



ILO BETTER HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR SUPPLIERS

WORKSHOP,

THE INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL,

TORONTO, CANADA

17 APRIL 2007

SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction

The Better Health and Safety for Suppliers workshop was held on 17th April 2007 in Toronto, Canada, and preceded a major international conference entitled “From compliance to high performance” from 18th-20th April in the same city. The workshop was sponsored by the German Corporation for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA), Ontario, and the International Association of Labour Inspection (IALI), the Ontario Ministry of Labour and the ILO. It was attended by 95 participants from 22 countries.

The following report summarizes presentations given on a range of topics and of groups discussions held later in the day. The 3 main topics for discussion were:

1. How to strengthen occupational health and safety in the supply chain of small and medium companies
2. How multinational companies can build stronger partnerships with their supplier in order to improve occupational health and safety
3. How to measure suppliers’ and contractors’ performances

Further information about individual presentations may be obtained from the Development of Inspection Systems cluster, Safework, ILO Geneva, e-mail safework@ilo.org .

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Development of Inspection Systems cluster, Safework
ILO, Geneva
June 2008

Contents

| | Pages |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Summary | 2 |
| Programme | 4-9 |
| Summary of Presentations: | |
| - Welcome and introductions | 10 |
| - Keynote presentations | 10-13 |
| - Working Groups | 13-17 |
| - Roundtable Discussion | 17 |
| - Conclusion | 18 |
| - References | 18-19 |

PROGRAMME

Better Health and Safety for Suppliers Workshop, Toronto, Canada

17th April 2007

| | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Welcome and introductions | | |
| 9.30-9.40 | Gerd Albracht | <p>Welcome and Introduction of Speakers</p> <p>Senior Specialist in Occupational Health and Safety, Development Coordinator of Inspections Systems, ILO</p> <p>Geneva, Switzerland</p> |
| 9.40-9.45 | Virginia West | <p>Welcome</p> <p>Ontario Deputy Minister of Labour</p> <p>Ontario, Canada</p> |
| 9.45-10.00 | Sameera Al-Tuwaijri | <p>Welcome</p> <p>ILO Director, Safework</p> <p>Geneva, Switzerland</p> |
| Keynote speakers | | |
| 10.00-10.15 | Igor Nossar | <p>The Scope for Appropriate Cross-Jurisdictional Regulation of International Contract Networks (such as Supply Chains): Recent Developments in Australia and their Supranational Implications</p> <p>Chief Advocate, Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia</p> <p>Sidney, Australia</p> |
| 10.15- | Jean- Yves Tollef | <p>The Arcelor-Mittal Health and Safety Policy and International Framework Agreement</p> |

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| 10.45 | Jean Claude Muller | Arcelor-Mittal Senior Legal Counsel, Head of International Coordination for Labor Law, Luxembourg Vice President of Health and Safety, Canada |
| 10.45-11.00 | Gerd Albracht | Strategies and Practices for Labor Inspections in Supply Chains Senior Specialist in Occupational Health and Safety, Coordinator Development of Inspections Systems, ILO Geneva, Switzerland |
| 11.00-11.15 | Frank Saunders | Health and Safety- A Business Focus Vice President of Environment and Safety, Bruce Power Canada |
| 11.15-11.45 | Networking Break | |
| 11.45 – 12.00 | <u>Elke Sebold-Tanski</u> Uwe Bartels | Cooperation and Support: Key Elements of Workplace Occupational Safety and Health Volkswagen/ILO/GTZ project in Brazil, Mexico and South Africa Safety and Health- Strategy and Coordination Head of Occupational Health and Safety and Environment Committee Volkswagen AG Wolfsburg, Germany |
| 12.00-12.15 | John Macnamara | Case Study: The Development and Implementation of a Third Party Health and Safety Management Process General Manager- Health, Safety, and Loss Prevention, Dofasco Inc. Hamilton, Ontario Canada |
| 12.15-12.30 | Dr. Eleftheria Lehmann | Support and Advice for Suppliers- Building up a Prevention Service System General Director, State Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of North Rhine-Westphalia Düsseldorf, Germany |
| 12.30-14.00 | Lunch | Main Level, Intercontinental Hotel |
| Afternoon | | |
| 14.00-14.10 | Gerd Albracht | Group Work Introductory Remarks |
| 14.10-14.20 | Group 1 | How to strengthen occupational health and safety in the supply chain of small and medium companies |
| | | Chairman |

