



THIRD ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Effect to be given to resolutions adopted  
by the International Labour Conference  
at its 91st Session (2003)**

**(a) Resolution concerning occupational  
safety and health**

1. At its 91st Session (June 2003), the Conference adopted a resolution concerning occupational safety and health (OSH) including “Conclusions concerning ILO standards-related activities in the area of occupational safety and health – A global strategy”. The text of the resolution is appended. The resolution invited the Governing Body:
  - (a) to give due consideration to these conclusions in planning future ILO standards-related activities in the area of OSH, noting that the opportunity exists for placing an item relating to OSH on the agenda of the 93rd Session (2005) of the International Labour Conference, if agreed by the Governing Body in November 2003;
  - (b) to request the Director-General to give them priority when implementing the present and the 2004-05 programmes, when allocating such resources as may be available during the 2004-05 biennium and when preparing future strategic plans and programmes and budgets, in particular for the 2006-07 biennium.
2. Follow-up proposed in relation to the agenda of the 93rd Session (2005) of the ILC is before the Governing Body in a separate document.<sup>1</sup> At its November 2004 and March 2005 sessions, the Governing Body will have the opportunity to address the portion of this resolution that deals with proposals for the Programme and Budget for 2006-07. This document concerns the follow-up to the resolution by the Office using resources available during the 2004-05 biennium. It outlines and provides illustrative examples of the approach being explored by the Director-General.

<sup>1</sup> GB.288/2/1.

## Promotion, awareness raising and advocacy

3. The ILC conclusions highlighted the seriousness of the global impact of occupational accidents and diseases and reaffirmed that OSH continues to be a fundamental requirement for achieving the objectives of the Decent Work Agenda. The conclusions called for new strategies and solutions to well-known hazards as well as emerging issues.
4. The conclusions underlined the importance of the ILO advocacy role for fostering and promoting a preventative safety and health culture and endorsed the establishment of an annual international event. Having participated in the observance of the International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers on 28 April in previous years, the ILO launched its World Day for Safety and Health at Work in 2003. Some 50 events were organized at the national level by the constituents in 2003 and a theme or slogan for the 2004 World Day will be selected to further promote the organization of national and local-level activities. Further efforts will be made to promote advocacy work with the governments, particularly OSH departments and labour inspectorates, as well as employers and workers.
5. The Office has started the discussions with the co-organizers of the XVIIth World Congress on Safety and Health at Work (September 2005, Orlando, Florida) and the Xth International Conference on Occupational Respiratory Diseases (April 2005, Beijing) about the ways to reflect the conclusions with particular stress on the promotion of a preventative safety and health culture and ILO values. The Office will collaborate with other organizers of major international meetings relevant to the promotion of OSH, such as triennial meetings of the International Commission of Occupational Health (ICOH), the International Ergonomics Association (IEA), the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA) and the International Association of Labour Inspection (IALI).
6. SafeWork's web pages are serving as an important platform for raising awareness of risks at work and their prevention. Efforts will be reinforced to expand the SafeWork site, including French and Spanish information, and to make better use of links to sites in other languages. In order to further enhance the use of SafeWork's web service, arrangements will be made also to establish links from other OSH-related web sites.
7. In all the activities for promotion and advocacy on OSH, up-to-date ILO instruments on OSH will be used as key references. The ILO instruments provide a firm basis for promotional campaigns and strategic references will enhance their visibility and understanding of them. They will also be promoted when reviewing the challenges of achieving better implementation, including possible ratification of Conventions, in the process of formulating national OSH programmes.

## ILO instruments

8. Paragraph 6 of the conclusions calls for the development of a new instrument establishing a promotional framework for OSH on a priority basis. As noted above, a proposal on this subject is submitted for consideration in the context of the agenda of the 93rd Session (2005) of the Conference.
9. Work has been initiated in the areas of ergonomics and the guarding of machinery. As a first step, the Office will review the law and practice in the member States in a similar way to the recent work of preparing the Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems. The review will be carried out in close collaboration with other governmental and non-governmental international organizations. This work will include the consideration of the development of relevant codes of practice. The collection and

analysis of information on other subject areas identified in the conclusions will be carried out. Revisions of international instruments will require similar reviews, followed by preparation of drafts and, for the codes of practice, meetings of experts once funding for such work becomes available.

