

Occupational Safety and Health and Decent Work in Asia - Achievements and Challenges -

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Securing safety and health at work for all workers is an increasingly important challenge to realize Decent Work in Asia. ILO's 14th Asian Regional Meeting (ARM) adopted "Asian Decent Work Decade" and identified Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) as a priority area for action. Many countries in Asia have launched the strategic National OSH Programmes referring to ILO Promotional Framework for OSH Convention (No 187, 2006). OSH legislative frameworks, enforcement and training systems have been steadily upgraded. Asian countries have jointly responded to emerging OSH issues such as health hazards by asbestos or the outbreak of the pandemic H1N1 influenza. Practical safety and health protection measures have been extended into small businesses, informal and rural workplaces by using ILO's participatory training programmes such as WISE (Work Improvement in Small Enterprises) for small enterprises or WIND (Work Improvement in Neighbourhood Development) for farmers.

Regional and international cooperation in OSH has been widely implemented. In 2008, the Safety and Health Summit was held on the occasion of the 18th World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in Seoul, the Republic of Korea, and adopted the Seoul Declaration to place OSH high as national agendas and to promote national preventative safety and health culture. ASEAN-OSHNET has strengthened ASEAN cooperation to promote OSH and carried out Workshops on National OSH Programmes in Hanoi in 2008 and also on Good OSH Practices in Singapore in 2009, respectively.

Despite these achievements, Asia has been facing increasing challenges in OSH. There are pressing needs to provide adequate OSH protection to all women and men including migrants or various forms of casual workers. Globalizing economies have also been causing diverse and complex work environments. [Roles of business leaders are essential in creating productive and human-centred work systems.](#) Workers are increasingly exposed to work-related stress and emerging OSH risks such as new chemicals. Many small businesses and informal economy workplaces need practical support measures to jointly improve OSH and productivity. OSH should also contribute to promoting green economies by reducing OSH risks of workers engaged in green businesses. Regional and international cooperation should be further strengthened to support good practices and promote practical solutions. The ILO joins the renewed commitment of the government, workers and employers in realizing OSH and Decent Work for All.