

Points of Consensus

Introduction

1. The ILO sub-Saharan African Workshop on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) in the Oil and Gas Industry brought together tripartite delegations from Angola, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Kenya, Mozambique and Nigeria and observers from the IndustriALL Global Union. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss and exchange good practices of improving OSH and to promote a preventative safety and health culture in the oil and gas industry in sub-Saharan African countries.

Risks and challenges for workers' safety and health in sub-Saharan Africa

2. The oil and gas industry is an important driver of economic growth in sub-Saharan African countries. Existing physical, biological, chemical and ergonomic hazards in the oil and gas industry are compounded by unfavourable climatic factors, which leads to heat stress that in turn increases the risk of workplace injuries and diseases. Psychosocial problems may result from working in remote base camps or on offshore drilling platforms for extended periods of time. Transportation to and from these sites can be extremely hazardous, especially if operations are located in or near conflict-affected areas. Excessive working hours and irregular working time arrangements have a negative effect on workers' health, alertness and performance.
3. Consequently, a number of occupational fatalities, injuries and diseases have been reported yearly. In the absence of effective monitoring and reporting systems, the actual number of accidents and incidents is not known, but suspected to be higher.
4. The critical role and independence of labour inspectorates to enforce legislation is in some sub-Saharan African countries undermined by weak capacity, poor governance including corruption and a lack of equipment, specialized training and of human and financial resources.
5. Non-standard forms of employment (NSFE) such as temporary work through agencies, service agreements, outsourcing and sub-contracting arrangements and other multiparty employment relationships have grown in the industry. Oil and gas workers in NSFE sometimes lack protection in law or in practice, and their injury rates are generally higher. NSFE should meet the occupational safety and health standards.

Promoting a preventative safety and health culture in sub-Saharan Africa

6. The return on investing in a preventative safety and health culture in the oil and gas industry is far greater than the costs. If these investments are coupled with policies that prioritize the most urgent challenges, consider the safety and health of workers, and recognize their rights to know the risks and to participate in mitigating the risks, they can contribute to safer workplaces, a more productive industry, decent work and inclusive economic growth as well as other Sustainable Development Goals.
7. The promotion of a preventative safety and health culture is a fundamental basis for improving OSH performance in the long term. Governments, employers' and workers' organizations have a shared responsibility to ensure that the right to a safe and healthy working environment is respected at all levels. Workers shall have the right to refuse or stop unsafe work when they have reasonable justification to believe there is an imminent and serious risk to their safety and health.
8. The ratification and effective implementation of the ILO Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) and its 2002 Protocol, the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174) and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187) is of particular strategic importance in closing governance gaps. It will assist governments and social partners to work together towards the development of programmes and strategies for improving OSH policies and infrastructure at the national and enterprise levels.
9. OSH risk management should commence with an effective risk assessment that includes the identification, assessment and control of hazards. Risk assessments should encompass diversified risks, including impact on the environment and communities surrounding the operations, and should be done with full participation of those who face the risk. Hazards should be identified in the earliest planning phase of operations and controlled at the source, including communication and relevant training. Essential reference documents are the ILO *Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems* (ILO-OSH 2001) and the *Code of Practice on Prevention of major industrial accidents* (1991).
10. Particular attention should be paid to the protection of the rights of all workers including women, migrants, indigenous peoples, workers in NSFE and other workers vulnerable to discrimination.
11. Sharing good practices and learning from the experiences among tripartite constituents in sub-Saharan Africa is an effective means to support sustainable industry growth and improve skills and competencies in OSH. Accredited training systems and personal protective equipment (PPE) and clothing are of key importance.
12. Education and training for all workers should address the specific skills and competencies that are required for oil and gas operations in sub-Saharan Africa, and be based on an assessment of skills needs in unfavourable climatic conditions. Regulations, certification, rules and tools should be easy to access and be understood including in local languages by the industry and workers. Self-assessment tools are useful to further promote compliance.
13. Elected worker OSH representatives and members of Joint OSH Committees should receive information and additional training specific to their responsibilities and have full knowledge of the peculiarities of their working environment.
14. Tripartite constituents should be involved in developing specific training tools and multiple skills sets need to be taken into consideration in their design, development and implementation.

Recommendations for future action by the ILO and its members

15. Tripartite constituents should develop and reinforce OSH management mechanisms through effective social dialogue, including the establishment of effective OSH committees at national, industry and enterprise levels and through support for the implementation of ILO-OSH 2001.
16. Social partners (workers and employers) should jointly promote Decent Work including OSH for all workers in the industry through, inter alia, collective agreements, cross-border social dialogue and international framework agreements.
17. Governments should:
 - a) ratify and implement international labour standards relevant to the industry as specified in paragraph 8;
 - b) ensure full compliance with national laws and regulations and access to appropriate and effective remedy and complaints mechanisms;
 - c) establish and implement integrated systems for the collection and sharing of OSH information, data and statistics and for the recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases;
 - d) empower labour administration and independent labour inspection systems in order to ensure full compliance with laws and regulations and access to appropriate and effective remedy and complaints mechanisms;
 - e) in its own purchasing practices promote OSH in the industry and should clearly communicate what they expect from enterprises with respect to responsible business conduct;
 - f) establish tripartite national, regional and international mechanisms to share good practices and enhance cooperation in relation to OSH policies, practices and management, including skills development and training for oil and gas operations in unfavourable climatic conditions; and
 - g) ensure an integrated approach across different government departments and agencies to promote a preventative safety and health culture in the industry.
18. The ILO should:
 - a) promote ratification and effective implementation of international labour standards relevant to OSH in the industry, as well as respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work and build the capacity of constituents to realize these rights including through South-South and Triangular Cooperation and other forms of development cooperation;
 - b) Collect and disseminate data and research to address OSH challenges in the oil and gas industry in sub-Saharan Africa and undertake a review of existing ILO tools and guidance with a view to update them to cover operations in unfavourable climatic conditions; and

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- c) collect and disseminate good practices from sub-Saharan Africa to strengthen a preventative safety and health culture through social dialogue.