## **Technical assistance and cooperation**

- 10.** The ILC endorsed the importance of launching national OSH programmes by the highest government authorities, for example by the Head of State or Parliament to help place OSH at the top of national agendas. The promotion of such national OSH programmes was included in the previous programme and budget as well as the 2004-05 programme and budget. The Office will continue to encourage member States to formulate these programmes as a framework for continual improvements in national OSH mechanisms and performance. The concept of systematic approaches for continual improvement is similar to the one described in the ILO Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems (ILO-OSH, 2001) being promoted at the enterprise level. National OSH programmes should be an integral part of the national decent work agendas. Efforts will be made to enhance Office-wide coordination towards this end.
- 11.** The Office will work closely with industrialized countries which have recently launched national OSH programmes to promote the exchange of experiences and to develop a common framework and methodologies. Technical assistance and cooperation to developing countries and countries in transition will be provided for the review of their OSH situation and the formulation of national OSH programmes mobilizing the network of ILO field offices and specialists. Efforts will be made to obtain donor support for the process of formulating national OSH programmes. In addition, technical cooperation project proposals to support the implementation of the national programmes will be developed based on the priority needs of each country. The Office will collaborate closely with the tripartite constituents to ensure the high-level commitment of the member States to the national OSH programmes. Such a commitment will be a key factor in prioritizing the use of available funds for technical cooperation.
- 12.** As a step towards the formulation of national OSH programmes, pilot projects are being carried out to prepare national OSH profiles. The survey carried out in preparation of the general discussion at the 2003 ILC yielded baseline data on national law and practice on ILO OSH standards for some 100 countries. This data and other available information is being used to develop the profiles. They will guide priority setting and will serve as benchmarks for progress reviews at a later stage. The information in the national OSH profile will also be useful references for other countries. The experience of these pilot activities will be used to develop guidelines for the future preparation of national OSH profiles.
- 13.** National OSH reviews and national OSH programmes will reflect the specific needs of each country, such as measures for small enterprises, informal economy undertakings and vulnerable workers as well as workers in hazardous occupations such as mining, construction, ship-breaking and agriculture. The design of the national OSH programmes will focus on strengthening of national capacities for enforcement and inspection systems and for provision of technical support to the enterprises in the area of OSH. In the field of training, emphasis will be given to training on practical preventive measures. Existing training materials will be improved to reflect the experience of work improvements in small enterprises (WISE) and other similar training packages.

## Knowledge development, management and dissemination

14. In the field of knowledge management, the ILO's International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centre (CIS) will continue to play a key role as a forum for international exchange of OSH information. Efforts will be made to reduce the cost of ILO OSH information, including the *Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety* and, where practicable, to make such information available free of charge in keeping with the conclusions adopted by the ILC. The effective use of web sites will be further pursued for sharing OSH information including best OSH practices.
15. CIS shares information with focal points at the regional, national and sometimes provincial or sectoral level. This network of "CIS centres" is not only a route for disseminating information, but also provides valuable input to the ILO regarding national circumstances (see paragraphs 11-12 above), good practice and comparative experience with different approaches to ensuring safety and health at work.
16. In order to promote the use of ILO OSH publications, most OSH codes of practice were recently posted on the SafeWork web site for free access. This will also be facilitated by improvements in links with other OSH-related web sites, particularly those of national OSH authorities and national CIS centres.
17. The relevant parts of the conclusions have been taken into account in the formulation of the CIS Programme and Budget for 2004-05, which is being submitted to the current session of the Governing Body.<sup>2</sup>