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| | Kevin Myers | Director of Hazardous Installations, IALI United Kingdom |
| 14.20-14.45 | Nikolai Rogovsky | Occupational Health and Safety in the Context of the Value Chain Development and Upgrading : ILO Approach and Methodology Senior Specialist, Job Creation and Enterprise Development Department, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland |
| 14.45-15.10 | Mary Cornish | Securing the Health and Safety of Women and Persons with Disabilities in the Supply Chain Labour and Human Rights Lawyer, Cavalluzzo Hayes Shilton McIntyre & Cornish Barristers and Solicitors, Toronto, Ontario Canada |
| 15.10-15.30 | Dr. Benjamin Olale Alli | Intensifying Occupational Health and Safety Measures in the Supply Chain of SMEs in the Developing Countries ILO, Coordinator Technical Cooperation and Consultative Services Geneva, Switzerland |
| 15.30-16.00 | Group Discussion and Conclusions of the Working Groups | |
| 14.10-14.15 | Group 2 | How multinational companies can build stronger partnerships with their suppliers in order to improve occupational health and safety |
| | Dr. Eleftheria Lehmann | Chairwoman General Director, State Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of North Rhine-Westphalia Düsseldorf, Germany |
| 14.15-14.30 | Lee Burk | Health and Safety Challenges of a Global Manufacturing Firm- Keynote Training Manager, Pilz Automation Safety Canton, Michigan U.S.A. |
| 14.30- | Jed Bullard | Using Supplier Partnerships to Assist Multinational Companies in Implementing their Global Occupational Health and Safety Policies |

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| 14.50 | | Chairman/President of Bullard Company Lexington, Kentucky U.S.A. |
| 14.50-15.10 | John Barclay | Contribution from the Field: What Suppliers are Expecting from a Strong Partnership with MNEs to Improve Occupational Health and Safety (working title) Managing Director, Acoustex Port Elizabeth, South Africa |
| 15.10-15.30 | Julia Ranke | Enabling Dialogue between Management and Workers Project Officer Social Standards, German Corporation for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) Eschborn, Germany |
| 15.30-16.00 | Group Discussion and Conclusions of the Working Groups | |
| 14.10-14.20 | Group 3 | How to measure suppliers' and contractors' performance |
| | Paul Weber | Chairman IALI Secretary General, Head of Luxembourg's Labor Inspection Luxembourg |
| 14.20-14.45 | Igor Nossar | Appropriate Regulation of Contracting Practices to ensure OHS Compliance by Suppliers and Contractors Chief Advocate, Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia Sidney, Australia |
| 14.45-15.10 | Maarten Quivooy | New Directions for Health & Safety in New Zealand Group Manager Workplace Services, Department of Labour Wellington, New Zealand |
| 15.10-15.30 | Professor Doctor | Experiences with Safety Contractor Certificate In the Netherlands and other EU countries |

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| 15.30 | Gerard I.J.M. Zwetsloot | Senior Consultant and Researcher at TNO Quality of Life- Work and Employment Professor at Erasmus Center for Sustainability and Management of Erasmus University Rotterdam The Hague, Netherlands |
| 15.30-16.00 | Group Discussion and Conclusions of the Working Groups | |
| 16.00-16.30 | Networking Break | |
| 16.30-16.50 | Presentations of Group Outcomes | |
| 16.50-18.00 | Round Table | Title |
| 16.50-17.00 | Armand Pereira | Chairman |
| | | Director, International Labor Organization ILO, Washington, USA |
| | Igor Nossar | Chief Advocate, Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia |
| | | City, Australia |
| | Michele Patterson | |

