Ms Annick VIROT's presentation is available in Annex VI.

A second presentation by **Ms Annick VIROT** on current promotional efforts by CIS (on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary) and by SafeWork was omitted because of time constraints. A copy of this presentation is, however, available in Annex VII.

8. Presentation by Mr András SZÜCS on recent database and internet developments

Mr András SZÜCS's presentation is available in Annex VIII.

Ms Sheila PANTRY (United Kingdom) remarked that **Mr András SZÜCS** had not mentioned the CIS Centres News feature, and she wondered how many people contributed to it. She also said that she was looking forward to the new web site and she appreciated how very well the system has been managed and put all together.

Replying to the question, **Mr András SZÜCS** said that the fact that not many people were contributing to the CIS Centres News site was instructive for the future and he suggested that this site should be presented in the new system differently, in order that more Centres be encouraged to contribute to it.

Mr Franck MUCHIRI (OSH Specialist in the ILO's Addis Ababa Office) called attention to the picture in the hall facing the audience, which shows farmers using rudimentary farming implements, and which was a very good example of technology still used in developing countries. The challenge for OSH specialists was to adjust their work methodologies to the technology being used. This was especially true in Africa, where there were also additional constraints. **Mr Frank MUCHIRI** reiterated that it was important to account for the needs of developing countries.

Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI said that the ILO was trying to serve the needs of its constituents: it provided products in both digital and paper format and would continue to do so in the future.

9. Presentations by SafeWork staff on SafeWork activities

Dr Yuka UJITA provided an overview of current SafeWork activities, with special emphasis on the implementation of ILO conventions and recommendations (see Annex IX).

Following this, **Dr Begoña CASANUEVA** made a presentation on the World Day for Safety and Health at Work, stressing its history and the current plans for 2010 (see Annex X).

10. Discussions of the morning's presentations

Ms Sheila PANTRY urged people to include publicity in all work plans. She also emphasized the need to repeat the same message many times if there was a desire for the message to be understood and retained. She added that Centres were eagerly awaiting the CIS publicity materials produced for the fiftieth anniversary.

Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI answered that the theme had been chosen in collaboration with the field specialists: she elaborated on the theme and on related topics, such as the changing patterns of work related to the crisis; she explained its very complex structure; she added that in 2010 there was not going to be a booklet but a report that should be available early in the year: it had been outsourced to a consultant. The poster itself will be available in several languages and it will be downloadable from the Internet. Other products were going to be available from January.

Speaking about OSH conventions, she said that one of the advantages of Convention 187 was that it gave Member States the freedom to constitute OSH management systems; based on its four main pillars, Member States are free to apply it in a way suitable to their wishes. The Convention is user-friendly and it shows how to constitute a management system on OSH.

Dr Yuka UJITA asked about World Day products suggesting to modify the format: they are available in PDF and asked if it was possible for people outside the ILO to modify the products.

Dr Begoña CASANUEVA - making clear that she is not an expert in copyright - said that the products can be translated but not modified.

Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI added that SafeWork objective is to have global products. The report itself is protected with copyrights, but whoever wants to adapt can do it but making clear that it is not an ILO world product.

There was some discussion of the actual date of 28 April. Why was this date adopted? Could other dates be used for the same purpose? The consensus was that yes, of course other dates could be used, and the ILO would support OSH celebrations round the year. However, it was a good idea from the publicity point of

view to identify one specific date with this campaign, and 28 April had been adopted because the trade union movement already used it to commemorate workplace deaths and injuries.

Mr Israel SHREIBMAN (Israel), **Mr Pius W. MAKHONGE** (Kenya), **Mr Tanga Ernest LOUROGO** (Burkina Faso) and **Pr. Abdeljalil EL KHOLTI** (Morocco) described their respective countries' approaches to the world day. The dates were not always the same, and the issue of appropriate language used in publicity efforts was raised: people did not necessarily know the ILO's official languages.

Dr. Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI said that SafeWork was going to take all these valuable comments into consideration. She added that SafeWork considers that the World day's primary role was to sensitize people to OSH and related workers' rights. The actual date was not in fact important, but the delivery of a constant message related to OSH was. She urged the Centres not to concentrate too much on details but try to be creative in bringing the OSH message to the public.