## International collaboration

18. Collaboration with other international organizations will be further reinforced by establishing joint activities with focused areas for joint action. Among others, the World Health Organization (WHO) is a major partner organization with which several joint programmes are foreseen at the regional level. The 13th Session of the ILO/WHO Joint Committee on Occupational Health to be held in December 2003 will examine how the two organizations could collaborate more effectively, including the ILO/WHO Global Programme on Elimination of Silicosis. The Joint Committee will consider ways to implement the conclusions of the 2003 ILC.
19. Collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will be continued in the field of radiation protection. While the ILO will seek ways to better benefit from the technical expertise of the IAEA, it will make constructive contributions to the deliberations at the IAEA reflecting the views of employers and workers as well as governments with a view to protecting workers. In the field of chemical safety, the ILO will continue to participate in the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals and the International Programme on Chemical Safety in order to improve synergy on chemical safety. The Office will participate in the Inter-governmental Forum on Chemical Safety to be held in November 2003 and the meetings of the Strategic Approach to Integrated Chemicals Management (SAICM) initiated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), including its first preparatory meeting in November 2003.

<sup>2</sup> GB.288/PFA/5/1.

20. The Director-General intends to circulate the text in the usual way to the governments of member States and, through them, to national employers' and workers' organizations, and to the international organizations concerned, including intergovernmental organizations, the non-government international organizations with consultative status and the other non-governmental international organizations concerned.
21. *The Governing Body may wish to approve the follow-up action, as proposed in this document, to the resolution on occupational safety and health, in the 2004-05 biennium.*

Geneva, 6 October 2003.

*Point for decision:* Paragraph 21.

## Appendix

### Resolution concerning occupational safety and health

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization, meeting at its 91st Session, 2003,

Having undertaken a general discussion based on an integrated approach on the basis of Report VI, *ILO standards-related activities in the area of occupational safety and health*;

1. Adopts the following conclusions;
2. With a view to increasing the impact, coherence and relevance of ILO standards-related activities in the area of occupational safety and health (OSH), invites the Governing Body of the International Labour Office:
  - (a) to give due consideration to these conclusions in planning future ILO standards-related activities in the area of OSH, noting that the opportunity exists for placing an item relating to OSH on the agenda of the 93rd Session (2005) of the International Labour Conference if agreed by the Governing Body in November 2003;
  - (b) to request the Director-General to give them priority when implementing the present and the 2004-05 programmes, when allocating such resources as may be available during the 2004-05 biennium and when preparing future strategic plans and programmes and budgets, in particular for the 2006-07 biennium.

### Conclusions concerning ILO standards-related activities in the area of occupational safety and health – A global strategy

1. The magnitude of the global impact of occupational accidents and diseases, as well as major industrial disasters, in terms of human suffering and related economic costs, have been a long-standing source of concern at workplace, national and international levels. Significant efforts have been made at all levels to come to terms with this problem, but nevertheless ILO estimates are that over 2 million workers die each year from work-related accidents and diseases, and that globally this figure is on the increase. OSH has been a central issue for the ILO ever since its creation in 1919 and continues to be a fundamental requirement for achieving the objectives of the Decent Work Agenda.

2. In addition to established measures to prevent and control hazards and risks, new strategies and solutions need to be developed and applied both for well-known hazards and risks such as those arising from dangerous substances, machinery and tools and manual handling as well as for emerging issues, such as biological hazards, psychosocial hazards and musculoskeletal disorders. Furthermore, as OSH is an intrinsic part of social relations it is affected by the same forces of change that prevail in national and global socio-economic contexts. The effects of demographic factors and dynamics, employment shifts and work organization changes, gender differentiation, the size, structure and life cycles of enterprises, the fast pace of technological progress, are examples of the key issues that can generate new types of patterns of hazards, exposures and risks. The development of an appropriate response to these issues should rely on and make use of the collective body of knowledge, experience and good practice in this area. Safety and health measures are undertaken to create and sustain a safe and healthy working environment; furthermore, such measures can also improve quality, productivity and competitiveness.

3. Although effective legal and technical tools, methodologies and measures to prevent occupational accidents and diseases exist, there is a need for an increased general awareness of the importance of OSH as well as a high level of political commitment for effective implementation of national OSH systems. Efforts to tackle OSH problems, whether at international or national levels, are often dispersed and fragmented and as a result do not have the level of coherence necessary to produce effective impact. There is thus a need to give higher priority to OSH at international, national and enterprise levels and to engage all social partners to initiate and sustain mechanisms for

a continued improvement of national OSH systems. Given its tripartite participation and recognized global mandate in the area of OSH, the ILO is particularly well equipped to make a real impact in the world of work through such a strategy.

