OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Occupational safety and health issues are generally less visible and not sufficiently recognized as a problem in developing countries where risks are often greater than in industrialized countries. Moreover, comprehensive and harmonized data collection systems on occupational accidents and diseases are poorly developed in low-income Southern African countries, leading to a serious underestimation of the magnitude of occupational accidents and diseases. The expansion of the informal economy also increases challenges in improving occupational safety and health.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH IN EASTERN EUROPE

We are committed at the national level to develop and implement a National Action Plan for providing safe and healthy working conditions and assume responsibility for the proper implementation of this Plan. Mr. Oleksandr Khohotva, the Head of the State Service on Occupational Safety and Mining Supervision of Ukraine.

“This Project will help us to save human lives!”

Sergiy Storchak, former Head of the State Committee of Ukraine on Occupational Safety, Labour Protection and Mining Supervision.

Most Eastern European countries have aspirations to eventually become EU members and are taking steps to bring their legislation and practices into line with the acquis communautaire on many fronts. Nevertheless, important gaps still exist, including in occupational safety and health and working conditions. The establishment of democracy and the market economy in Eastern Europe requires fundamental changes in managing occupational safety and health. This would entail taking into account the small enterprises in the private sector in addition to promoting prevention through risk assessment and bipartite dialogue.

“I am an absolute realist and understand that our Project – and hope that I have a right to consider it also as ours, - would not solve all the problems. But for sure, the Project will significantly improve the situation on occupational safety and health in Ukraine.”

Oleksiy Miroshnychenko, Executive Vice-President of the Confederation of Employers of Ukraine.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

As employees we know there are a lot of challenges pertaining to occupational safety and health. I am very optimistic that the programme we are just about to embark on will be able to address some of these issues.

Luther Mambala, President of the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions (MCTU).

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Occupational safety and health in a “priority for the social actors in the region” according to the Decent Work in the Americas Hemispheric Agenda, 2006-2015. A priority goal is “reduce the incidence of occupational accidents and illnesses by 20 percent within 10 years (by 2015), and double occupational safety and health protection for sectors and collectives heretofore not covered.”

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Luther Mambala, President of the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions (MCTU).
A PROJECT TO SAVE AND IMPROVE LIVES

This project, “Improving safety and health at work through a Decent Work agenda,” was developed to better address safety and health at work as a core component of decent work. It will be implemented over two and a half years between 2011 and 2013 in six pilot countries.

By developing and implementing this time-bound and targeted project, the EU and the ILO Programme on Safety and Health at Work and the Environment (SAFEWORK) are joining forces to ensure that safety and health measures sustain their impetus and reach the concerned stakeholders.

The project aims at incorporating occupational safety and health at the highest level in the national political agenda, integrating it into national development policies, and translating the occupational safety and health national programmes into action at the workplace level.

Seiji Machida, SafeWork Director, emphasizes that this project will include convincing government officials to incorporate occupational safety and health concerns as a part of national development plans, to stimulate high level decision makers at government level to allocate funds for occupational safety and health, and, more generally speaking, to encourage stakeholders to take the necessary steps to improve occupational safety and health.

To contribute to a more inclusive and productive society through a reduction in occupational accidents and work-related diseases.

OBJECTIVES

Overall Goal: To contribute to a more inclusive and productive society through a reduction in occupational accidents and work-related diseases.

Specific objective 1: A Global approach aimed at improving Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is taken on board at the highest political level, including consideration of OSH concerns in national development policies in the pilot countries.

Specific objective 2: Practical OSH management measures are introduced and implemented at enterprise level in accordance with national action plans.

Specific objective 3: Global knowledge sharing on OSH tools and good practices is promoted with the purpose of developing a systemic and sustainable approach to OSH improvements.

“Good practices and lessons learned in the six countries involved will certainly be very useful to further improve safety communication on OSH in other parts of the world, and promote a systematic approach to national occupational safety and health developments.”

Mr Aristotelis Bouratsis, Director of Thematic Operations in the European Commission/European Development and Cooperation Directorate General

EXPECTED RESULTS

The project is expected to achieve the following results:

Core ILO Occupational Safety and Health Conventions

→ Occupational Safety and Health Convention (1956 No 157)
→ Occupational Health Services (Minimum Standards) Convention (1980 No 187)

DECENT WORK IS SAFE WORK

The International Labour Organization’s notice of Decent Work is a global objective for men and women to obtain productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity. The objectives of decent work have been consistently highlighted in EU and ILO policy statements. The European Commission and the International Labour Office have collaborated to ensure that the Community will promote decent work for all in line with the ILO agenda. Occupational safety and health is a core element of Decent Work and the EU’s Decent Work Agenda. Decent Work is Safe Work.

CONCLUSION

→ Eastern Europe – Republic of Moldova and Ukraine
→ Central America – Honduras and Nicaragua
→ Southern Africa – Malawi and Zambia

The pilot countries were selected on the basis of their national commitment to improve health and safety at work, as witnessed by the formal agreements between governments, employers’ and workers’ organisations in the Decent Work Country Programme (SWCH).

A stakeholders’ partnership in the Decent Work Country Programme (SWCH)

A national dialogue process in OSH is in action and institutionalised in six pilot countries (Honduras and Nicaragua, Malawi and Zambia, Moldova and Ukraine).

A national and international community of practice is established and functioning in the six countries.

The ILO and the EU are motivated to promote OSH at national level.

A review of the project concludes, lessons learned and good practices developed to improve OSH are incorporated into the national processes.

A global conference to share experience from six pilot countries.

ACTIVITIES

→ Develop national OSH strategies (institutional and stakeholder-based).
→ Develop national programmes to OSH and address the highest political level.
→ Train policy makers and stakeholders.
→ Develop and publish a tool on calculating the costs of poor OSH and poor productivity.
→ Develop and publish a methodology for monitoring the number of occupational accidents and diseases.
→ Train labour inspectors to promote effective and efficient OSH inspections and ensure compliance with the OSH programmes.
→ Train trainers in risk assessment and management techniques.
→ Conduct awareness-raising campaigns based on the OC World Day for Safety and Health at Work and the European Week for Safety and Health at Work.
→ Develop and implement the project conclusions, stakeholders’ lessons learned and good practices developed to improve OSH are incorporated into the national processes.

A project to save and improve lives

Urgent action is required to reverse this trend of workplace accidents and diseases, which fuel health-care costs and reduce work force. In 2005, the cost of poor OSH amounted to USD 2.8 trillion worldwide and USD 1.58 trillion in the European Union.

The global economic cost of non-fatal occupational accidents has increased to over 300 million per year.

Health and safety at work remains a major global concern.

The importance of safety and health at work is apparent in more than half of the ILO instruments, and is expected to increase in the future with the implementation of the Global Framework for Promoting OSH at Work and the Environment (SAFEWORK).

The importance of safety and health at work is one of the objectives of the International Labour Organization’s Decent Work Agenda.

The increasing human, economic and social burden of workplace accidents and diseases has urged the development of international standards and operational action in this field.

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