

The ILO highlights the importance of occupational safety & health in China.

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For immediate release:
19 November 2008 (ILOBJ/08/03)

ILO News (Beijing) – The International Labour Organization (ILO) highlights the importance of occupational safety and health (OSH), and further efforts critical to China's future growth.

Over 400 representatives including ILO experts attended the biennial China International Forum on Work Safety, co-hosted by the ILO and China's State Administration of Work Safety, in Beijing from 17th to 20th November.

ILO Director General Juan Somavia stressed, via a televised video, the vital role of OSH and the Forum's theme, "Safe Development Concerns People's Well-Being".

"Safe Work is also at the heart of the ILO's Decent Work agenda and activities", says Mr. Somavia. "I encourage the Forum to draw on these instruments, particularly the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention (No.187) and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 197) of 2006, for guidance and direction."

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Ms. Constance Thomas, Director of the ILO in China, praised China for the social and economic progress it has made over the last three decades. The ILO also recognised China's recent improvements in trying to control and prevent industrial accidents. But she stressed that China is still facing daunting challenges as it tries to upgrade and improve its employment market.

"China needs to strengthen its occupation safety and health inspection system", says Ms. Thomas. "Enforcing the laws and protecting workers especially those vulnerable groups such as migrants must be the main priorities."

Thousands of workers die or injured in work-related accidents in China each year. Many also suffer from occupational diseases. The country, like many other countries in transition, still has industries using outdated and unsafe technologies, posing risks to workers.

The ILO also emphasises the need to improve OSH services to particularly small and medium sized enterprises, and tripartite dialogues among governments, employers, and workers' organisations.

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