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Health and life at **work**: A basic human right



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A basic human right**



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Health and life at work : A basic human right

*“Everyone has the right to life, to work...
to just and favourable conditions of work...”*



*Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate
for the health and well-being of himself and of his family...”*

(From the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, UN, 1948).

Whose safety, health and life are we talking about?

Yours... Mine...

Every worker's life!

Then how can we sit back when...

Every **15 Seconds**,
a worker dies from a work-related
accident or disease.

Every **15 Seconds**,
160 workers
have a work-related **accident**.

But what does this mean?

It means that **by the end of this day**,
nearly **1 million workers**
will suffer a workplace **accident**.

It means that **by the end of this day**,
around **5,500 workers will die**
due to an accident or disease from their work!

Imagine the headline news if 5,500 people
died each day in airplane crashes!

But occupational accidents and work-related diseases
mainly go unnoticed.

The public generally does not hear about those
who die in the workplace because they die one at a time,
often in small towns, noticed only by their family,
friends and co-workers.

THE 28TH OF APRIL IS THE WORLD DAY FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK. LET'S STOP AND THINK ABOUT THESE DEATHS AND INJURIES ON THE JOB :

How can we prevent one workplace accident from taking place, or avoid one death at the workplace? Not just today, but every day.

Each one of us is responsible for these lives and deaths :

- As employers and managers, we are responsible for ensuring that the workplaces under our control are safe and without risk to health, we are responsible for educating ourselves on what workplace safety and health measures are, and for providing for the protection of our workers.
- As governments, we are responsible for providing the infrastructure – the laws and services – necessary to ensure that workers remain employable and that enterprises flourish. This includes the development, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, of a national policy and programme and a system of inspection to enforce compliance with occupational safety and health legislation and policy.
- As academics who claim knowledge in this field, we are responsible to get the awareness message across, not once, not twice, but at least every 15 seconds.
- As occupational safety and health specialists, we are responsible to provide advice, and to promote risk assessment and monitoring of the working environment.
- As workers, we are responsible to work safely and to protect ourselves and not endanger others, to know our rights, and to participate in implementing preventative measures, not just for our sake but for the sake of our families waiting for us at home.

No matter where we work, there may be a risk. We cannot change the past but we can prevent it from being repeated. We all have a chance to join the prevention efforts.

Could you be one of the **one million** people who will have a **work accident today**?

Maybe - but remember, this accident **can be prevented**, and it is everyone's responsibility to help prevent it.

Accidents, fatalities and ill-health which result from work can be prevented through management systems which rely on controlling the hazards and risks in the workplace. It is a shared responsibility, calling for governments' vision and commitment and an active role by employers and workers in the improvement of working conditions. This includes the value we place on being safe and healthy, the belief that our actions can make a difference, and the motivation to act on our beliefs.

THE RIGHT TO LIFE, THE RIGHT TO A *SAFE AND HEALTHY* LIFE

Life is precious. A good quality of life is priceless.

This good quality of life is more than just the mere absence of death. It can only be achieved with good physical and mental health and social well-being.

For the majority of people, most of their precious active life is spent at work. Therefore, how important is it to work in a safe and healthy environment?

We ask for clean air, unpolluted oceans, greener land and safer streets... but how clean, unpolluted, green or safe is our workplace?

We have a right to live. More importantly, we have a right to live well, to live decently, both at home and outside.



Sometimes we make it sound as though “life” is what happens outside of work hours, as though it is somehow acceptable in the workplace to sacrifice our well-being.

It is part of the job, we're being paid for it... The fact that we are paid for our work does not mean that we should face hazards that can be avoided. We have the technology and managerial know-how to make workplaces safe and healthy – let us use them.

It is everyone's right to build a safe, healthy and happy home - their relaxation zone. Then how much more important is it for employers to make the workplace - the productive zone - an even safer and healthier place?

As employers, it is our fundamental duty to provide a safe and healthy workplace. As workers, it is our fundamental right to work under safe and healthy conditions. Occupational safety and health is not a bonus or an add-on. Knowing our obligations as employers and our rights as workers will involve everyone in the prevention process. In return, a safe and healthy workforce can only be more productive. We, employers, workers and governments, everybody, wins.