4. The fundamental pillars of a global OSH strategy include the building and maintenance of a national preventative safety and health culture and the introduction of a systems approach to OSH management. A national preventative safety and health culture is one in which the right to a safe and healthy working environment is respected at all levels, where governments, employers and workers actively participate in securing a safe and healthy working environment through a system of defined rights, responsibilities and duties, and where the principle of prevention is accorded the highest priority. Building and maintaining a preventative safety and health culture require making use of all available means to increase general awareness, knowledge and understanding of the concepts of hazards and risks and how they may be prevented or controlled. A systems approach to OSH management at the enterprise level has recently been developed in the ILO Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems (ILO-OSH, 2001). Building on this concept and related methodology, the global OSH strategy advocates the application of a systems approach to the management of national OSH systems.

## **An ILO action plan for the promotion of safety and health at work**

### ***I. Promotion, awareness raising and advocacy***

5. The fostering and promotion of a preventative safety and health culture is a fundamental basis for improving OSH performance in the long term. Multiple approaches could be taken for this purpose. Since the promotion of such a preventative culture is very much a leadership issue, the ILO has to play an advocacy role with regard to different initiatives. Therefore the ILO should:

- endorse the establishment of an annual international event or campaign (world day or a safety and health week) aimed at raising widespread awareness of the importance of OSH and promoting the rights of workers to a safe and healthy working environment. Such an initiative should respect the workers' commemoration event organized since 1984 on 28 April;
- seek ways to raise visibility of the ILO and its OSH instruments;
- launch a global knowledge and awareness campaign focused on promoting the concept of "sound management of safety and health at work" as the most effective means for achieving strong and sustained preventative safety and health culture at both the national and enterprise levels;
- strategically use international meetings to promote a preventative safety and health culture including the triennial World Congress on Occupational Safety and Health organized jointly by the ILO and the International Social Security Association;
- internally implement its own guidelines on OSH management systems;
- encourage the launching of national OSH programmes by the highest government authorities.

### ***II. ILO instruments***

6. A new instrument establishing a promotional framework in the area of OSH should be developed on a priority basis. The main purpose of this instrument should be to ensure that a priority is given to OSH in national agendas and to foster political commitments to develop, in a tripartite context, national strategies for the improvement of OSH based on a preventative safety and health culture and the management systems approach. In its function as an overarching instrument with a promotional rather than prescriptive content, it would also contribute to increasing the impact of existing up-to-date ILO instruments and to a continuous improvement of national OSH systems including legislation, supporting measures and enforcement. Such a practical and constructive instrument should promote, inter alia, the right of workers to a safe and healthy working environment; the respective responsibilities of governments, employers and workers; the establishment of tripartite consultation mechanisms on OSH; the formulation and implementation of national OSH programmes based on the principles of assessment and management of hazards and risks at the workplace level; initiatives fostering a preventative safety and health culture; and worker

participation and representation at all relevant levels. It should strive to avoid duplication of provisions which are in existing instruments. In order to enable an exchange of experience and good practice on OSH in this respect, the instrument should include a mechanism for reporting on achievements and progress.

7. As regards revisions, priority should be given to the revision of the Guarding of Machinery Convention, 1963 (No. 119), and the Guarding of Machinery Recommendation, 1963 (No. 118), and the revision of the Lead Poisoning (Women and Children) Recommendation, 1919 (No. 4), the White Phosphorus Recommendation, 1919 (No. 6), the White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921 (No. 13), the Benzene Convention, 1971 (No. 136), and the Benzene Recommendation, 1971 (No. 144), in a consolidated manner by a Protocol to the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170).

8. With a view to increasing the relevance of ILO instruments, the development of new instruments in the areas of ergonomics and biological hazards should be given the highest priority. Priority should also be given to the development of a new instrument on the guarding of machinery in the form of a code of practice. Consideration should also be given to work-related psychosocial hazards for further ILO activities.

