



## ***Safety + Health for All Plantation Workers in South Asia- India Component***

### **CONCEPT NOTE**

## **Consultative meeting with the Small Tea Growers on Promoting Occupational Safety and Health in the Workplace**

*18 February 2022 (10:30 - 12:30 hrs - Virtual meeting)*

### ***Introduction***

The occupational health and safety in the labour-intensive tea sector is challenging as workers are exposed to variety of hazards and risks. About fifty percent of the tea production in India is through the small tea growers. As part of the **ILO/Japan** project “**Safety + Health for All Plantation Workers in South Asia**”: **India Component**, a consultative meeting is being organized to assess the needs of the small tea holdings to improve work and safety at the workplace.

The project contributes to the India Decent Work Country Programme adopted by the Indian constituents in Outcome 3.2: By 2022, women and men workers and enterprises benefit from safe and healthy workplaces. Aligned with **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, and Goal 12 (responsible production and consumption) Sustainable Development that has a principle of ‘Leaving No One Behind. It targets directly in terms of Goal 8 (decent work), target 8.8 (safe working environment), and indirectly in terms of Goal 3 (healthy lives), target 3.9 (hazardous environment).

The purpose is to discuss occupational safety and health issues in small tea holding with the associations of small tea growers to (i) understand the health and safety challenges faced by workers (ii) discuss the existing safety and occupational health management systems in the small holdings; and (iii) explore possible solutions for improving the health, safety and working conditions of the workers, which in turn can enhance productivity as well. The outcomes of the assessment will feed into developing a roadmap with the small tea growers’ associations to build capacity, strengthen workplace OSH systems and bring progressive workplace improvements with participation of employers and workers. A healthy workplace can have a great impact on the productivity and efficiency. The consultative meeting also intends to understand the needs of the small growers and seek the possibility to suggest practical and effective solutions that can be used to create safer and healthier workplace by promoting safer working conditions.

## ***Background and need for the consultative meeting***

In line with the recommendations and suggestions provided by the constituents, under the global ILO's flagship programme “**Safety + Health for All**”, a sub-regional project is launched targeting the Plantation Workers in South Asia (covering the countries India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal). The ILO programme pays particular attention to the hurdles developing countries face; high-risk sectors such as agriculture; workers in vulnerable conditions such as women, young workers and migrant workers; small and medium enterprises; and global supply chains.



In India, the project, as a pilot, will focus on the tea sector in Assam. Assam is the largest single tea growing region in the world. With about 750 estates and 100,000 smallholder plots, tea in Assam accounts for one sixth of the total global tea production. Assam produces half of India's tea. Improving working and living conditions in the sector is directly linked to the current and future development of the lives of more than 1 million people in the state of Assam<sup>1</sup>. Tea production is characterized by high labour intensity especially in remote rural areas, with female workers representing half of the total workforce. Overall conditions of tea workers are poor and characterized by low wages, poor hygiene, sanitation, and health conditions, as well as limited workers' voice and representation. In addition, COVID – 19 has created havoc in the lives of workers. In the context of a global COVID-19 pandemic, the right of every worker to a safe and healthy work environment has become ever more important.

### ***Consultative meeting objectives and proposed outcomes:***

Under the current project, the ILO will be providing technical support to the employers, workers and the government to improve the occupational health and safety at the workplace, strengthen OSH management systems and their implementation, using a collaborative and participative approach based on social dialogue. Progressive changes at all levels are essential to make the change more sustainable. Based on the needs assessment, the project will work with the small growers' association to develop an action plan for capacity building and implementation of OSH improvement programs. ILO also has specific participatory programs that provide no cost/low-cost solutions that can enable workplace improvement, when implemented with participation of management and workers. This consultative meeting will also serve as a platform to understand the capacity building needs of small growers as in the context of the new OSH and Working Conditions Code, 2020 which may be implemented once the central rules are notified (replacing the Plantation Labour Act, 1951).

**Specific objectives:** In line with the above, the specific objectives of the consultative meeting are to understand:

- Capacity building needs for improving the occupational health and safety conditions in the small tea holdings of Assam and to address the challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic for both women and men workers.

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<sup>1</sup> [ILO/The Lab project and Fairtrade: Improving conditions in tea plantations in Assam. Market Systems Action Research, ILO March 2018](#)

- Specific gender needs for strengthening gender responsive workplace OSH frameworks and to prevent workplace violence and harassment at the workplace.
- Any other technical support needed to help improve current practices, organizational structures, tools and safety measures in place for prevention and protection from occupational hazards, keeping in line with the new Code on OSH and Working Conditions 2020.