“The protection of the worker against sickness, disease and injury arising out of his employment” is not only a labour right but a fundamental human right and is one of the main objectives of the ILO as stated in its Constitution. Therefore, the ILO contribution to the recognition of human rights in the world of work is clearly reflected in the fundamental principles of its labour standards.

We all need to wake up for a purpose. We need to feel useful for ourselves, for our families and for society. A feeling that our actions are bringing results can give us a sense of accomplishment. But our workplaces should protect us from harm. If we work in risky environments, then we go to work everyday with a high chance of coming home injured, sick - or not coming back home at all.

THE RIGHT TO SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK IN INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (UN, 1948)

“Everyone has the right to life, to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment”.

INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS, (UN, 1976)

“Recognize the right of everyone to work; the right of everyone to enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work which ensure in particular, safe and healthy working conditions; the right to the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, in particular, the improvement of all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene; the prevention, treatment and control of epidemic, endemic, occupational and other diseases; the creation of conditions which would assure to all medical service and medical attention in the event of sickness.”

ILO CONSTITUTION, (1919)

“Whereas universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice; And whereas conditions of labour exist involving such injustice; hardship and privation to large numbers of people as to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperiled; and an improvement of those conditions is urgently required; as, for example,... the protection of the worker against sickness, disease and injury arising out of his employment.”

ILO DECLARATION OF PHILADELPHIA, (1944)

“The principles which should inspire the policy of its Members in order to achieve: ... adequate protection for the life and health of workers in all occupations; the extension of social security measures to provide a basic income to all in need of such protection and comprehensive medical care.”

ILO CONVENTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The ILO establishes international labour standards, in the form of Conventions and Recommendations. About 80 of these deal with occupational safety and health, including, in particular, the following:

● THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH CONVENTION, 1981 (No. 155)

“Employers shall be required to ensure that, so far as reasonably practicable, the workplaces, machinery, equipment and processes under their control are safe and without risk to health” (Art.16.1).

● THE PROMOTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH CONVENTION, 2006 (No. 187)

“Each Member shall promote and advance, at all relevant levels, the right of workers to a safe and healthy working environment” (Art. 3.1).

This defeats the object of working, which should allow us to feel helpful and needed; it becomes a risk taken for granted, as though it is the price to pay for having a job.

In this sense, when it comes to workers' health, work can be a positive experience or a very negative one. When we work, we become financially independent: we can reward ourselves with satisfying our basic needs and to indulge our desires. In turn, the whole give-and-take process interacts with our social aspirations and has repercussions on our psychological and physical health - our well-being. This workplace which takes us away from our homes for a major part of every day should then respect our well-being. Being productive and active for decades of our lives should allow us to preserve our health long after we enter our retirement years.

SEOUL DECLARATION ON SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK, (2008) (WORLD CONGRESS SUMMIT ON SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK, ILO/ISSA).

“Recalling that the right to a safe and healthy working environment should be recognized as a fundamental human right and that globalization must go hand in hand with preventative measures to ensure the safety and health of all at work.”

ILO DECLARATION ON SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR A FAIR GLOBALIZATION, (2008)

“In the context of accelerated change, the commitments and efforts of Members to place full and productive employment and decent work at the centre of economic and social policies... through which the Decent Work Agenda is expressed... In particular, developing and enhancing measures of social protection – social security and labour protection – which are sustainable and adapted to national circumstances, including healthy and safe working conditions;... and adapting its scope and coverage to meet the new needs and uncertainties generated by the rapidity of technological, societal, demographic and economic changes.”

ILO/WHO COMMITTEE ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, (1995)

“Occupational health should aim at: the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of workers in all occupations; the prevention amongst workers of departures from health caused by their working conditions; the protection of workers in their employment from risks resulting from factors adverse to health; the placing and maintenance of the worker in an occupational environment adapted to his physiological and psychological capabilities; and, to summarize, the adaptation of work to man and of each man to his job.”

WHO CONSTITUTION, (1948)

“Health: A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of diseases or infirmity.”