11. Presentation by Mr Thomas NETTER on "How to raise awareness of OSH information service providers"

Mr Thomas NETTER works for the Media Programmes Section (DCOMM/MEDIA) of the ILO's Department of Communication and Public Information, which includes strategic ILO elements such as the ILO library, the publications section and the web production unit.

He said that his unit had always worked effectively with SafeWork in the past. They were particularly pleased that they had been able to work with CIS on its 50th anniversary.

As a journalist and an ex-steelworker, he was very aware of the importance of OSH.

He stressed the importance of good communications for governments as well as for workers' and employers' organizations because without them it was very difficult to get the message across. Good communications, adapted to countries' individual needs, involved awareness raising, advocacy and the provision of

assistance when needed. He highlighted the importance of knowledge sharing within the ILO, something that was stressed at the highest levels within the organization.

He said he appreciated the use countries made of Safeday, whether celebrated as a public holiday or as part of the world day. He hoped that its role would expand in the future. He suggested to use it as a platform for awareness raising and for creating a sense of solidarity. He drew a parallel with the Child Labour Day, whose participants felt to be the part of the same global movement.

He also commented on the 2011 World Congress in Istanbul, another excellent opportunity to publicise the importance of OSH.

He recommended that people consult the various guidance documents issued by DCOMM to improve communications, including on how to deal with the media and how to write letters to editors.

He then showed the audience a short CD-ROM video developed by DCOMM to describe its activities.

The audience was asked at this point to ask questions.

Mr Israel SHREIBMAN asked what was his advice on what to do after a work accident, because such occurrences did not usually elicit much interest.

Mr Thomas NETTER answered stating that it was an interesting point: in the case of a major industrial accident there would be strong attention by the media, but this would not be the case after minor accidents. He said that one thing that would usually help was to maintain good personal contacts with journalists.

Mr Renán Alfonso ROJAS GUTIÉRREZ (Colombia) agreed that the media are more interested in spectacular occurrences than in providing information on the day-to-day work of OSH institutions. He said that his institution was doing its best in Colombia to contribute to the creation of a prevention culture, and that it was able to use the media to achieve this aim.

Ms Barbara SZCZEPANOWSKA (Poland) emphasized the usefulness of good websites in order to disseminate information and to exchange information with other countries.

Mr Thomas NETTER agreed and said that the Internet had changed much in the world in the last twenty years. He recalled how difficult it had been to issue a press release before the Internet: for example, it may have been necessary to print 10,000 copies for a simple news item. Today, press releases are not mailed out but links to online versions are e-mailed to most contacts, and hard copy is sent only to people who do not have Internet access.

In the case of the ILO, such links may be sent in 34 languages, with subsidiary links to videos and audio files, and photographs. There was also a feature service, useful to give background information on particular subjects (e.g. what was the ILO response to a particular issue). He said that there were 15,000 subscribers to this service.

He also said that the ILO was actively trying to find a way to draw peoples' attention to ILO services and web pages by augmenting the possibilities of existing search engines such as Google.

Ms Sheila PANTRY drew attention to the information disseminated by the CIS Newsletter. She also suggested that CIS establish a media list, which would help in establishing better contacts with broadcast media that had an enormous influence on public opinion and information gathering all over the world.

Ms Sheila PANTRY recommended that in addition to Safeday, other, more specialized, campaigns be carried out at a regional level for particular sectors of local importance.

12. Presentations on individual Centres *(an asterisk (*) marks presentations also stored on the CIS web site)*

Dr Manuel PARRA (Chile) surveyed the history of his Centre*, the Instituto de Salud Pública (Institute of Public Health). The main tasks of the Institute are the preparation of standards and the dissemination of resource and promotional information on occupational health issues.

Among the resources of the Institute are the John Bloomfield Library, named after the donor of its initial collection, an Online Consultation Service and a Virtual library of OSH information. The library also engaged in training activities.

One priority for the future is the conservation of its material through digitalization. It also had to increase the size and quality of its network of national contacts.

