

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Occupational safety and health issues are generally less visible and not adequately recognized as a problem in developing countries where risks are often greater than in industrialized countries. Moreover, comprehensive and harmonised data collection systems on occupational accidents and diseases are poorly developed in low-income Southern African countries, leading to a serious underestimation of the magnitude of occupational accidents and diseases. The expansion of the informal economy also increases challenges in improving occupational safety and health.



→ Malawi workshop, 2010

“As employees we know there are a lot of challenges pertaining to occupational safety and health. I am very optimistic that the programme we are just about to embark on will be able to address some of these challenges within the workplace”.

Luther Mambala, President of the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions (MCTU).

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Occupational safety and health has been identified as a “priority for the social actors in the region” according to the Decent Work in the Americas Hemispheric Agenda, 2006-2015. A priority goal is to “reduce the incidence of occupational accidents and illnesses by 20 percent within 10 years (by 2015), and double occupational safety and health protection for sectors and collectives heretofore not covered”.



OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH IN EASTERN EUROPE:

“We are committed at the national level to develop and implement a National Action Plan for providing safe and healthy working conditions and assume responsibility for the proper implementation of this Project in Ukraine.”

Mr. Oleksandr Khohotva, the Head of the State Service on Industrial Safety and Mining Supervision of Ukraine.

“This Project will help us to save human lives!”

Sergiy Storchak, former Head of the State Committee of Ukraine on Industrial Safety, Labour Protection and Mining Supervision.

Most Eastern European countries have aspirations to eventually become EU members and are taking steps to bring their legislation and practices into line with *the acquis communautaire* on many fronts. Nevertheless, important gaps still exist, including in occupational safety and health and working conditions. The establishment of democracy and the market economy in Eastern Europe requires fundamental changes in managing occupational safety and health. This would entail taking into account the small enterprises in the private sector in addition to promoting prevention through risk assessment and bipartite dialogue.

“I am an absolute realist and understand that our Project – and I hope that I have a right to consider it also as ours, - would not solve all the problems. But for sure, the Project will significantly improve the situation on occupational safety and health in Ukraine.”

Oleksiy Miroshnychenko, Executive Vice-President of the Confederation of Employers of Ukraine.



→ Ukraine workshop, 2010

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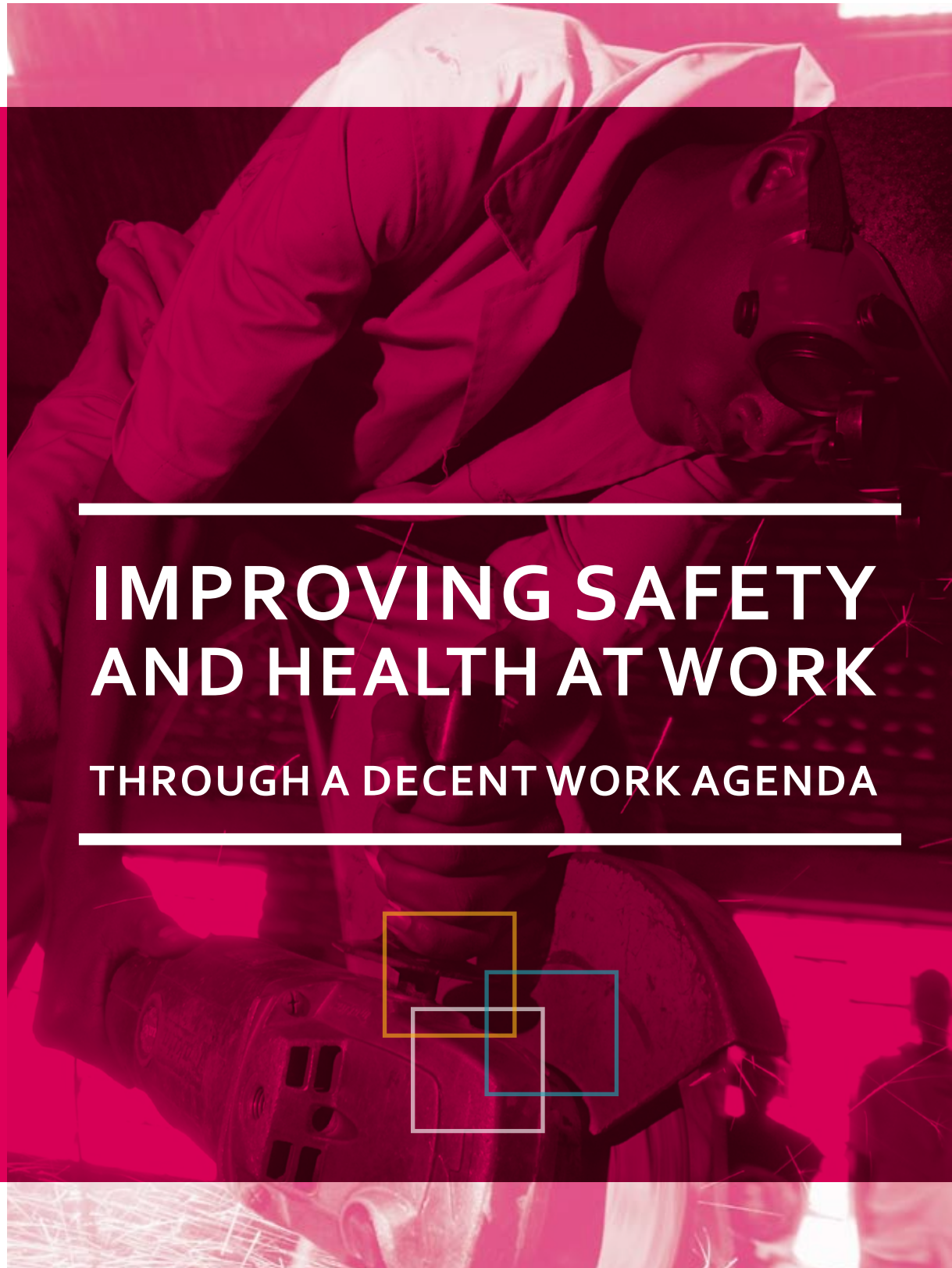
FOR FURTHER DETAILS, PLEASE VISIT