WHO GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH FOR ALL 1994-2000

“According to the principles of the United Nations, WHO and ILO, every citizen of the world has a right to healthy and safe work and to a work environment that enables him or her to live a socially and economically productive life.”



A CHANGING WORLD, A CHANGING WORKFORCE

The extent and pace of technological change have radically affected every sector of the economy and every region of the world. This has brought about changes in the characteristics of organizations and enterprises.

Greater flexibility to respond to production demands has also determined changes in employment patterns and labour relations.

As a result, we are witnessing:

- an increase in precarious contracts, in temporary and subcontract work;
- downsizing and outsourcing;
- an increase in working from home;
- changes in working time arrangements and in working hours;
- changes in the composition of the workforce:
 - *a higher percentage of older workers and women workers;*
 - *a large proportion of the working population in developing countries engaged in the informal economy;*
- increased mobility of the workforce and migration for work, resulting in cultural and ethnic diversity;
- a decreased rate of unionization.

Demographic and occupational changes will affect the type and nature of occupational risks and their management. Changes in the socioeconomic balance in the world will affect the workplace. The global financial crisis is undoubtedly part of a changing world which could impact on safety and health, and we have to accommodate and respond to it wisely.

DOES THE CURRENT GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS AFFECT MY SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK?

As safety and health at work is an essential part of labour relations, it is affected by the same forces of change that prevail in the national and global socioeconomic context.

All the trends in a changing world and workforce are expected to continue and be aggravated by the crisis.

WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL IMPACT?

Negative working conditions, poor safety and health and an increase in accidents, diseases and fatalities for millions of women and men.



WHO WILL SUFFER MOST?

Those employed in precarious and informal work, including younger and older workers, migrants and low-skilled workers.



The evidence from other crises shows that a crisis puts working conditions and quality at risk. It causes uncertainty and antagonisms at all levels of the organization and society.



Companies around the world are :

- decreasing production ;
- cutting jobs ;
- closing factories ;
- laying off workers in large numbers ;
- increasing part-time and temporary work ;
- out-sourcing and subcontracting.

A global crisis is likely to lead to an increased incidence of psychosocial factors at work. Work-related stress and fatigue can then lead to accidents and diseases, reduce performance and affect working relations.

This stress can be triggered by :

- reorganization ;
- perceived lack of control over work ;
- insecurity at work – fear of dismissal or unemployment ;
- changes in working time patterns : irregular or less predictable working hours, (e.g. *very limited hours as a consequence of involuntary part-time work or excessively long working hours as a consequence of involuntary overtime*) ;
- job demands due to the intensification of work, or workers being required to be more flexible and to learn fast in order to perform new tasks ;
- being out of a job.

If not well planned, changes in work organization, especially part-time and precarious work, can make workers feel :

- isolated or not properly involved in the enterprise or organization ;
- that they no longer have the same career or training opportunities.

Many such jobs are characterized by :

- tasks which do not require skill ;
- workers being employed with insufficient knowledge of the job ;
- inability of workers to organize to protect themselves.

This can lead to :

- increased exposure to hazardous agents and poor working conditions ;
- no safety and health training for these workers ;
- less autonomy over their work ;
- less opportunity to participate in workplace decision making.

The organizational changes of restructuring, such as outsourcing, increased part-time work, and subcontracting, complicate the management of safety and health at work. This creates uncertainty and misunderstandings about responsibilities, especially where several different employers are working on one site, as in the case of construction, for example. Precarious working conditions will increase, adding to the risk of accidents and ill-health in micro-enterprises in the informal economy, where a formal management structure is lacking and survival is the priority.

Reduced production may reverse the tight schedules and peaks of intensive work in production or services which were prevalent before the crisis; but these may also increase for certain industries where there has been severe reduction in personnel. Some employees will have to work extra hard and longer hours to compensate for the lack of human and financial resources, leading to physical and mental workload and fatigue.