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| | | IALI President Adelaide, Australia |
| | Gerd Albracht | Senior Specialist in Occupational Health and Safety, Coordinator Development of Inspections Systems, ILO Geneva, Switzerland |
| | Mary Cornish | Labour and Human Rights Lawyer, Cavalluzzo Hayes Shilton McIntyre & Corniish Barristers and Solicitors Toronto, Ontario Canada |
| | John Barclay | Managing Director, Acoustex Port Elizabeth, South Africa |
| | Dr. Valentina Forastieri | Senior Specialist on Working Conditions, Occupational Safety and Health Interregional Program on Occupational Safety and health and Environment SAFEWORK, ILO San Jose, Costa Rica |
| 17.30-18.00 | Panel Discussion | |

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

Welcome and Introduction

1. Ms Virginia West, Deputy Minister of Labour in Ontario, formally opened the workshop and welcomed all participants. Dr. Sameera Al-Tuwaijri, Director of International Programme for Safety and Health at Work and the Environment (SafeWork), ILO Geneva, thanked all sponsors and organizers of the event, in particular the Ontario Ministry of Labour, the German Corporation for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA) and the International Association of Labour Inspection (IALI).
2. Quoting several recent examples, such as the ILO/GTZ/Volkswagen public-private partnership project “Better Health and Safety for Suppliers” and the ILO’s “Better Factories in Cambodia” program, Dr. Al-Tuwaijri showed that there were demonstrable synergies between safer and healthier working conditions and increased productivity, performance and competitiveness. The supply chain presented an excellent means of promoting better working conditions amongst suppliers, many of which were also SMEs, but much more needed to be done to maximize such opportunities globally.

Keynote presentations

The Arcelor-Mittal Health and Safety Policy and International Framework Agreement- Jean-Yves Tollet, Senior Legal Council for Arcelor-Mittal and Head of International Coordination for Labour Law and Jean Claude Muller, Vice President of Health and Safety for Arcelor-Mittal

3. Mr. Tollet and Mr. Muller introduced the Arcelor Group, later to become Arcelor-Mittal. On 13 September 2005, the company committed to an international framework agreement with partners including trade unions, the International Metalworkers’ Federation (IMF), and the European Metalworkers’ Federation (EMF). The purpose of this international framework agreement was to promote health and safety in Arcelor-Mittal’s supply chain. There were four clauses in the IFA that stated the minimum standards that each supplier would be held to, including non-discrimination, freedom of choice of employment, banning of child labour, and freedom of association and the right to collectively bargain. Arcelor-Mittal’s priorities in the IFA were health and safety, environment, communication, social dialogue, and industrial and economic changes.
4. The IFA dealt with health and safety and Mr. Tollet and Mr. Muller highlighted four key points, namely that safety and health should be integrated into everyone’s work, that there were no other priorities higher than health and safety, that the participation and involvement of everyone at all levels of the organization was required, and a zero-tolerance of accidents goal. These goals made health and safety a part of the company

culture, making the goal of zero tolerance more viable as an outcome. With regard to purchasing, the IFA said that Arcelor-Mittal supported and encouraged its contractors and suppliers to take this agreement into consideration in their own company policy. If an enterprise working at one of Arcelor's sites did not take part in programmes for effective improvement of occupational health and safety, the contract could well be terminated. Arcelor-Mittal was a prime example of a major corporation taking responsibility for the actions of its own business transactions as well as those of their supply chain.

