

Seoul Declaration on Safety and Health at Work



Overview

- For the first time in the history of the World Congress on Safety and Health at Work ever since its inception in 1955, a Safety and Health Summit was held by Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA) along with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Social Security Association (ISSA) at COEX ASEM Hall in Seoul, Korea on June 29, 2008.
- A renowned group of 46 high-ranking decision-makers from around the world-including labour ministers, representatives from governments, employers and employees, and CEOs of leading multinational companies-gathered together in the summit and made discussions on "safety and health as a means for promoting basic human rights and economic development." The Safety and Health Summit was planned to raise the public awareness and place an appropriate attention on the importance of occupational safety and health.
- The summit participants made a heated debate on how to put occupational safety and health on the high national and international political agendas so that OSH policies can be well implemented as ideal media that bring positive effects to employers, employees and ultimately to society as a whole.
- As a result, all the summit participants unanimously reached a consensus to adopt Seoul Declaration on Safety and Health at Work (hereinafter, Seoul Declaration) and were committed to implementing the Declaration.

Objectives

Seoul Declaration aims at:

- Showing a clear future direction in the OSH field, which illustrates how to reach a win-win situation in terms of making our workplace and society safe and healthy;
- Laying a firm foundation for achieving shared goals and fulfilling a strong commitment to joining in the efforts to eliminate unnecessary, painful burdens on workers as well as to contribute to the welfare of society and local communities;
- Sharing and carrying out a common vision of creating a healthy working environment as a basic means for the development of individuals, businesses and society; and
- Advancing a fundamental value that safety and health in working environment is a basic right for employees; a fundamental management tool in improving productivity for employers; and an undeniable principle in promoting a safety and health culture for governments.



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Background

- There has been a mounting pressure in the global workplaces to make a new turning point and reinforce occupational safety and health; since work-related injuries and diseases have caused a staggering number of economic and human losses.
- The ILO estimates that more than 2.3 million people lose their lives due to occupational accidents and work-related diseases every year. At the same time, 270 million and more workers have light injuries while over 160 million suffer from work-related diseases, short-term or long-term.
- On the economic front, such workplace calamities can translate into an average economic loss of nearly 4% of the global GDP. This means that a large lump sum of money is paid in the forms of various kinds of compensations for injuries, work-absence due to work-related illnesses and medical treatment as well as disability benefits and compensations to the bereaved families. The prevention of such unbearable losses calls for a close cooperation among relevant OSH stakeholders around the world.
- Occupational safety and health still fails to get enough attention despite a wide range of efforts including OSH strategies, programs and inspection activities in parallel with provision of education, training and information. Thus, it is required to raise political responsibilities in order to make OSH policies a priority in the national and international agendas.

Preparation Process

- In January, 2006, the International Organizing Committee(IOC) of XVIII World Congress on Safety and Health at Work, composed of representatives from the ILO, ISSA, and KOSHA, proposed to hold a Safety and Health Summit.
- The IOC coordinated and tuned up various issues and details through eight working-group meetings.
- The Seoul Declaration Drafting Committee was launched under the leadership of ILO Executive Director Assane Diop. The Committee made tireless efforts to collect and coordinate various opinions and ideas about the draft until the last minute to finalize and get approval of the draft.
- All of the 46 summit participants adopted and endorsed Seoul Declaration at the Safety and Health Summit on June 29, 2008.