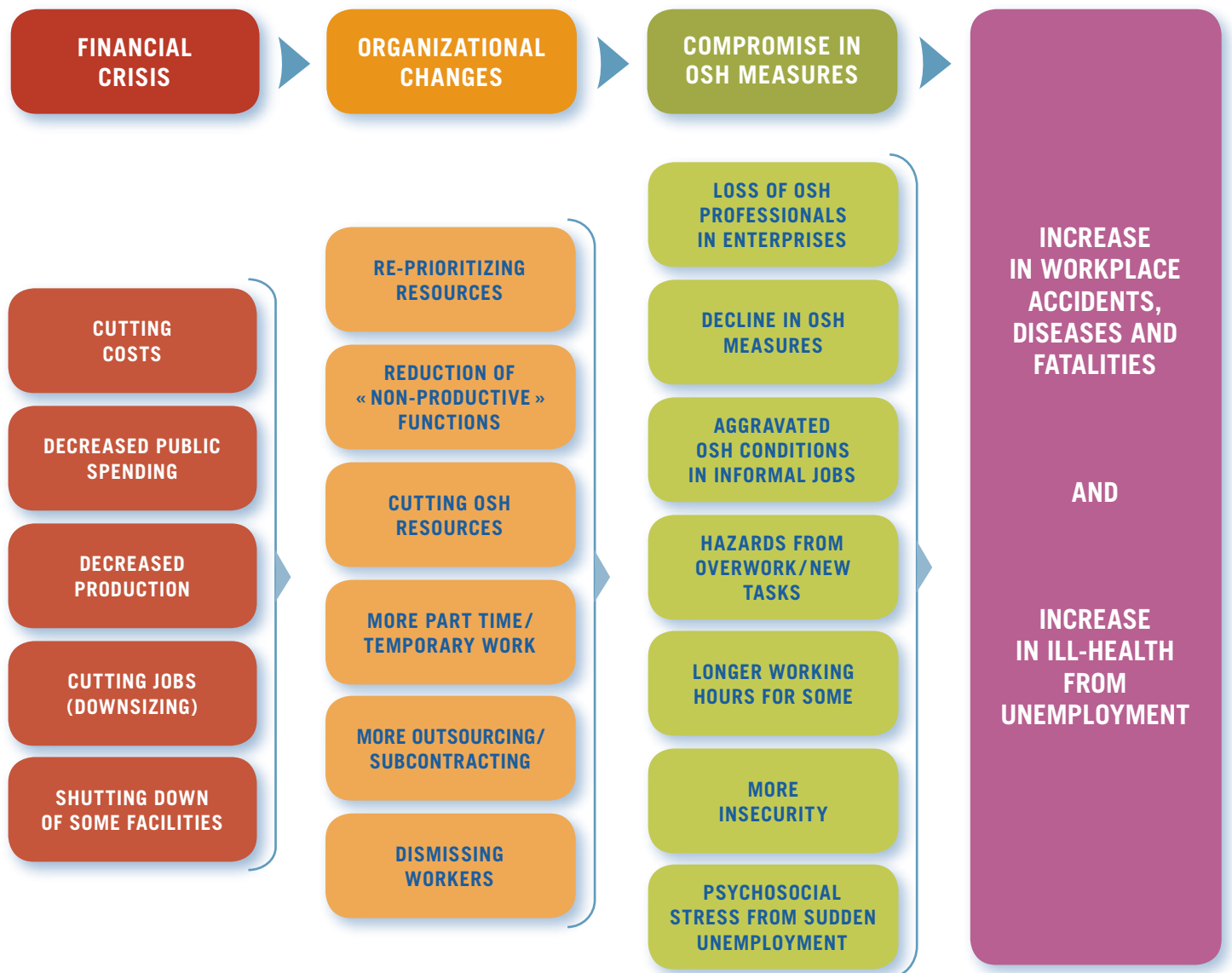


Management changes in this period may lead to decreased management of traditional hazards and risks, under the spurious argument of a necessary reduction in costs. This will often be the case in small-scale enterprises which traditionally lack the resources and the know-how to manage occupational safety and health and may consider it a cost rather than an investment.

The potential impact of the crisis on the health of workers goes beyond the victims of downsizing and the remaining workers themselves. It also affects their families, and the communities in which the restructuring occurs. It is expected that the number of workplace accidents and diseases and ill-health due to unemployment will rise in light of the present economic crisis, as some companies and governments will be tempted to ignore occupational safety and health standards. The decrease in public spending will also compromise the capacities of labour inspectorates and other occupational safety and health services.