Strategies and Practices for Labour Inspection in Supply Chains- Gerd Albracht, ILO Senior Specialist in Occupational Health and Safety and Development Coordinator of Inspections Systems

5. Mr. Albracht focused on the role of labour inspectors in improving occupational safety and health in the supply chain. While he acknowledged that private monitoring was valuable, he said that labour inspection was a vital part of national systems for occupational safety and health and could not be substituted by private systems. He said that the key issue was how to promote effective cooperation between systems for private assessment and (State) labour inspection for improved governance. Many labour inspectors had been actively engaged in supply chain initiatives, and the strategy behind these initiatives was to reach a large number of often small and medium sized enterprises through the larger enterprises with whom they do business.
6. This strategy aimed at increasing global awareness of health and safety and make sure that inspections systems are far-reaching. Inspectors worked with larger enterprises in order to raise standards of working conditions, gave technical advice and took enforcement action if necessary. Mr. Albracht also talked about the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention 2006 (No. 187), which promoted national safety and health programmes as well as national systems.
7. National programs focused on particular sectors or on certain risks that arose in many occupations such as muscular-skeletal disorders. The inspectors' role in these programs would be to target the same sectors or risks, promoting compliance with relevant legislation and working with other stakeholders to raise awareness more widely of the risks and how they could be properly managed and reduced. Mr. Albracht was optimistic that such programs would offer a sound basis for supply chain initiatives.

Cooperation and Support: Key Elements of Workplace Occupational Safety and Health- Elke Sebold-Tanski, Safety and Health- Strategy Coordinator for Volkswagen and Uwe Bartels, Head of Occupational Health and Safety and Environment Committee for Volkswagen

8. Ms. Sebold-Tanski spoke about the public-private partnership project between the ILO, the German Corporation for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), and Volkswagen AG, which started in 2004. The project involved South Africa, Brazil and Mexico and would last till 2008. The goals of the project were the optimization of the production process, long-term improvement of safety and health at SMEs and improving the effectiveness of the labour inspectorates.

9. Ms. Sebold-Tanski talked about how the project had started, with workshops for dissemination of information and team-building. Process Optimization Teams (POTs) had been set up that included several key stakeholders, including VW experts and labour inspectors. A Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Declaration was also developed, and teams would be “characterized by a spirit of partnership”, remain objective, they were not to act as policemen and they would handle all results confidentially.
10. She spoke about the work of the POTs , which was to carry out ‘consultations’ of suppliers, based on listening, looking, asking and discussing. Consultations included information given by the CEO, walkabout inspections and interviews of managers at all levels. The interviews are conducted with several partners: the CEO, senior management, experts responsible for safety and for health. Issues considered during the walkabout inspections included order and cleanliness, escape and emergency routes, work instructions, safety signs, and safety-conscious behaviour.
11. The results of the consultations showed that many CEOs and managers were not aware of their responsibilities and that employees were not sufficiently involved in improving occupational safety and health or in motivating programmes for promoting safety conscious behaviour. However, Ms. Sebold-Tanski said that suppliers readily accepted good advice offered and the need to change employees’ attitudes and behaviour.

Third Party Health and Safety Management Process- John Macnamara, General Manager of Health and Safety and Loss Prevention for Dofasco Inc.

12. Mr. Macnamara used Dofasco Inc. as an example of how a large multinational enterprise handled health and safety problems. Dofasco Inc. produced flat rolled steel products and was owned by Arcelor-Mittal. Dofasco had over six thousand active vendors of which almost two thirds provided some form of on site service, which meant that they were subject to Dofasco’s Third Party HSE program requirements. With so many vendors, making sure that they all followed these requirements was not an easy task.
13. He laid out several reasons for the Third Party HSE program including the principle that nothing was more important than employees’ health and safety, which includes third party employees on Dofasco’s property. Other reasons behind the program were the need for high productivity as well as the company’s reputation and customers’ expectations. Mr. Macnamara also described Dofasco’s Supplier Health and Safety Pre-Qualification Process, which was designed to help Dofasco choose suppliers that were following health and safety standards that met their own high criteria.
14. Potential suppliers had to complete a pre-qualification form, which was evaluated to determine whether suppliers were sufficiently committed to occupational safety and health in practice. While this was a time-consuming process, it meant that less oversight of suppliers was required and that better standards of safety and health and productivity should be achieved overall. It was likely that the pre and re-qualification procedures would be simplified in future.