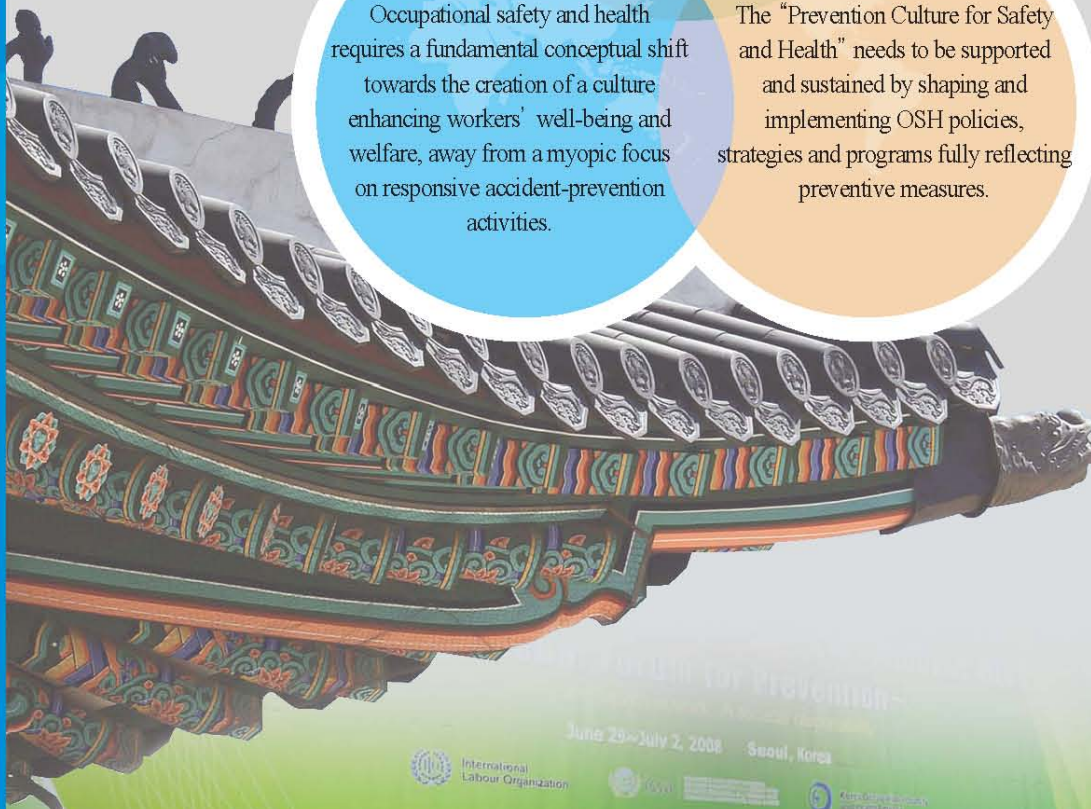


Three Paradigms in Seoul Declaration

Occupational safety and health is a common responsibility taken on by every societal player rather than just by the government, employers, or OSH institutions.

Occupational safety and health requires a fundamental conceptual shift towards the creation of a culture enhancing workers' well-being and welfare, away from a myopic focus on responsive accident-prevention activities.

The "Prevention Culture for Safety and Health" needs to be supported and sustained by shaping and implementing OSH policies, strategies and programs fully reflecting preventive measures.



Action Plans: the Summit Outcomes

■ Societal responsibilities include:

- Implementation of Seoul Declaration at the national, regional and international levels;
- Prioritization of occupational safety and health in the political agendas;
- Setting up standards on working conditions at the national and international levels;
- Ongoing cooperation among high-ranking decision-makers, representatives of the tripartite bodies and leaders of OSH organizations;
- Building partnerships with OSH research institutions, expert groups and associations; and
- Designation of the so-called "Global Day for Seoul Declaration on Safety and Health at Work."

■ Responsibilities of the government, employers and employees include:

- Prompt ratification and implementation of the ILO Conventions No. 187 and other relevant Conventions;
- A nationwide campaign to raise the public awareness about the prioritization of occupational safety and health in the national agendas;
- Provision of necessary supports to workplaces so as to put Seoul Declaration in place;
- Employers' effort to place OSH standards in place and encourage employees and their representatives to participate in decision-making process when deciding OSH related corporate policies;
- Employees' effort to comply with OSH guidelines and procedures, complete OSH training programs provided by their employer, and cooperate with the management;
- Ongoing provision of best practices conducted by the government, employers and employees;
- OSH expert organizations' effort to write a report and offer data on the effects of the investment in the OSH areas; and
- Coming up with practical measures to help employees to comply with OSH regulations.