THE FINANCIAL CRISIS AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT ON SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK:



It is in such situations of crisis that the voices calling for the right to safe and healthy workplaces should be loud and not muted.

Health and safety at work TODAY is a basic human right more than ever.

When cutting costs, why does safety and health have to go first? Who will continue any production at all if all the workers are ill, injured or dead? It is time to look beyond tomorrow and after tomorrow, into the future, in which we could find ourselves paying the price for a compromise in the wrong area.

We, everyone, should take matters in our own hands, and not wait for further research around the impact of the crisis on worker's safety and health... or it may just be too late.

*“Beyond the economic issues we have a moral obligation :
The human costs are far beyond unacceptable.”*

Sameera Al-Tuwajri, ILO SafeWork Director



How can the ILO help you claim the right to a **safe and healthy workplace** even in times of global financial crisis?

The ILO was a pioneer in asserting the value of human rights which include civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, as reflected in the preamble of its Constitution. The ILO has a special responsibility and role to play at this challenging time, by virtue of its mandate and its tripartite structure, which means that governments, employers' and workers' organizations have an equal voice in determining its standards, programme and actions.

Would one be able to ask for rights with assertiveness if they were not backed up by international standards?

The ILO develops international labour standards, including standards in the field of occupational safety and health, to help protect you at work. These standards exist to guide governments in setting national laws and regulations and enforcing their application at the workplace. If a country ratifies an ILO Convention, it has to incorporate its provisions into national law and practice. This means that employers and workers and their organizations also have the framework to improve working conditions and occupational safety and health. This is why ILO standards are promoted worldwide to ensure safe and healthy working environments.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES IN CORE LABOUR STANDARDS ON OSH

- A national system on OSH should be in place
- A legislative framework should be adopted
- A national policy should be established and put into practice
- A national programme on OSH should be formulated and implemented
- Mechanisms for inter-institutional and intersectoral coordination should be established
- A national system of recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases should be established and regularly updated for preventive purposes
- Legislation on OSH should be enforced
- OSH is a joint tripartite responsibility
- OSH preventative measures should be established at the enterprise level
- Employers have obligations and responsibilities
- Workers have rights and duties
- Occupational health services for all workers should be established
- A knowledge base is essential for the implementation of OSH measures
- Health promotion at the workplace is an integral part of OSH practice
- An OSH preventative culture should be promoted and progressively established



OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE DECENT WORK AGENDA

The ILO's Decent Work Agenda is a concrete response to the present challenges. Decent work is defined as the right to productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. It is indispensable in times of crisis.

Work can only be decent if it is safe and healthy. Work that is well paid but unsafe is not decent. Work practiced freely but which exposes workers to health hazards is not decent. A fair employment contract for a work that impairs one's well-being is not decent work. Decent Work must be safe work.

Involving all stakeholders in the design of comprehensive, effective and efficient mechanisms of response to the potential impact of the crisis on safety and health at work should be included in the framework of country programmes. The ILO and its constituents are active in defining "Decent Work Country Programmes" (DWCPs) to ensure that country programmes, projects and activities are in full compliance with the ILO's occupational safety and health standards.

Helping constituents prioritize safety and health at work is important in order for it to become part and parcel of national economic and development plans.

TRIPARTISM AND BEYOND

The ILO is in a unique position because of its tripartite structure, established by its constitution. It has the capability to create solutions for workplace problems through consultation with workers, employers and governments. It is therefore in an ideal situation to develop effective standards and work practices at both the national and enterprise level that lead to significant improvements in the safety and health of workers.

Meanwhile, there are other stakeholders who should have an active voice in decisions through consultation and cooperation with the social partners. The complexity and magnitude of the challenge requires broadening of the safety and health partnership, to include:

- relevant ministries;
- labour inspectorates;
- occupational health services;
- the scientific community;
- associations of professionals;
- associations of informal economy and low-income workers and other key stakeholders;
- representatives of vulnerable groups.

How can Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) feed into a safer and healthier workplace? And will it fade as financial problems move to the forefront?