Mr Renán Alfonso ROJAS GUTIÉRREZ (Colombia) made a presentation* about the activities of the Consejo Colombiano de Seguridad (Colombian Safety Council). He said that his centre started to digitalize its collection in 2005, and by now it had electronic copies of 900 articles from Colombian and more than 200 from international periodicals. They also had references to 1200 OSH research projects at Colombian universities.

The council had technical cooperation agreements with unions, industrial associations and the governments. In 2008 alone 28 Conventions had been signed. The council's web site had a wealth of technical information on OSH-related courses, links and conferences.

He surveyed activities, performed in collaboration with the Ministries of Labour and Foreign Affairs, related to the system of certification of the OSH Management System in Colombia. There were also many agreements with enterprises who used information supplied by the Council. He said that two approaches were particularly beneficial for the reinforcement of a preventative culture: concentrate on working with large enterprises whose unions maintained relationships with smaller unions; and encourage a culture of social responsibility in enterprises.

Mr Jonathan GORVIN (Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), United Kingdom) presented the IOSH website*, due to undergo a major transformation on 27 October in order to enhance its usability. He added that the forums managed on the site were an excellent way to share information about OSH. IOSH was also present on Youtube. For the future, Mr Gorvin said that a priority was to translate the site into various languages, in line with IOSH's desire to be active in the international OSH community.

Dr Kuyo-Abel GBELIA (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the main purpose of his centre was to collect information concerning OSH coming in part from CIS, as well as to diffuse OSH information at the local level. The main target group of the centre consisted of safety officers, students and interns. The staff, aside from himself, consisted of two occupational physicians and one documentalist. The documentation centre, open from 8 am until 6 pm every day, had 700 documents, including monographs, specialized journals, reports, theses, studies, the Labour Code, collective agreements, CD-ROMs and the ILO Encyclopedia.

The principal needs of the centre were more computers and furniture. It also needed training of its staff and an evaluation of its services.

Ms Sheila PANTRY (United Kingdom) outlined the history of the CIS Newsletter (www.sheilapantry.com/cis), which she has been editing and distributing for more than 20 years. She recommended the Newsletter as an excellent vehicle for spreading information about OSH matters around the world, and as a source for materials on how to engage in public relations and awareness campaigns.

Mr Ljupco KOCOVSKI (Macedonia) presented the activities of the Macedonian Occupational Safety and Health Organization (MOSHA). He thanked the many partners MOSHA had, including donor organizations in Norway and Germany, and relevant bodies in Macedonia.

Mr Saeed AWAN (Pakistan) described the activities and publications of the centre, showing sample copies of the user-friendly illustrated safety guides written in Urdu. He also talked about the safety campaigns.

Ms Barbara SZCZEPANOWSKA (Poland) congratulated CIS on the occasion of its 50th anniversary. She did a quick overview of CIOP-PIB activities, stressing those aspects that contributed most to consciousness raising: poster competitions, the quarterly OSH journal, the website (the third largest OSH portal in Europe).

She called attention to the fact that 2010 is going to be the 60th anniversary of CIOB-PIB.

Mr Gábor SÁNDI reminded the audience that the Polish Centre was very active in sending CIS abstracts of the Polish literature on OSH, one of the few Centres to do so.

Mr Israel SHREIBMAN (Israel) talked about the different functions of IIOSH, which will celebrate its 50 years as a CIS centre next year. He described some of the changes he had seen in recent years thanks to the activities of CIS Centres: people are much more aware of OSH issues, and are more willing to look for information when they perceive a problem. IIOSH produced information in several languages, in line with the multinational nature of the Israeli workforce.

Among recent innovations, he mentioned an E-learning project in hospitals and a university.

Dr Sweet Far HO (Singapore) surveyed the activities of the Singapore centre. She emphasized the need to reach every stakeholder on the ground. She demonstrated how this was possible through a well-designed internet interface. She said that in Singapore, people were encouraged to take photographs of possible safety violations and send them to the Ministry, which would then normally investigate it.

She said that anything on the website of the Singapore Centre can be downloaded, reissued in a modified manner and translated by anyone in the country. They also have useful links and she asked the participants to give her the websites of the Centres to be included in these links.