Support and Advice for Suppliers: Building up a Prevention Service System (PSS)- Dr. Eleftheria Lehmann, General Director for the State Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of North Rhine-Westphalia in Dusseldorf, Germany

15. Dr. Lehmann spoke about a Prevention Service System (PSS) dedicated to helping suppliers with health and safety requirements, as one of the tasks of the above-mentioned project between the ILO, Volkswagen and GTZ. The long-term targets of the project included achieving sustainability at a national level via an Internet-based prevention system which provided information on OSH for SME[s], legal requirements, checklists, etc. There were also three components of service that supplied information for labour inspection, Volkswagen suppliers, and SMEs outside of the supply chain.
16. She outlined steps for proceeding with the project, based on earlier experience of a PSS in Germany. She emphasized the importance of not creating brand new systems, identifying users' needs, using an existing concept and adapting it to the situation of the country, and setting up a pilot to test feasibility of a PSS. In order to identify the users' needs there must be a development of profiles for both customers and services. Once the users' needs were discovered there needed to be a 'one stop-one shop service' which users could easily access. Other aspects of the project included quick responses, practical and high quality service, and the need for transparency.
17. Dr. Lehmann said that using modules of a PSS would help fulfil users' needs, and would include an interaction module, which would allow access to the PSS by various channels of communication. There would also be a management module of the PSS, and a module "Network of experts." She talked about the need to set up a pilot which would test the feasibility of the PSS, build a network of experts, and publicize the PSS using all channels of communication along the supply chain and utilize existing structures. She concluded by explaining how a national approach to the program would help tailor the needs of the PSS to a specific country as well as help with further expansion of services. She stressed that in order for the PSS to work on a national level there must be early involvement of all stakeholders, identification of all users' needs, clarification of funding, and commitment of experts.

Working Groups

18. The next presentations took place in three separate groups designed to tackle specific issues regarding supply chain management. The discussion topics included how multi-national enterprises and other large organizations can influence their suppliers' safety and health performance, the accreditation of suppliers and how their performance can be measured in practice.

Group 1: How to Strengthen Occupational Health and Safety in the Supply Chain of Small and Medium Companies

Occupational Health and Safety in the Context of the Value Chain Development and Upgrading: ILO Approach and Methodology- Nikolai Rogovsky, Senior Specialist of Job Creation and Enterprise Development Department for the ILO

19. The first group presented on the topic of how to strengthen occupational health and safety in the supply chain of small and medium companies. Mr. Rogovsky spoke about the value chain analysis and how it can strengthen occupational safety and health. He began with the definition of a value chain, namely a full range of activities that were required to bring a product or service from its final consumers, and referred to the fact that value is added to preliminary products through combination with other resources (tools, manpower, knowledge and skills, etc.). Mr. Rogovsky then stated several levels of analysis within SMEs in the Value Chain, which included entrepreneurial and supply chain activities, policy and regulatory frameworks and international standards and values.
20. Mr. Rogovsky distinguished between the traditional approach to upgrading, which was about economic factors, and that of the ILO which was also about social improvements, including better jobs, working conditions, social dialogue and occupational safety and health. There were four levels of Value Chain Analysis and Upgrading and Occupational Safety and Health: micro-level, which was about management policies and practices in SMEs, the meso- level that included Codes of Conduct for MNEs, the macro-level, which included national and international standards and legislation, and the meta-level of promotion and advocacy. Mr. Rogovsky concluded with ILO solutions to problems regarding value chain analysis and upgrading, including guides to VCAU, training modules, and using the value chain approach in ILO projects in Sri Lanka, China, and Zambia.