Enterprises face a dynamic business environment that requires them to be productive and competitive in order to survive and grow. At the same time, with a better informed and demanding society, the long-term business viability of enterprises increasingly depends not only on their productivity but also on meeting the legal requirements and social expectations that come with their roles as corporate citizens of the local and international community. This becomes particularly evident in the context of the present financial crisis.

The challenge at a time of changing structure of production and work organization is to build the supportive systems and the managerial competencies that enable enterprises to address the emerging issues through sound safety and health management. Innovations in risk management and promotion of workers' health, training and education should continue to occupy an important part of CSR agendas. This will help employers to create an environment in which workers' rights are respected and complaints are listened to and resolved in a fair way. In turn, this fulfilment of human rights is not just a legal requirement and social responsibility. It is also a wise business practice.

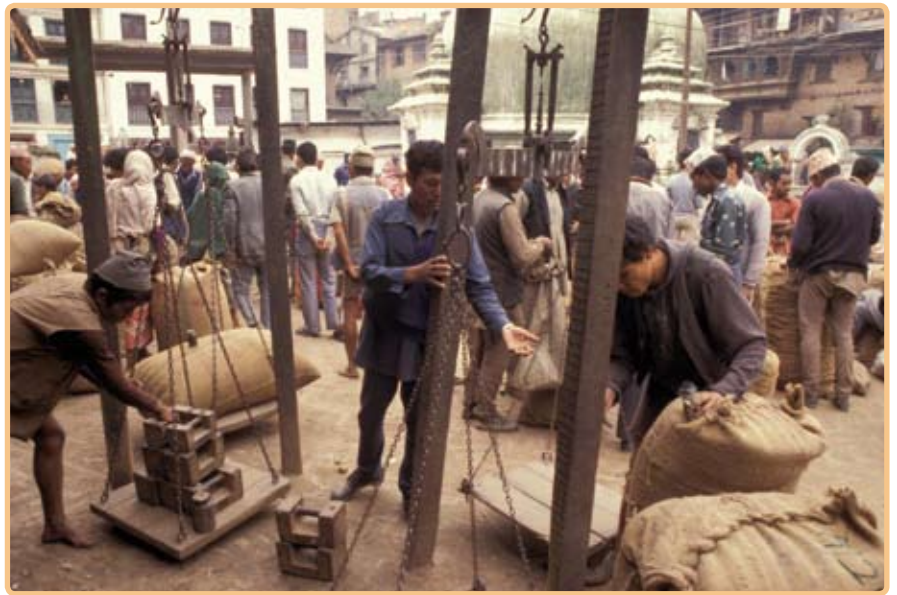


PLENTY OF KNOWLEDGE TO SHARE AND MORE TO DISCOVER

As public awareness on safety and health at work tends to be low, it does not get the priority it deserves.

In the context of the economic crisis, even more efforts should be made to change this tendency. International and national action needs to be stimulated. Awareness-raising of the potential implications of such crises for workplace accidents and diseases can help people and high-level decision makers understand the seriousness of the dilemma. People need to be informed of the existence of effective legal and technical tools, methodologies and measures to prevent occupational accidents and diseases. They should know that the costs of occupational accidents and work-related diseases far outweigh the costs of investments in good safety and health measures, that those improvements can often be made at little or no cost, and that productivity is often increased as a result.

The development of an appropriate response to the impact of the crisis on occupational safety and health should make use of the collective body of knowledge, experience and good practices in this field. On the eve of its 50th anniversary, the ILO's International Occupational Safety and Health Information Center (CIS) is to be credited for years of networking with over 150 CIS centers around the world – perhaps there is one in your country. Their main aim has always been to spread knowledge as accurately and as extensively as possible.



What other recent ILO tools are there for the promotion of workplace safety and health at all times?

Moving from prescription to a promotional and preventative approach, the new *Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187)* adapts to the needs of today in the field of workplace safety and health. It incorporates the core principles from the ILO Standards on occupational safety and health and provides guidelines for a coherent and effective national system for safety and health management.

Managing the field of safety and health at work can be as complicated or as simple as you make it. Other than the international response, it is rooted at the national and at the enterprise levels, involving many actors.



