World Day for Safety and Health at Work: 28 April 2013

The International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) calls for reinforced actions for preventing occupational and work-related diseases and injuries by meeting the changing needs at the workplace in globalizing economy

Effective recognition and prevention of occupational and work-related diseases are essential for achieving decent work for all workers. Occupational diseases are highly prevalent worldwide and cause immeasurable human suffering and losses to workers, businesses and societies. It is timely that the World Day for Safety and Health at Work in 2013 focuses on the prevention of occupational diseases as the core topic for international collaboration in occupational health and safety. We fully support the ILO strategy to ensure sound national policies and programmes and strengthen collaboration for preventing occupational diseases.

Concerted, urgent actions are needed for identifying relevant occupational hazards and risks and preventing occupational diseases. As multiple risk factors including organizational aspects are usually associated with occupational diseases, multidisciplinary teamwork is necessary. At the workplace, comprehensive preventive measures are essential for this purpose while the vast majority of workers are still without occupational health services. Detection of many occupational diseases is often difficult. Strengthened effort is needed to extend effective and basic occupational health services with the active support of legislation and action-oriented programmes. The Basic Occupational Health Service approach needs to be further developed in connection with primary health care and other grassroots level services.

Positive experiences gained in many areas and sectors for ensuring easy access to occupational health services and developing action-oriented preventive activities in diverse work situations can be utilized in strengthening effective support for identifying and controlling multifaceted risks causing occupational diseases. We call for all stakeholders and relevant professionals to collaborate for developing networks of occupational health services and their supporting systems.

ICOH warmly congratulates the ILO on its 94th Anniversary and its leadership role in the improvement of conditions of work and social justice throughout the world. We extend our sincere gratitude for our continued collaborative relations. We call upon sustained joint effort for furthering research and practice in safety and health at work and for effectively preventing occupational and work-related diseases.

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