Intensifying Occupational Health and Safety Measures in the Supply Chain of SMEs in the Developing Countries, Germany- Dr. Benjamin Olale Alli, Coordinator Technical Cooperation and Consultative Services for the ILO

21. Dr. Alli said that occupational health and safety should aim at the promotion and maintenance of physical, mental and social well-being of workers in all occupations, to the highest degree attainable. SMEs with less than 100 employees currently employed between 50% and 70% of the workforce in Africa, and many are not covered by national occupational safety and health legislation or labour inspection. This sector was also “where the need is greatest but least served.” He stressed the need for legislation on health and safety in SMEs stating the importance of applying, gradually, the protective measures specified in international labour standards and national laws and regulations.
22. One awareness-raising initiative was the ILO’s WISE program (Work Improvement in Small Enterprises). WISE was aimed at owners and managers and promoted action to improve working conditions through simple low cost solutions. It was originally

developed for “applicability in the small-scale manufacturing enterprises,” so specific topics include material handling, workstation design, productive machine safety, control of hazardous substances, [and] work related welfare facilities. WISE has been proven to work in other ILO programs that target the needs of particular workers in SMEs, including Start and Improve Your Business, Improve Your Working Environment and Business, and Work Improvement in Neighbourhood Developments.

23. Dr. Alli spoke about occupational safety and health problems, including poor housekeeping, poor work postures, unsafe equipment, inadequate ventilation, respiratory illness, back, joint and muscle pain, and headaches. Other challenges Dr. Alli addressed were, “development of workplace policies and strategies, ensuring a healthy work environment through the application of specific tools, provision of relevant information and advisory services, available resources for capacity enhancement, and the need for political support.” He offered several approaches to dealing with occupational health and safety in SMEs, which included enhanced awareness-raising on OSH and working conditions, promotion of social dialogue, encouragement of collective bargaining, and working through relevant government agencies to promote occupational health and safety.

Group 2: How multinational companies can build stronger partnerships with their suppliers in order to improve occupational safety and health

Health and Safety Challenges of a Global Manufacturing Firm- Lee Burk, Training Manager for Pilz Automation

24. Mr. Burk focused on safety and health in Federal-Mogul as an example of a multinational enterprise. He stated some general facts about the company, which has over 45,000 employees in 35 countries. Since 2000, the global injury rate for the corporation has fallen from 4.5% to 1.0% in 2007. Mr. Burk then addressed a number of challenges concerning occupational health and safety for the corporation and solutions that have been implemented in order to reduce these problems. Some of the challenges Mr. Burk spoke about included culture, communication, environment health and safety (EHS) management, reporting, and funding. Some of the challenges with culture were the importance of safety, human worth, management relations/trust and admitting failure. Solutions to problems of culture were setting standards and insisting on their application and establishing personal relationships.
25. Mr. Burk then spoke about the challenges of language barriers. Communication is hindered by uncertainty of the meanings of words and phrases. Possible solutions to this problem included translation leveraging in-country bilingual employees and cultural awareness training. Challenges posed to EHS management included qualification and retention. Federal-Mogul’s solutions to EHS management problems included training, providing competitive pay, mentoring, and expressions of appreciation. Standardized reporting and avoidance of ‘apples-to apples’ comparisons of plants were crucial

components of making sure that reporting was effective. Because of a need for competitive pay for salaries, the lack of funding for EHS improvements was a major concern. However, Federal-Mogul had implemented compensation packages including pay and tangible benefits and utilizing the risk assessment process to prioritize corrective actions while optimizing the expenditure of available funds. With these programs and policy solutions, Federal-Mogul saw a brighter future for occupational safety and health within the company.

Using Supplier Partnerships to Assist Multinational Companies in Implementing their Global Occupational Safety and Health Policies- Jed Bullard, Chairman and President of the Bullard Company

26. Mr. Bullard spoke about occupational safety and health in Bullard Company and how it had been integrated within the company's business. He then stated various reasons why companies needed strong occupational health and safety programs, including an ethical approach that respected legal requirements, attracting and retaining employees, and a broad view of risk management and total cost control. He said that any broad thinking management of an enterprise realized the link between safe work practices and efficiency. Mr. Bullard talked about the role of health and safety professionals; he stated that today they are being involved in various aspects of a company, including many non-traditional roles. Challenges for safety and health professionals included creating internally-focused reporting tools and communicating the results throughout the organization to try to build buy-in that the program works.
27. Other challenges included working outside of a comfort zone, communicating in all directions of a company and creating educational materials. Mr. Bullard stated that yesterday's safety and health professional "just sold safety", but because organizations were more complex than they used to be, today's professional must have additional skills including developing and leading the big picture. This also included the working environment in which the company operates. He then talked about benefits in the profession including a wider scope of work and wider influence of safety and health in a company. Mr. Bullard concluded with the benefits to society that health and safety professionals created such as improved communications and integration of systems and values that can help focus on the biggest issues for the profession.