At the national level

A National Occupational Safety and Health Policy

Priority should be given to occupational safety and health in national agendas. National occupational safety and health policies demonstrate a commitment and a vision by the national authorities to further a preventive safety and health culture through public declarations, legislation and well-written guidance documents.

A National Occupational Safety and Health System

A systems approach to occupational safety and health management at the national level implies a continuous improvement and assessment of preventative measures. Crisis situations should be factored into the planning of safety and health systems and programmes. A national system includes all the basic infrastructures for a better response to workplace safety and health issues, including legislation, policies and programmes, labour inspection and occupational health services, information, training and research, occupational accident and disease insurance schemes, representative organisations of employers and workers, and the means for collaboration in addition to a mechanism for collecting data on work-related accidents and diseases.



Do you have a national system of recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases?

Numbers and figures are important and they do articulate the extent of the problem. Their main purpose is prevention. The collection of statistical data on the incidence and prevalence of injuries and ill health due to accidents and exposures also identifies priority areas for intervention and prevention. Using these figures will allow everyone to advocate better conditions and to inform decision makers.

Does legislation covering occupational safety and health exist in your country, do people know about it, and who implements it?

Safety and health legislation provides the minimum requirements for the competent authorities (ministries dealing with occupational safety and health, labour inspection services, etc.), employers and workers to implement their shared responsibility for occupational safety and health. But safety and health at work is a discipline affected by changes in technological development, work organization, research, and even economic transition; therefore, legislation needs to be updated accordingly.

Simply having legislation in place does not imply that all those concerned know about it. Some laws and regulations remain on paper in the ministries they were developed in. Enterprises just do not know about them. Employers are not always informed. Workers may not be aware of their rights. So how can we expect to implement what we do not know exists in the first place? It would be helpful for the national authorities in charge of safety and health to provide tailored guidelines for employers and workers to help them better understand their duties and rights. This would help simplify the provisions of national safety and health regulations which can sometimes be very comprehensive or complicated. A clear guideline will direct employers and workers in the right track and will explicitly assist them in implementing preventative measures at the workplace.

A National Occupational Safety and Health Programme

In order to develop a strategy for implementing safety and health measures at a national level, a set of targets, indicators, responsibilities, resources and a timeframe should be set. This is a programme. Based on a national review of the current situation, what is known as the national occupational safety and health profile, one can identify gaps, challenges and priorities for action. The programme can then aim at improving the capacity and performance of any or all components of the national occupational safety and health system.

Such programmes should strengthen occupational safety and health service structures, national government departments and inspection and enforcement systems. Inspection bodies can be trained and motivated to take on an advisory role as a means to encourage compliance as well as their enforcement and sanctioning role.

Participation in tripartite dialogue and collective bargaining for occupational safety and health improvements should be promoted, as should advocacy campaigns and initiatives by workers' and employers' organizations and other stakeholders.

At the enterprise level

A National Occupational Safety and Health Management System can also be reflected at the enterprise level

In order to address the increasing application of management principles to occupational safety and health and the demand for a standard in this area, the ILO adopted Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems (ILO-OSH 2001). Their application implies a continuous improvement through a clear-cut strategy at the workplace, based on :

- adopting a safety and health policy ;
- organizing for safety and health measures, with clear responsibilities, communication and cooperation ;
- planning and implementing the preventative and protective measures based on risk assessment ; (such measures depend on a hierarchy of implementation, starting with the elimination of the hazard, through reduction of risk by engineering controls to administrative measures and, as a last resort, the wearing of personal protective equipment) ;
- evaluating, or monitoring and measuring performance of the safety and health measures taken ;
- workers participation, and
- taking action for improvement.



Health promotion at the workplace can respond to the stress caused by organizational restructuring

Safety and health at work does not merely mean preventing workers from being exposed to workplace risks and hazards and to protect them against these. It also involves being proactive in promoting healthy lifestyles and practices. Using the workplace as a platform to raise awareness of healthy lifestyles can help workers and reach out to their families and the community as a whole.

In times of crisis and restructuring, health promotion in the workplace can help workers cope with psychosocial stressors. Any introduction of changes in the workplace requires an assessment of psychosocial factors and needs to be carefully managed to reduce stress.



