



**Statement by Mr. Juan Somavia,  
Director-General of the International Labour Office  
on the occasion of  
World Day for Safety and Health at Work  
(28 April 2007)**

Today, the ILO joins governments, employers and workers and their organizations, and all who are striving to ensure safe and healthy workplaces, in this observance of World Day for Safety and Health at Work.

The ILO was founded on the recognition that “conditions of labour exist involving such injustice, hardship and privation to large numbers of people as to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperilled; and an improvement of those conditions is urgently required; as, for example...by the protection of the worker against sickness, disease and injury arising out of his employment...”

This imperative remains valid. Protecting the life and health of all workers is a keystone of the ILO’s broader goal of decent work – a goal endorsed by the global community at the 2005 World Summit.

Promoting safe and healthy workplaces is a global responsibility and calls for action nationally, regionally and internationally. On this World Day, we focus on one of the ILO’s newest instruments to reinforce and support these efforts – the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention (No. 187) adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2006.

This Convention and its accompanying Recommendation reflect the importance of placing occupational safety and health high on national agendas. Respect for workers’ lives must be at the heart of sustainable strategies for growth and development.

These instruments set out a systematic approach to the prevention of workplace illness and injury through a national policy, a national system, a national programme and a national profile. They are anchored in tripartite involvement. Implementation creates an environment conducive to making common cause around safety and health objectives and open up discussion and prospects for action on other relevant ILO instruments. A preventive orientation encourages safety and health at work to be a reflex not a burden. And the approach they advocate can facilitate regional and international cooperation on safety and health.

Ratification and implementation of Convention No. 187 is a concrete expression of commitment to protecting the life and health of all workers.

Today, let us re-commit to doing all that we can to prevent the millions of work-related illnesses, injuries and deaths that occur each year.

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