Singapore being a country where many languages are used (including languages of migrant workers from other countries), the centre made a special effort to deliver the OSH message to everyone in their language. The key approach was to make sure that every worker was safe. Many avenues were used to reach the public, including advertising on public transportation.

The Chairperson announced that the rest of the Centre presentations would be made the following day. With that, he prorogued the Meeting.

(Morning)

Ms Mary MUCHENGETI (ARLAC Regional Centre, Harare, Zimbabwe) made a short presentation on ARLAC, one of the oldest regional institutes in Africa. She recalled that ARLAC covers 20 African countries, including most of those with English as an official language. It offered many training courses.

Mr Goran VRANIC (Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina), came next. He said that his centre, part of the labour inspectorate in his home region, became in Sept. 2007 a member of IALI, the international association on labour inspectors. He outlined the infrastructure of the Inspection Management System, its risk assessment module and its surveillance plan. He also demonstrated its web page, and showed a promotional video.

Ms Siba HATEM (Arab Institute for Occupational Health and Safety of the Arab Labour Organization, based in Damascus, Syria.) gave a presentation on the activities and role of the centre in the Arabic-speaking countries of the region. It's a non-governmental body. Training activities jointly conducted with other Centres were also surveyed. The Institute also provides translations into Arabic of the OSH-related documents published in other languages, and makes them available free of charge. Recently, the Institute had also embarked on the translation of selected chapters of the ILO Encyclopedia into Arabic. Several workshops had been organized, on topics such as the Safe Management of Chemicals and Environmental Health. An Internet site had recently been set up.

Mr Joshua MATIKO (Tanzania) outlined the different activities of the Centre, such as the setting up of OSH registries in the workplace.

Among the achievements of the previous year were the organizations of a National OSH Training course (lasting 6 weeks), a shorter (5-day) training course and the holding of several promotional programmes such as that celebrating the 28th of April.

The Centre's web site was also demonstrated.

Mrs Nguyen Trinh HUONG (Vietnam) surveyed OSH publications available for Vietnam, including ILO publications such as the guidelines on asbestos translated into Vietnamese during the previous year and distributed to 30 enterprises.

During the same year, a new Technical School on OSH and Environmental Protection was established in Vietnam.

There was strong collaboration between the National Institute on Labour Protection and various universities, including joint organization of OSH exhibitions and of thirty courses on OSH during the year offered to trade unionists.

Special emphasis had been placed on the construction industry because of the high prevalence of accidents and occupational diseases in the sector.

An international workshop had been organized on asbestos.

New approaches in the use of communications networks had been taken, including the use of a virtual-reality theatre to create scenarios of work-related accidents.

Ms Selen SOZEN (Turkey) presented a videotape on ISGUM's activities. She called attention to the fact that the next World Congress will be held in Istanbul in 2011 and she expressed her hope that all participants of the Meeting would be able to attend it. She showed a promotional video concerning the World Congress.

Dr Fathi BADAWI (Kuwait) described the activities of the National Centre in Kuwait. He emphasized the fact that Kuwait had a large population of foreign workers, and that this imposed a big workload on his organization.

Ms Helena JIMÉNEZ GOY (Spain). The Spanish Centre relied heavily on the CISDOC database in its training activities, and she urged the ILO to continue producing this very important source of OSH information. Among its advantages she mentioned the fact that it gave access to original documents and that it was very useful for occupational physicians preparing their thesis. She also recommended that a simpler and more user-friendly interface be prepared for searching the CISDOC database.

Ms Rym AZIZI (Algeria) presented the activities of the organization, which was created in 2005 by statute. The main activities were training and the organization of seminars.

13. REPORT ON CHANGES IN THE CISDOC DATABASE AND RELATED PRODUCTS

1. Introduction

Introducing the topic, **Mr Gábor SÁNDI**, stressed the importance of maintaining the CISDOC database as a reference source for OSH professionals and researchers around the world. He went on to say that management did not necessarily understand the importance of this database and did not always allocate the necessary resources to follow up with it.