The right to a safe and healthy working environment

The ILO uses platforms such as world congresses and summits to confirm the commitment of decision-makers to the cause of workplace safety and health. The most recent is the **Seoul Declaration on Occupational Safety and Health**.

It belongs to you - make use of it.

As a government, an employer, a worker, a professional, or a member of society, the Declaration talks to you... it can break down the obstacles.

Isn't placing occupational safety and health as a priority on national agendas a dream? The call has come. It is your turn to exploit it to the benefit of all.

Seoul Declaration on Safety and Health at Work

The Safety and Health Summit

Having met in Seoul, Republic of Korea, on 29 June 2008 on the occasion of the 10th Summit of the International Labour Office, the International Social Security Association (ISSA) with the participation of senior professionals, employers' and workers' representatives,

Recognizing the serious consequences of work-related accidents and diseases, which per year world-wide and an economic loss of 4 percent of global Gross Domestic Product,

Recognizing that improving safety and health at work has a positive impact on world economic growth,

Recalling that the right to a safe and healthy working environment should be recognized and implemented in order to ensure the safety and health of all at work,

Recognizing the importance of the instruments on safety and health at work of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and its members' contribution in implementing these instruments,

Recalling that the promotion of occupational safety and health and the prevention of occupational risks are part of the mission and of the Decent Work Agenda,

Recalling that the prevention of occupational risks and the promotion of workers' health are part of the Conceptual Framework of Dynamic Social Security,

Recognizing the importance of education, training, consultation and the exchange of experiences and best practices,

Recognizing the important role played by governments and the social partners, professional associations and employers' organizations in providing treatment, support and rehabilitation services,

Recognizing the importance of cooperation among international organizations and institutions,

Welcoming progress achieved through international and national efforts to improve safety and health at work,

Declares that

- Promoting high levels of safety and health at work is the responsibility of all stakeholders. Governments should ensure that priority is given to occupational safety and health in national development strategies and policies.
- A national preventative safety and health culture is one in which the right to a safe and healthy working environment is recognized, and where the principle of prevention is accepted, responsibilities and duties, and where the principle of prevention is accepted.
- The continuous improvement of occupational safety and health should be a priority for all stakeholders, including the development of a national policy taking into account the International Labour Convention, 1981 (No. 155).
- Governments should
 - Consider the ratification of the ILO Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health as an integral part of their national development strategies and policies.
 - Ensure that continued actions are taken to create and enhance a national preventative safety and health culture.
 - Ensure that the occupational safety and health of workers is protected through health standards, including a strong and effective labour inspection system.
- Employers should ensure that
 - Prevention is an integral part of their activities, as high safety and health standards are essential for productivity and economic growth.
 - Occupational safety and health management systems are established in an effective and systematic way.
 - Workers and their representatives are consulted, trained, informed and involved in occupational safety and health management systems.
- Affirming the workers' right to a safe and healthy working environment, workers should
 - Follow safety and health instructions and procedures, including on the use of personal protective equipment.
 - Participate in safety and health training and awareness-raising activities.
 - Cooperate with their employer in measures related to their safety and health at work.
- The World Congress on Safety and Health at Work is an ideal forum to promote safety and health at work.
- Progress made on achieving safety and health at work should be reviewed on a regular basis.
- The Summit participants commit to taking the lead in promoting a preventative safety and health culture on national agendas.

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<http://www.ilo.org/safeday>

DECENT WORK, SPREADING BEYOND THE ILO

With the aim of achieving poverty reduction and development which is equitable, inclusive and sustainable, the UN system, led by the ILO, has undertaken the responsibility of jointly promoting Decent Work.

*“... Working for social justice is more than just the theme
of our 90th anniversary.
It is our assessment of the past and our mandate for the future.”*

*Juan Somavia,
Director-General of the International Labour Office*

With the adoption of the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, the ILO and its tripartite constituents have taken a further step in an important process of strengthening their capacity to promote Decent Work.



**Decent work implies above all,
safe and healthy work.**

**The final message is loud and clear:
Even in a changing world,
we tolerate NO COMPROMISE on the right
to safe and healthy work.**



**WORLD DAY
FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH
AT WORK 2009**

Health and life at work : A basic human right



International
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Geneva

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