

**International Conference**  
**“Fair Globalization – Safe Workplace Policies,**  
**Strategies and Practices for Sustainable Development”,**  
**Düsseldorf, 24-26 October 2005.**

*Decent Work as a source of Welfare –  
Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health contribute to Fair Globalization*

**(GENEVA) – Over 200 participants from more than 50 countries discussed strategies for reaching the goal of decent work for all through consolidated commitments at all levels and stronger labour inspection services worldwide. The Conference was jointly organized by the ILO in cooperation with RWE, HVBG and the German Federal Ministry for Economics and Labour.**



Representatives from governments, workers and employers organizations and international organizations underlined the necessity of new strategies and practices to achieve the common goal of a fair globalization and safe workplaces for all. All parties involved stated that the opportunities of globalization must extend to everyone, and that progress in social protection matters such as occupational health and safety is necessary for economic growth. François Biltgen, Minister of Labour from Luxembourg emphasized that economic globalisation must go together with social globalisation. Professor Dr. Ernst-Ulrich von Weizsäcker added that democratically legitimated governments, the UN institutions and civil society need to join hands to create a frame for a more equitable world society. His outstanding keynote speech formulated the common ground for all following contributions and received collective admiration from the audience. Ms. Engelen-Kefer, Member of the ILO Governing Body and the German Confederation of Trade Unions, pointed out that the opportunities of globalization must also be offered to the employees.

“The overall goal in the international context must be Decent Work for all. The ILO can contribute to formulate and enforce internationally valid core labour standards”, said State Secretary Rudolf Anzinger from the German Ministry for Economics and Labour. Participants pointed out that strengthening of national labour inspection systems is one of the most important ways to ensure good working conditions worldwide. Labour inspection provides an

excellent method for effectively enforcing labour laws in the workplace. Manfred Reindl, RWE stated that health and safety is considered a core management function and adds millions of dollars to net revenues through tailor-made RWE prevention programmes. “The well-being of people is also a matter of competitiveness. If we want to remain competitive we must invest in the people and their well-being.”, said Ms. Tuula Haateinen, Finnish Minister for Social Affairs and Health. Ms. Hornung-Draus, Member of the ILO Governing Body and the German Confederation of German Employers Associations stated that health and safety must be in the interest of companies since it also contributes to their economic performance.

Company representatives from internationally renowned multinationals contributed examples of best practices how to ensure safe and decent working conditions at the workplace. Tricia Tarrant, Global Employee Relations Manager at Shell People Services said: “Action is always driven by a fundamental respect for people, it is about using our best endeavors to surface and resolve conflicts and dilemmas wherever possible in the complex environments in which we operate, using processes based on dialogue with our stakeholders and understanding of their situation”. Representatives from UVEX, Deutsche Post World Net and Fraport AG presented concrete examples of how safe work can be made a reality.

“The objective is to raise European and worldwide awareness to the social dimensions of globalisation at the workplace. Social considerations must be given the same status as economic, financial and environmental concerns in a holistic approach. It is time for global thinking and local action. The implementation of the Core Labour Standards and the laws and regulations that give effect to them at the national level can be significantly enhanced if the capacities of national labour inspectorates are strengthened.”, indicated Gerd Albracht, Coordinator of Labour Inspection Systems, ILO, Geneva.

The role of labour inspectors is unique as they have direct access to the workplace, and can deal with a variety of tasks on a broad scope while mainstreaming Decent Work activities into all of their functions, programmes and activities.

Brent Wilton, Deputy Secretary General, International Organization of Employers agreed with the participants of the round table discussion to the need for strengthening Labour Inspection. This should also include their supply with adequate resources as well as the improvement of information exchange and transparency. Dr. Hans-Joachim Wolff, Chairman

of the Management Board, HVBG, demanded a worldwide prohibition for asbestos, in light of the large number of asbestos fatalities annually.

The ILO is currently working on an internet-based information portal, which will enable labour inspectors to share valuable insights about sector, training and company related issues. The participants welcomed the efforts of the SafeWork Department of the ILO to raise awareness of safety and health issues in the workplace and strengthen the acceptance of Labour Inspectors in all of their fields of practice. Kari Tapiola, Executive Director at the International Labour Organization made clear that Labour Inspection needs to be strengthened because it often is understaffed and cannot yet cover every workplace. He further stated:” The ILO itself, with its tripartite structure and its tripartite decision-making body represents a model. Cooperation between the various actors is necessary in order to make progresses. We need to focus on the good core issues of regulatory effectiveness and the good management of enforcement actions”.

Closing the conference, Jukka Takala, Director of the ILO’s SafeWork Department summed up the core statements of the conference and gratefully thanked all the organizers and participants for their thoughtful and beneficial inputs, which mainly contributed to the overall success of this conference.