“Improving Safety and Health at Work Through a Decent Work Agenda”
found at <http://www.ilo.org/safework/projects>

<http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/social-protection>

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IMPROVING SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK THROUGH A DECENT WORK AGENDA



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This project has an overall goal to contribute to a more inclusive and productive society through a reduction in occupational accidents and work-related diseases.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH: A MAJOR GLOBAL CONCERN

The latest ILO estimates show that Safety and health at work remains a major global concern.

- Over 2 million people die around the world every year as a result of their work.
- Every day around 1,000 people go out to work in the morning or evening and simply don't return home because they die in occupational accidents.
- Non-fatal occupational accidents have increased to over 300 million per year.
- The global economic cost of occupational accidents and diseases represent 4% of the global gross domestic product (GDP).

Urgent action is required to reverse this trend of workplace accidents and diseases, reliance on benefits, early retirement, exclusion from the labour market, the loss of a breadwinner and poverty.

THE CHALLENGE: TRANSLATING INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS INTO REAL PRACTICE

The increasing human, economic and social burden of workplace accidents, diseases and fatalities has urged the development of preventive international standards and operational action in this field.

The importance of safety and health at work is apparent in more than half of the ILO instruments, but translating these provisions into real practice at national and workplace level remains a challenge.

- Core ILO Occupational Safety and Health Conventions
- Occupational Safety and Health Convention. 1981 (No 155)
 - Occupational Health Services Convention. 1985 (No 161)
 - Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention. 2006 (No 187)

A PROJECT TO SAVE AND IMPROVE LIVES

The project “Improving safety and health at work through a Decent Work agenda” was developed to better address safety and health at work as a vital component of decent work. It will be implemented over two and a half years between 2010 and 2012 in six pilot countries.

By developing and implementing this time bound and targeted project, the EU and the ILO Programme on Safety and Health at Work and the Environment (SAFEWORK) are joining efforts to ensure that safety and health measures attain their endpoint and reach the concerned beneficiaries.

The project aims at incorporating occupational safety and health at the highest level in the national political agenda, integrating it into national development policies, and translating the occupational safety and health national programmes into action at the workplace level.

Seiji Machida, SafeWork Director, emphasizes that “The project will include sensitization activities to convince government officials to include occupational health and safety concerns as part of national development plans, to stimulate high level decision makers at government level to allocate funds for occupational safety and health and, more generally speaking, to encourage stakeholders to take the necessary steps to improve occupational safety and health”.



COVERAGE

- Eastern Europe : Republic of Moldova and Ukraine
- Central America : Honduras and Nicaragua
- Southern Africa : Malawi and Zambia

The pilot countries were selected on the basis of their national commitment to improve health and safety at work, as witnessed by the formal agreements between governments, employers’ and workers’ organisations in the Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs).

DECENT WORK IS SAFE WORK

The International Labour Organization’s notion of Decent Work is a global objective for men and women to obtain productive work in conditions of freedom, equality, security and dignity. The objectives of decent work have been consistently highlighted in EC and EU policy statements. The European Consensus on Development states that the Community will promote decent work for all in line with the ILO agenda. Occupational safety and health is a core element of Decent Work and the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda. Decent Work is Safe Work.

OBJECTIVES

- Overall Goal:** To contribute to a more inclusive and productive society through a reduction in occupational accidents and work-related diseases.
- Specific objective 1:** A systematic approach to improving Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is taken on board at the highest political level, including consideration of OSH concerns in national development policies in the pilot countries.
- Specific objective 2:** Practical OSH management measures are introduced and implemented at enterprise level in accordance with national action plans.
- Specific objective 3:** Global knowledge sharing on OSH tools and good practices is promoted with the purpose of developing a systematic and sustainable approach to OSH improvements.

“Good practices and lessons learned in the six countries involved will certainly be very useful to further spread the advocacy messages on OSH in other parts of the world...and promote a systematic approach to national occupational health and safety developments”

Mr Aristotelis Bouratsis, Director of Thematic Operations in the European Commission EuropeAid Development and Cooperation Directorate General.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- A national dialogue process on OSH is established and functioning in the six pilot countries (Honduras and Nicaragua, Moldova and Ukraine, Malawi and Zambia).
- National OSH programmes are adopted in the six pilot countries.
- Advocacy tools developed by the project are used by stakeholders who are motivated to promote OSH at national level.
- Stakeholders are capable of using tools and methodologies to improve OSH management at the workplace.
- Methodologies used and good practices developed in the pilot countries are acknowledged by more countries.



ACTIVITIES

- Develop national OSH profiles (situational and needs analyses).
- Develop national programmes on OSH and launch them at the highest political level.
- Train policy makers on prioritising OSH.
- Develop and publish a tool on calculating the costs of poor OSH practices to the national economy.
- Develop and publish a methodology to determine more accurately the number of occupational accidents and diseases in a country.
- Train labour inspectors to promote more efficient and effective OSH inspections and ensure implementation of the OSH programme.
- Train trainers in risk assessment and management methodologies.
- Conduct awareness-raising campaigns, based on the ILO World Day for Safety and Health at Work and the European Week for Safety and Health at Work.
- Develop a report of the project conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations for a systematic and sustainable approach to improving OSH in a national context.
- Organize one global conference to share experience from the six pilot countries.