

ILO-ACTRAV Symposium
Role of trade unions in the promotion of OSH in Asia-Pacific
1-3 October 2014, Jakarta, Indonesia

Conclusions

Trade Union representatives from 14 countries in Asia and the Pacific Region (Australia, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam) met in Jakarta from 1-3 October 2014 for the ILO-ACTRAV Symposium supported under South-South Cooperation ACTRAV/ACFTU Programme to review and share experiences on the state of occupational safety and health (OSH) in the region and to discuss trade union role and actions to place occupational safety and health high on the agenda leading to the participation of workers and their representatives in formulating, implementing and reviewing of all policies, systems and programmes related to OSH, including through social dialogue and collective bargaining.

Recognizing that the protection of life and health at work is a worker's right¹ and "a fundamental requirement for achieving the objectives of the Decent Work Agenda"², participants were strongly of the view that pathway to safe and healthy workplaces lies in promoting decent work for all. Lack of respect for human life and dignity means that too many workers are dying at work due to injuries and ill health. Lack of social protection, combined with adverse changes due to pressures of globalization has increased work-related stress, insecurities and ill health. While still focusing on the basic safety and health, measures should also expand to cover socio-economic security needs since economic policies are making workers' lives more insecure and stressful, leading to worse health outcomes. Trade Unions therefore call for Decent Work-led rights based approach to OSH. For this it is necessary that effective right to organize, to union recognition and to collective bargaining is guaranteed.

Specifically to the Asia-Pacific region the emerging trends of increasing precariousness of work due to outsourcing, contracting and casualization enable abuse of workers, deplorable working conditions, low wages and companies avoiding their OSH responsibilities.

The symposium agreed to act and called for action by all the unions in the following areas:

- Enhancing regional cooperation of trade unions, networking, exchange of information/experience/solidarity actions in the area of OSH including secondment and participation in training of trainers, exercised among others by means of a mailing list of participants;

¹ ILO Convention No 187; The UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1976

² Global strategy on OSH, Conclusions adopted by the ILC at its 91st Session, 2003

- Conducting the necessary activities to ratify/implement the ILO key Instruments on OSH: Convention No 155, its 2002 Protocol and Convention No 187:
 - ✓ Participate in the preparation, implementation and review of national OSH policies and programmes;
 - ✓ Participate and contribute to the development, strengthening and review of the national OSH systems;
 - ✓ Work to set up tri-partite National OSH Councils;
 - ✓ Promote social dialogue at the enterprises (OSH committee or other forms);

- Continuing efforts to ratify and implement Convention No 176;

- Facilitating and provide training and education on OSH for TU leaders at all levels so that they can effectively participate in bipartite and tripartite bodies and consultations, and become more active in OSH activities in the workplaces;

- Campaigning for Right to Decent Work - to promote workers' safety, health and well-being, including through promotion of the integration of OSH in Decent Work Country Programmes and other programmes;

- Promoting the shift from behavior based safety and health to prevention: identification and elimination of work hazards and risks, establishment of safe work procedures, systems of work, etc.;

- Promoting workers' and their representatives' involvement in design, implementation and monitoring in the field of OSH at all levels from workplace to national;

- Integrating sex and gender perspectives in OSH work and union policies and actions;

- Raising awareness among management and workers on hazards and risks (including psychosocial factors) in order to focus on their prevention;

- Improving worker-union-management communication and action on safety and health workplace issues. This includes increased worker participation in incident and injury investigations, and input into decision making;

- Promoting universal social protection floors, and improved legislation, based on rights;

- Promoting rehabilitation and return to work rights to injured workers;

- Strengthening cooperation with authorities and labour and other inspectorates to ensure improved workplace compliance and lobby for strengthened and effective labour and other inspectorates.