Given the general lack of resources, **Mr Gábor SÁNDI** invited the participants to discuss the following question: was it worthwhile to maintain the CISDOC database at all, and could this be done within the ILO?

Ms Sheila PANTRY, while affirming the importance of the database, emphasized the importance of the network in order to keep CISDOC going. She said that information gathering continued to be a very important task, especially as governmental organizations, institutions and universities worldwide had to restrict their activities in the current economic climate. With fewer organizations keeping a tab on what was being done around the world, it was essential to support services (such as CIS) that still kept on performing this task.

She said that new internet-based information sources, such as the Wikipedia, could not be relied upon because of their lack of quality control. Reliable information continued to be hard to find.

She reminded participants that there was still a lot of OSH-related research going on, and that the reports of such research had to be repertoried somehow, in order to avoid duplication of effort. CIS was the ideal organization to do this.

Ms Pantry wondered what constraints, particularly of a financial nature, existed for the future development of CIS?

She returned to the topic of the CIS Centres network, and said that they could function as the ILO's ambassadors to obtain support for CIS's activities.

Mr Gábor SÁNDI said that for the time being CIS was able to continue its database-producing activities, but it was so close to the edge that it may be time to reduce the services it provided. He suggested two possible simplifications for the near future: (1) reduce or eliminate the production of the French version of the database, and (2) eliminate the requirement for scanning and storing a digital copy of every document abstracted into the database.

Ms Barbara SZCZEPANOWSKA supported the continuation of the CISDOC database, and stressed how vital it was for the world's OSH community.

Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI said that it was essential to cover publications in many languages, as workers needing protection were present in all countries of the world. She also said that indeed there were budgetary limitations on what CIS was doing, which is why it was important to rely on the CIS Centers network to provide better coverage around the world.

2. Animated group discussions on the future of CIS and the CIS network of Centres

Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI took over as the facilitator of the group discussions. She asked participants to separate into three groups, and asked each group to choose a group leader, who would report back to the whole group at the end of the discussions. She requested that there should be a numerical and gender balance in each group.

The themes of the three groups were as follows:

1. How can communication between the CIS and the Centres be improved?
2. What is the future of the CIS products?
3. How can we encourage more inter-regional and inter-sub regional communication among CIS Centres?

Group 1 (Mr Janis JANSZ (Australia) rapporteur):

One suggestion was the creation of a common, knowledge-based, e-mail system. This could include discussion forums on both substance (OSH) and the technology used to distribute OSH information. Such systems would have to be updated on a continuous (preferably daily) basis.

The use of social networks (e.g. Twitter) was not recommended however, as they were judged to be too labour-intensive.

Dr Begoña CASANUEVA said that she did not agree with all the things that came up in the group because some of them are unrealistic.

Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI said that SafeWork was fully aware and conscious of the limitations of the SafeWork website, and of the bureaucracy involved in creating it, but it was trying to be innovative.

Mr András SZÜCS explained that the ILO website was being redone according to the needs of its new content management system, forcing all pages to follow the same ILO rules and standards. He said that a consistent site would be available by the end of the year, which would be slimmer but still including all the necessary information.

Mr András SZÜCS added that all efforts would be made to include all information in the three official languages of the ILO, but that, given limitations of resources, personnel and time, this would not be possible for everything, and on some topics only English-language pages would exist at first.

The SafeWork goal was to try to promote discussion and dialogue among Centres and the CIS.

He then talked about the small number of responses he received on the interactive sites he had created (on OSH institutions and CIS Centre news). He said that this limited response indicated to him that this model of information gathering was probably not the right one. He supposed that people in CIS Centres were too busy with their own work, and did not have the time to comply with the requirements of distant servers.

He thought that for the same reason, specialized participation in social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) was not likely to give rise to positive results.

Mr Jonathan GORVIN said that it is easy to forget that CIS Centres do not necessarily communicate effectively.

Mr Shinichi UMEZAWA (Japan) said that before discussing the usefulness of interactive sites, he believed that it was important to establish a well-made, informational webpage. He said that his centre was in the middle of a major upgrade of its own web site.

Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI lauded the effort to aim at more effective collaboration over communication matters among the CIS Centres, but that it was not necessarily up to CIS itself to be the organizer of this effort. She encouraged the Centres to do more to improve communications among themselves, as well as with their users.