9. Occupational safety and health is an area which is in constant technical evolution. High-level instruments to be developed should therefore focus on key principles. Requirements that are more subject to obsolescence should be addressed through detailed guidance in the form of codes of practice and technical guidelines. The ILO should develop a methodology for a systematic updating of such codes and guidelines.

### **III. Technical assistance and cooperation**

10. It is important to provide technical advisory and financial support to developing countries and countries in transition for the timely strengthening of their national OSH capacities and programmes. This is of particular importance in the context of rapid changes in global economy and technology. In developing technical cooperation programmes, priority should be given to the countries where the assistance is most needed and where the commitment for sustained action is obvious, for example in the form of initiated national OSH programmes. The formulation and implementation of technical cooperation projects, beginning with a needs assessment at the national, regional and international levels, are the effective ways in this regard. Where possible, these projects should have a multiplier effect at the regional level and be self-sustaining in the long term. Together with its constituents, the ILO should make special efforts to seek the support of donor countries and institutions as well as innovative funding sources for such purposes along with increasing OSH experts in the regions. Experiences gained through technical cooperation projects should be widely shared, particularly at the regional level.

11. The formulation of national OSH programmes, which has been promoted by the ILO in recent years, is an effective way to consolidate national tripartite efforts in improving national OSH systems. The endorsement and launching of a national OSH programme by the highest government authority, for example by the Head of State, government or parliament, would have a significant impact on strengthening national OSH capacities and mobilization of national and international resources. It is essential to ensure the active participation of employers, workers and all relevant government institutions in the formulation and implementation of the programme. The programme should be developed on the basis of the achievements and needs of each country aiming at the improvement of national OSH systems and their capacity and OSH performance.

12. National OSH programmes should cover key aspects such as national policy, high-level commitment and vision that are publicly expressed and documented, national strategy that would include the development of a national OSH profile, targets, indicators, responsibilities, resources, and government leadership. Such programmes would strengthen national government departments and their OSH inspection and enforcement systems, OSH service structures, employers' and workers' organizations focused on OSH, information centres and networks, cross-cutting education and training systems, research and analytic structures, occupational injury and disease compensation and rehabilitation systems that include experience rating and incentives, voluntary and tripartite programmes and structures, as well as advocacy and promotion.

13. In developing methodologies to assist in the establishment and implementation of national OSH programmes, consideration should be given to the elaboration of appropriate and practical input, process and output indicators designed to provide a tool for the evaluation of progress by

constituents, as well as a basis for periodic review and identification of future priorities for action in the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases.

14. The capacities and expertise of ILO field structures in the area of OSH should be strengthened to better address the needs of constituents in this area. The means of communication between ILO headquarters and its field offices should be streamlined and improved to ensure that available country data can be analysed and used effectively for planning and developing projects.

#### **IV. Knowledge development, management and dissemination**

15. In the field of OSH, adequate capacities to develop, process and disseminate knowledge that meets the needs of governments, employers and workers – be it international standards, national legislation, technical guidance, methodologies, accident and disease statistics, best practice, educational and training tools, research or hazard and risk assessment data, in whatever medium, language and format needed – are a prerequisite for identifying key priorities, developing coherent and relevant strategies, and implementing national OSH programmes. The ILO should continue to improve its means to assist constituents in developing their capacities in this area, and responding to their specific needs, particularly in the establishment or strengthening of the national and collaborating centres of the ILO's International Occupational Safety and Health Centre (CIS) and linking these centres through the Internet to form regional networks and a global OSH information exchange system that could also serve as the backbone for a global hazard alert system.

16. The ILO should foster research on particular priority subjects in the area of OSH, preferably in collaboration with other interested organizations, as a basis for decision-making and action.

17. Free access to ILO OSH information to all who need it should be granted through all available dissemination means and networks such as CD-ROM and the Internet. Assistance to constituents in the translation of key OSH documents and materials in local languages is vital. The ILO should collaborate with other interested organizations and bodies in integrating the ILO's information centres and networks into wider global OSH information networks designed to provide constituents with easy access to key quality and multilingual OSH information and databases, particularly in the areas of OSH legislation, technical and scientific guidance, training and education materials, and best practice. The sharing of successful experience and approaches among all those involved in safety and health is the most efficient way of facilitating the development of practical preventative measures for new and traditional problems. Access to such a body of knowledge would also facilitate the ILO's task of identifying key trends and updating its instruments accordingly.

