



International Commission on Occupational Health - ICOH
Commission Internationale de la Santé au Travail - CIST

Founded in 1906 as Permanent Commission



ILO World Day for Safety and Health at Work – 28 April 2018

The International Commission on Occupational Health, ICOH, strongly supports the ILO SafeDay and combined World Day against Child Labour on 28 April. Both causes - elimination of child labour and Safety and Health at work - are in the heart of ICOH ethical, evidence-based and engagement oriented approach.

Last ILO-ISSA Congress in Singapore released the new numbers of fatal and non-fatal occupational accidents and work-related diseases. Out of the global number of 2.8 million workers dying at work every year at least 22,000 children lose their lives caused by accidents every year. This is complemented by another 20 million non-fatal accidents for children in hazardous work.

No reliable number of fatal and non-fatal work-related diseases exists while children are, in particular, working in many hazardous sectors and jobs, such as those in agriculture. The sector is, in particular, hazardous including a wide range of communicable and non-communicable risks leading to diseases and disorders, including those hazardous to their mental development. Due to life-long exposure time starting from being exposed at young age, and an unprepared body and mind, will cause, in particular, a highly increased risk.

The real and proper statistics are missing as children are not considered as recordable workers. In reality there are more than 500 million working children and young workers. Their experience of problems at work and risks is very limited or non-existent.

The risk prevention methods have been well developed in the safest and healthiest countries and workplaces and an estimated 80 % of fatal and non-fatal outcomes could be easily prevented. The body of ILO Conventions, Recommendations, Resolutions and Guidance documents are there to be implemented. This is surely the responsibility of those employing children, but the legal framework must be established by states and governments. Every adult must be responsible as well.

The present practices are often clearly against all ethical principles. Children must be in school and not at work destroying their health and future.

ICOH congratulates ILO for this campaign and is pleased to be associated with related action. During the ICOH 2018 Dublin Congress about to start on this same 28th April many issues are surely taken up both scientifically and in practice.

Children as well as grown-ups are definitely entitled to have a Safe Day – every day.

Dr Jukka Takala,
President of ICOH