■ Responsibilities of co-organizers of the World Congress include:

- Promotion and dissemination of Seoul Declaration on the Internet;
- Encouraging the signatory institutions to lay out cooperative action plans to implement Seoul Declaration; and
- National and international campaigns to put Seoul Declaration in place.

Prospects

- Seoul Declaration on Safety and Health at Work serves as a meaningful ground for leading global OSH stakeholders to establish a network for sharing information and reach a consensus. The Declaration is expected to be conducive to a significant improvement in working conditions in a strategic, systematic, political, practical or voluntary manner.
- The adoption of the Seoul Declaration will be recorded as a momentous watershed in the history of occupational safety and health in light of the fact that it was unprecedented that the representatives of tripartite bodies around the world expressed their firm commitment to enhancing workers' safety and health at the international level.

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The Safety and Health Summit,

Having met in Seoul, Republic of Korea, on 29 June 2008 on the occasion of the XVIII World Congress on Safety and Health at Work, jointly organized by the International Labour Office, the International Social Security Association (ISSA) and the Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA), with the participation of senior professionals, employers' and workers' representatives, social security representatives, policy-makers and administrators.

Recognizing the serious consequences of work-related accidents and diseases, which the International Labour Office estimates lead to 2.3 million fatalities per year world-wide and an economic loss of 4 percent of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP),

Recognizing that improving safety and health at work has a positive impact on working conditions, productivity and economic and social development,

Recalling that the right to a safe and healthy working environment should be recognized as a fundamental human right and that globalization must go hand in hand with preventative measures to ensure the safety and health of all at work,

Recognizing the importance of the instruments on safety and health at work of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the substantial role of the ISSA and its members' contribution in implementing these instruments,

Recalling that the promotion of occupational safety and health and the prevention of accidents and diseases at work is a core element of the ILO's founding mission and of the Decent Work Agenda,

Recalling that the prevention of occupational risks and the promotion of workers' health constitute an essential part of the ISSA's mandate and of its Conceptual Framework of Dynamic Social Security,

Recognizing the importance of education, training, consultation and the exchange of information and good practices on prevention and the promotion of preventative measures,