Group 3: How to measure suppliers' and contractors' performance

New Directions for Safety and Health in New Zealand- Martin Quivooy, Group Manager of Workplace Services for the Department of Labour of New Zealand

28. Mr. Quivooy spoke about safety and health legislation in New Zealand, and of the country's national program "Workplace Health and Safety for New Zealand to 2015", whose slogan was "Healthy people in safe and productive workplaces". There were three outcomes of the program relating to government leadership, preventative workplace

cultures, and industry and community leadership. He discussed five points for economic transformation in New Zealand, which were having a world class infrastructure, growing globally competitive firms, environmental sustainability, having an internationally competitive city (Auckland), and innovative and productive workplaces. Mr. Quivooy concluded with the Department of Labour's vision, "working together to make New Zealand workplaces work better," and its model of "knowledge, influence, and services."

Experiences with Safety Contractor Certificate In the Netherlands and other EU countries- Professor Gerard I.J.M. Zwetsloot PhD., Senior Consultant and Researcher at TNO Quality of Life- Work and Employment and Professor at Erasmus Centre for Sustainability and Management of Erasmus University Rotterdam

29. Professor Zwetsloot spoke about the Netherlands' experience of certifying contractors who had proven health and safety guidelines. He explained the Safety for Contractors Certification System VCA (SCC-VCA), which began in the early 1990s with four major chemical companies with sites in the Netherlands. The certification system was the only system of its kind in the Netherlands, and was adopted by many contractors inside and outside of the chemical industry. A central committee of experts decided upon requirements for the VCA.
30. He discussed three challenges for the future of the VCA including: the SCC-VCA was not the only system of its kind in Europe anymore, the high adoption of the SCC-VCA posing new challenges including the fact that many contractors outside of the original industry of chemicals are now adopting the program, and investigations in 2001 and 2006 had shown that the external auditing system of the SCC-VCA was a serious weakness of the entire system. He concluded that certification could certainly contribute to creating justified trust in occupational health and safety, but sustaining that trust on the longer run needed a critical evaluation of such systems.

Roundtable discussion

31. Mr. Armand Pereira gave a short presentation at the beginning of the roundtable in which he returned to the ILO's core objectives. Calling for minimum international standards in law, practice and contracts, he said that labour inspection needed to be strengthened and occupational health and safety integrated into overall performance indicators, so as to promote more of a preventative occupational health and safety culture globally. Other members of the Roundtable commented on the importance of supply chain initiatives in improving occupational safety and health and the influence that large enterprises now had in promoting decent working conditions amongst their suppliers. The synergy between safety and health and good working conditions on one hand and good business performance and productivity on the other was now well established, as many presentations given over the course of the workshop had demonstrated. They welcomed the many positive efforts that large enterprises were now making to improve occupational safety and health within their supply chains.

Conclusion

32. Mr. Albracht thanked all of the workshop participants, as well as the organizers in Toronto who had helped to make the workshop possible. Each of the speakers transmitted information on important aspects of occupational safety and health through their presentations. While there was a lot to absorb, the underlying message of each presentation was how important safety and health was to the world of work. There was a need for improvement in this area with a specific focus on supply chain management of safety and health problems.
33. The participants of the workshop had spoken of the need for better communication, programs, and government support in improving occupational health and safety. The workshop not only highlighted specific problems in the world of safety and health, but also gave expert solutions that had been tried and tested all over the world. There was a sense of optimism after the workshop with the broadening of possibilities in making the world of work within companies and their supply chains healthier and safer for all.

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