**Outcomes:** In line with the above, the proposed outcomes of the meeting are:

- Capacity building needs for the members of the small growers' associations in the context of improving the occupational health and safety conditions and to deal with OSH challenges related COVID-19 pandemic will be identified. This would include capacity needs to promote gender responsive workplace OSH frameworks as well.
- Based on the discussion, the small tea growers' employers' associations will be able to build knowledge and explore ways to improve current practices, organizational structures, tools and safety measures and prepare for the implementation of the new OSH and Working Conditions Code, 2020 (when notified for enforcement).
- The overall outcome of the consultative meeting will be to a) develop a comprehensive plan to support the small growers b) to apply collaborative and participatory processes to improve the occupational health and safety and c) promote better working conditions for women and men workers by taking incremental steps with participation of workers and employers at the workplace.

## ***Participants and Resource Persons:***

**Participants:** The consultative meeting participants will be the small growers' organizations in Assam, namely:

All Assam Small Tea Growers Association, Lahowal, Assam  
 All Bodoland Small Tea Growers Association, Udalguri, Assam  
 Assam Tea Planters Association, Jorhat, Assam  
 North Eastern Tea Association, Golahat, Assam  
 The Organic Small Tea Growers Association of North East India, Dibrugarh, Assam  
 Confederation of Indian Small Tea-Growers' Associations (CISTA), Jalpaiguri, West-Bengal  
 Indian Tea Association, Kolkatta, West Bengal

**Resource Persons and facilitators:** The consultative meeting will be facilitated by:

Mr. R. Peiris, Senior Specialist - Employers Activities, ILO DWT/CO, New Delhi  
 Mr. T. Kawakami, Senior Specialist - OSH, ILO DWT/CO, New Delhi  
 Ms. Bharti Birla, Project Manager, ILO DWT/CO, New Delhi  
 Ms. Kanagarani Selvakumar, National Project Coordinator, ILO DWT/CO, New Delhi



## **Safety + Health for All Plantation Workers in South Asia- India Component**

### **Provisional Agenda**

## **Consultative meeting with the Small Tea Growers on Promoting Occupational Safety and Health at Workplace**

*18 February 2022 (10:30 - 12:30 hrs - Virtual meeting)*

<b>10:30 – 10:35 Hrs</b>	<b>Welcome address:</b> -Ms. Kanagarani Selvakumar, National Project Coordinator, ILO-DWT/CO, New Delhi
<b>10:35- 10:45 Hrs</b>	<b>Opening remarks:</b> -Ms Dagmar Walter, Director, ILO DWT/CO, New Delhi
<b>10:45 – 11:00 Hrs</b>	<b>Setting context for the consultative meeting</b> - Ms Bharti Birla, Chief Technical Advisor, ILO DWT/CO, New Delhi - Mr Ravi Peiris, Specialist for Employers Activities, ILO DWT/CO, New Delhi
<b>11:00 – 12:00 Hrs</b>	<b>Discussion</b> Comments and inputs from small tea growers’ associations Facilitated by - Ms Bharti Birla, ILO DWT/CO, New Delhi Areas of discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capacity building needs</li> <li>- Specific gender needs for strengthening gender responsive workplace OSH frameworks</li> <li>- Improving current practices, organizational structures, tools and safety measures in place</li> <li>- Impact of the new Code on OSH and Working Conditions 2020.</li> </ul>
<b>12:00 – 12:15 Hrs</b>	<b>Comments and inputs</b> -Mr. T. Kawakami, Specialist for OSH, ILO DWT/CO, New Delhi. -Mr Ravi Peiris, Specialist for Employers Activities, ILO DWT/CO, New Delhi  <b>Possible actions through the project:</b> - Ms Bharti Birla, Project Manager, ILO DWT/CO, New Delhi.
<b>12:15 – 12:30 Hrs</b>	<b>Open House</b> Inputs and comments from the Small growers’ associations based on the discussion on current situation, challenges and areas of collaboration with ILO with a focus on women. Facilitated by: Mrs. Kanagarani Selvakumar
<b>12:30 Hrs</b>	Closing and Vote of thanks: Mrs. Kanagarani Selvakumar