Group 2 (Mr Israel SHREIBMAN (Israel), rapporteur):

The group's consensus opinion was that all CIS products were important and provided good value. CIS was the market leader in OSH, and should try to retain this position. It was suggested that a strategic plan be prepared involving ILO staff and representatives of CIS Centres.

In the short term (3-5 years) CIS's priority should go to the following hazard areas:

- ▶ safety management
- ▶ risk assessment
- ▶ occupational hygiene
- ▶ musculoskeletal problems
- ▶ psychosocial
- ▶ law enforcement

It was also suggested that the CIS Thesaurus include terms such as Intervention (primary, secondary, tertiary) and Globalization.

Mr Gábor SÁNDI was happy that so many OSH issues had been covered. He suggested that in addition to other suggestions, the CIS site should also include a good repository of statistical information on occupational accidents and diseases.

He also raised the issue of feedback on whether databases produced by CIS are useful. It would be helpful if Centres that are not present at the Meeting, and that CIS rarely hears from, would provide such feedback as well.

Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI also asked for more feedback from CIS Centres, as well as OSH statistics that were sorely needed.

On the issue of language, **Mr Israel SHREIBMAN** said that for Israel, having just the English-language version of the databases was sufficient. Translation into other languages was the job for CIS Centres.

Mr Gábor SÁNDI asked how many organizations represented in the Meeting subscribed to the CISDOC-TEXT. The answer was five.

He suggested that if his suggestion that not all documents entered into the database be scanned for inclusion in CISDOC-TEXT was adopted, then items in the database without links to full-text versions would be marked (e.g. with an asterisk). He then asked if there was any objection to this proposed practice by some of the Centres. On the whole, the proposal was not received favourably – the assurance that all documents abstracted in CISDOC have a corresponding full-text version was one of the strong points of CISDOC.

Mr Stéphane VAXELAIRE (France) stressed the importance of improving communications. Procedure should become friendlier, up-to-date documents adapted to cultures and include examples of practical transfer. Training of trainers programmes are very important – a good example was the E-learning programme established in the ILO Training Centre in Turin. He also emphasized the importance of communicating with non-specialists in OSH.

Group 3 (Eng. Faiz AL-THIGA (Saudi Arabia), rapporteur):

Group 3 came up with 16 recommendations. **Eng. Faiz AL-THIGA** summarized these recommendations to the plenary Meeting.

Mr Gábor SÁNDI asked for clarification of one of the proposals: the placement of photos of CIS Centres staff on a web site, and wondered if this was a good idea, because of privacy issues.

Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI raised the issue of regionalization and sub-regionalization and said that we do not as yet know for certain whether a regional/sub-regional approach would in fact improve cooperation between Centres.

Personally, she thought that a regional and sub-regional approach was useful, but in any case, a direct contact with CIS Geneva would always be possible.

She then asked for reactions to the following question: what is the added value to have regional Centres?

Mr Saeed AWAN said that once he sent out a question to all CIS Centres, with not a single one answering him. He suggested that the accreditation of CIS Centres should not be permanent and he advanced the notion of dynamic accreditation.

Ms Annick VIROT said that she was very much in favour of Regional Centres, an idea that originated from a survey of CIS centres in 2003. It was a good idea to develop regional networks, coordinated by a centre, for countries that shared similar problems, and – often – a common official language.

Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI suggested an ongoing monitoring of the performance of Centres. She suggested that the recognition of a centre as such could be withdrawn if they showed no activity during a certain period. Setting minimum standards was a good idea.

Mr András SZÜCS made the following comments:

1. CIS Centre addresses: CIS was close to establishing a database of CIS Centres in which Centres themselves could update parameters.
2. There was a possibility of starting a free online forum in which groups interested in an issue could start a topic and thus initiate an exchange of opinions and experiences.

3. It was up to CIS to define what it wanted exactly from its Centres. He hoped that in the coming months this could be made more clear. He said that it would be to the benefit of everyone to engage in database collaboration and thus create an accurate, up-to-date information service.

