

International Seminar on Occupational Safety and Health in the Oil and Gas Industry and State Control

4-5 November 2010, Atyrau, Republic of Kazakhstan

Conclusions

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population, the Republic of Kazakhstan and the International Labour Office (ILO) jointly organized the International Seminar on Occupational Safety and Health in the Oil and Gas Industry and State Control on 4-5 November 2010, Atyrau, the Republic of Kazakhstan. The International Seminar was attended by 170 participants representing the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and social partners in the oil and gas industry as well as foreign experts of the oil and gas industry.

The International Seminar discussed a wide range of issues concerning occupational safety and health in the oil and gas industry, including, inter alia, social dialogue on occupational safety and health in the oil and gas industry in the Republic of Kazakhstan; regulating safety and health in the oil and gas industry – risk identification; revelation, evaluation and management of occupational risks in the workplace; occupational safety and health management systems; best practices for promoting a preventative safety and health culture at work.

1. Findings:

The International Seminar found the following:

To improve occupational safety and health is one of the pillars of the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for 2010-12 in the Republic of Kazakhstan. State control and state supervision play a pivotal role in maintaining good occupational safety and health in the oil and gas industry to prevent the accidents in the industry which will contribute to protecting people's lives and the environment.

Although the government's efforts and endeavours have recently contributed to reducing the number of fatalities and injuries in the oil and gas industry, the risks associated with a hazardous working environment remain. The International Seminar noted that workers in the oil and gas industry face a number of occupational health risks such as stress, noise, vibration, and exposure to hazardous substances. An integrated and holistic approach is effective in eliminating or reducing risks. Risk identification and adequate preventative measures must be established.

Human factors often contribute to accidents in the oil and gas industry. An ergonomic approach is an effective means of building a safe and health working environment. To create and foster preventative and safety culture across the oil and gas industry is paramount. Thus, the government has a key role to play. At the company level, the full commitment by all management, including top management, is essential to create a preventative and safe culture at work.

Strengthening state control and the capacities of labour inspectors will benefit the people of the Republic of Kazakhstan. This will also aid in creating an open and transparent society, resulting in healthy national governance which is a prerequisite to national development and growth. The International Seminar noted that an effective means of labour inspection requires clear goal-orientation. In this context, risk knowledge-based inspections accompanied by dialogue-based actions are effective for enforcement.

Training in occupational safety and health is also effective in preventing accidents at work. Training must include all workers, including contractors and sub-contractors, in the workplace. Adequate training and re-training must take place for labour inspectors.

Tripartite and/or bipartite social dialogues play a crucial role in occupational safety and health in the oil and gas industry. Collective labour agreements (CLAs) can contribute to creating a safe and healthy working environment in the oil and gas industry. In order to improve safety and health at work, the government must take a lead role of promoting social dialogue in the oil and gas industry.

2. Possible follow-up activities:

The International Seminar suggests that the Government of Kazakhstan take the following actions:

- Study best practices to identify a system of regular medical checkups and fit-to-work programs in order to improve all workers' health;
- Promote preventative and safety culture through occupational safety and health campaigns and training, including the observation of World Day for Safety and Health at Work (28 April) in collaboration with social partners in the oil and gas industry;
- Support the ILO Plan of Action (2010-2016) to achieve widespread ratification and effective implementation of occupational safety and health instruments (Convention No. 155, its 2002 Protocol and Convention No. 187).
- Ratify the ILO occupational safety and health Conventions, particularly the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187);
- In collaboration with the ILO, establish a mechanism for securing adequate financial and human resources for the labour inspectorate, in order to promote compliance with laws and regulations;
- In collaboration with the ILO, promote implementation of GOST 12.0.230-2007 (ILO Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems – ILO-OSH 2001);
- In collaboration with the ILO, identify a mechanism for mobilizing all possible resources to implement the DWCP for 2010-12 in the Republic of Kazakhstan, with full participation of social partners in the oil and gas industry;
- Explore the feasibility of creating a knowledge-based safety network in the oil and gas industry in order to exchange best practices on improving occupational safety and health in the industry as well as disseminating best practices information to other sectors; and
- Organize follow-up activities, where appropriate, in order to improve occupational safety and health in the oil and gas industry.