18. The ILO should contribute to international and national efforts aimed at developing harmonized methods for the collection and analysis of data on occupational accidents and diseases. Methodologies should also be designed to assist constituents in the techniques of information collection, analysis, processing and dissemination, and on the use of reliable information in planning, prioritizing and decision-making processes.

19. It is essential to provide education to raise awareness of OSH issues to all starting from schools and other educational and training institutions. In addition, certain groups need more advanced OSH education and training, including management, supervisors, workers and their representatives, and government officials responsible for safety and health.

20. The ILO should develop practical and easy-to-use training materials and methods focused on the "train-the-trainer" approach on key aspects of safety and health at work and improve the capacities of the ILO field structures in the area of OSH information dissemination and provision of training, and in particular those of the ILO's training centres. The ILO should support developing countries in the establishment of relevant OSH training mechanisms to reach all workers and their representatives and employers. Training should focus on supporting preventative action and on finding practical solutions. Vulnerable workers and workers in the informal economy should be given special consideration. The ILO training package on Work Improvements in Small Enterprises (WISE) has been used in many countries resulting in concrete improvements at enterprises. WISE and other training materials should be further improved and made widely available at low cost. OSH education curricula should be developed at the appropriate level.

## V. *International collaboration*

21. Collaboration with international organizations and bodies involved in various activities related to OSH, in particular with WHO, has proven to be a very effective way of ensuring that ILO values and views are taken into account and used as a basis for the development of technical standards and methodologies pertaining to OSH. This collaboration puts the ILO at the centre of global networks and alliances that are vital mechanisms for maintaining the currency of its technical knowledge base as well as influencing other bodies. It is also very effective in ensuring complementarities of mandates and avoidance of duplication of efforts, and opens opportunities for employer and worker experts to bring their views to bear on outcomes outside the mandate of the ILO.

22. In taking action to further improve the visibility, streamlining and impact of the ILO's role in OSH, consideration should be given to a periodic review of activities in this context and reporting to the Governing Body of the ILO on key issues and outcomes. This type of collaboration should be further encouraged and strengthened, particularly in areas where common interests and mandates are shared between several organizations and where outcomes of activities are of benefit to the ILO's constituents, such as the work of the ILO/WHO Joint Committee on Occupational Health, the International Programme on Chemical Safety, the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) and the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH). Within the context of ongoing efforts by the United Nations Environment Programme, the Inter-governmental Forum on Chemical Safety and the IOMC in developing a strategic approach to integrated chemicals management, the ILO should contribute to this work and ensure the full participation of employers' and workers' organizations in this process so that their views and interests are duly taken into account. The final outcome of this process should be presented to the ILO decision-making bodies for consideration.

### **General considerations**

23. In developing and implementing the global strategy, the ILO should make special efforts in relation to countries with particular needs for assistance and willing to strengthen their OSH capacities. Other means that could be considered at a national level as part of strategies to improve working conditions at the enterprise level, including SMEs and informal economy undertakings, and for vulnerable workers, including young, disabled and migrant workers, and the self-employed, include: extending coverage of legal requirements, strengthening the capacities of enforcement and inspection systems, and focusing these capacities towards the provision of technical advice and assistance in the area of OSH; the use of financial incentives; initiatives to strengthen linkages between primary health-care systems and occupational health; the introduction of hazard, risk and prevention concepts in school curricula and educational systems in general (prevention through education) as an effective means to build strong and sustained preventative safety and health cultures on a continuous basis. A further consideration is the need to take account of gender specific factors in the context of OSH standards, other instruments, management systems and practice. Within the Office, the mainstreaming of OSH in other ILO activities should be improved. Furthermore, the integrated approach should be progressively applied to all other areas of ILO activities. Finally, due consideration should be given to the provision of adequate resources to implement this action plan.