Mr Gábor SÁNDI said that the ideal location for regional Centres was in areas where there were few, if any, Centres right now: Subsaharan Francophone Africa, the Caribbean and Central Asia.

Ms Barbara SZCZEPANOWSKA proposed that translation of the database into French and Spanish be discontinued. She said that English has by now become the most generally used international language, and if CIS had scarce resources, this was one obvious area where savings could be made.

She asked **Mr Gábor SÁNDI** to give more details on proposed changes in the database because she was in charge of writing abstracts at the Polish National Centre and this was information she needed for this job.

Mr Gábor SÁNDI said the structure was not going to be changed significantly. As for the non-English language versions of the CIS database, it was only the French version that CIS was doing as of now, the Spanish version was produced by CIS's National Centre in Spain.

He suggested other countries could do it e.g. Belgium and he did not see major structural changes to be made apart from shorter abstracts and fewer indexing terms.

Mr András SZÜCS said that the next version of the database will have the capability to add information in any language to it.

Mr Franck MUCHIRI wanted to back the regional approach, which would be quite appropriate to Africa, where regional economic communities, harmonizing various aspects of the economy, were already a reality.

Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI said that all Centres would be contacted in the future in order to find out their views on the raised subjects.

Ms Annick VIROT said that she did not think that the need to be translated into French was the main reason for the lateness of updates of the database, and that, in any case, the EU contribution received by CIS required CIS to produce a bilingual product. She added, however, that just translating the title of publications into French may be a good compromise, especially as the descriptors were translated automatically in any case.

Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI devoted some time to a discussion of the current state of the Encyclopaedia. She said that producing a new edition was a huge task, not made any easier by the current economic crisis. Once the decision to produce the new edition was taken, the ILO would be actively looking for writers and editors for the Encyclopaedia, and Dr Al-Tuwaijri foresaw a role for CIS Centres in this process. Some subjects in the Encyclopaedia called for only minor updating, others (e.g. new technologies like nanotechnology) for a completely new treatment.

Dr Manuel PARRA (Chile) asked if there was a list of qualifications required of writers for the Encyclopaedia and if the first version of the new edition was to be only in English.

Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI answered that writers had to be an authority on the subject and that indeed the new edition will initially be in English only. Other language versions would be produced if national institutions were willing to finance them.

Mr Saeed AWAN (Pakistan) suggested that CIS Centres could exchange detailed e-mails concerning their promotional activities.

Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI suggested that formal request should be sent out to explain better with all the specifications; she said that even the editorial details we have to care about were not a lot, still SafeWork has to ask the Centres formally.

Ms Barbara SZCZEPANOWSKA regretted that in many of the presentations reports concerned general activities, with little or nothing said about CIS-related activities.

Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI said that one of the strengths of the CIS Centres network was its diversity. She also said that there needed to be no worry about the future role of OSH within the ILO, because it remained a solid part of the ILO's Decent Work agenda.

3. Ending remarks

Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI thanked all the participants, the SafeWork team, the interpreters and the interns.

The Chairperson closed the Meeting.

ANNEXES

- I List of participants.
- II **Mr Assane DIOP's** opening speech[Ⓢ]
- III **Dr Sameera AL-TUWAIJRI's** opening speech[Ⓢ]
- IV **Mr Gábor SÁNDI's** PowerPoint presentation: CIS - 50 years:
What we have done, what we do, and what we would like to do in the future. [Ⓢ]
- V CIS Bibliography on the OSH aspects of Nanotechnology.
- VI **Ms Annick VIROT's** presentation on the CIS Centres Network.[Ⓢ]
- VII **Ms Annick VIROT's** presentation on promotional efforts by CIS and SafeWork. [Ⓢ]
- VIII Presentation by **Mr András SZÜCS** on recent database and internet developments. [Ⓢ]
- IX Presentation by **Dr Yuka UJITA** on SafeWork activities. [Ⓢ]
- X Presentation by **Dr Begoña CASANUEVA** on the World Day. [Ⓢ]

[Ⓢ] : Available on CIS Web page at :

<http://www.ilo.org/legacy/english/protection/safework/cis/about/mtg2009/index.htm>