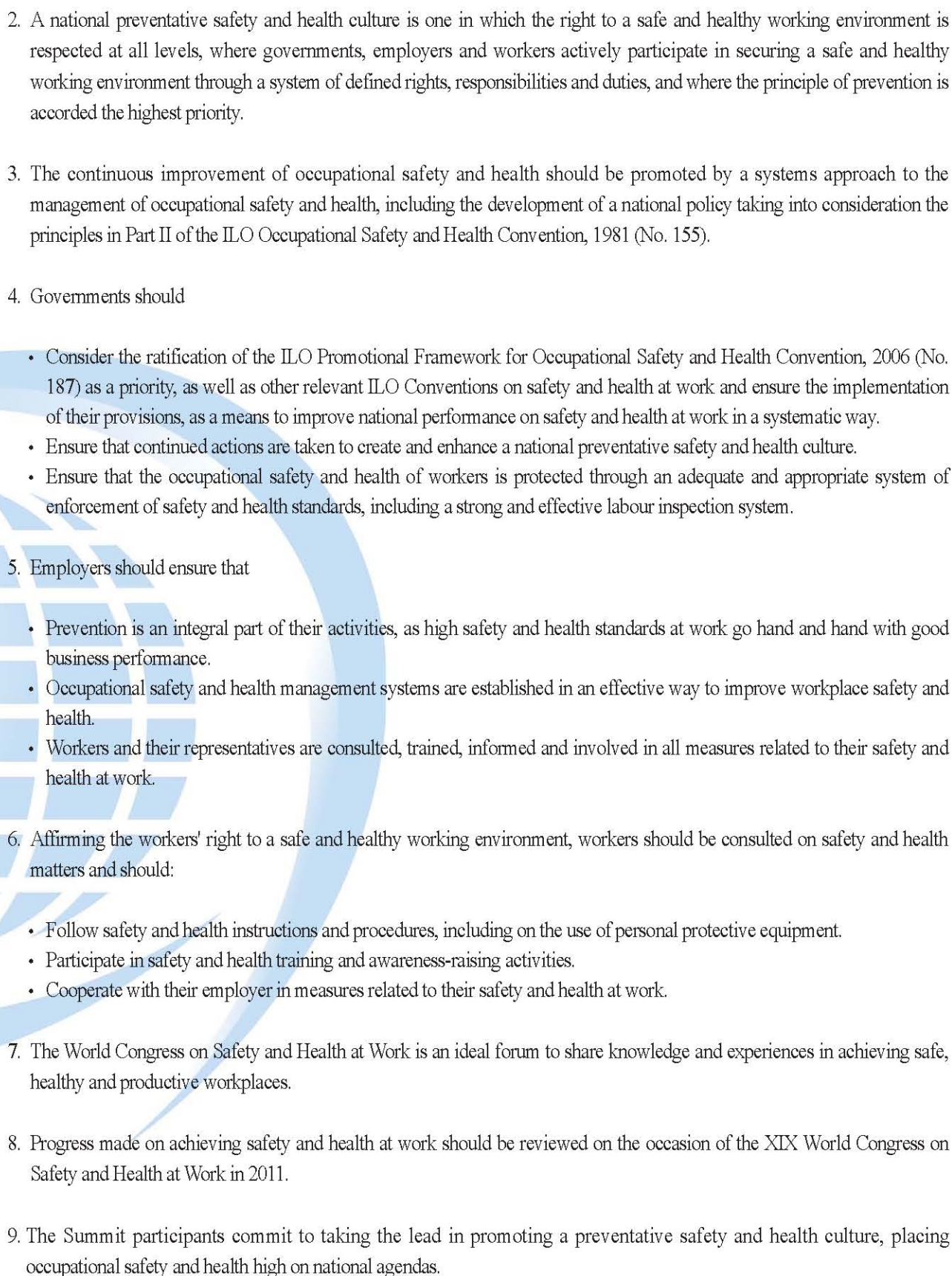
Recognizing the important role played by governments and the social partners, professional safety and health organizations and social security institutions in promoting prevention and in providing treatment, support and rehabilitation services,

Recognizing the importance of cooperation among international organizations and institutions,

Welcoming progress achieved through international and national efforts to improve safety and health at work,

Declares that

1. Promoting high levels of safety and health at work is the responsibility of society as a whole and all members of society must contribute to achieving this goal by ensuring that priority is given to occupational safety and health in national agendas and by building and maintaining a national preventative safety and health culture.

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2. A national preventative safety and health culture is one in which the right to a safe and healthy working environment is respected at all levels, where governments, employers and workers actively participate in securing a safe and healthy working environment through a system of defined rights, responsibilities and duties, and where the principle of prevention is accorded the highest priority.
 3. The continuous improvement of occupational safety and health should be promoted by a systems approach to the management of occupational safety and health, including the development of a national policy taking into consideration the principles in Part II of the ILO Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155).
 4. Governments should
 - Consider the ratification of the ILO Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187) as a priority, as well as other relevant ILO Conventions on safety and health at work and ensure the implementation of their provisions, as a means to improve national performance on safety and health at work in a systematic way.
 - Ensure that continued actions are taken to create and enhance a national preventative safety and health culture.
 - Ensure that the occupational safety and health of workers is protected through an adequate and appropriate system of enforcement of safety and health standards, including a strong and effective labour inspection system.
 5. Employers should ensure that
 - Prevention is an integral part of their activities, as high safety and health standards at work go hand and hand with good business performance.
 - Occupational safety and health management systems are established in an effective way to improve workplace safety and health.
 - Workers and their representatives are consulted, trained, informed and involved in all measures related to their safety and health at work.
 6. Affirming the workers' right to a safe and healthy working environment, workers should be consulted on safety and health matters and should:
 - Follow safety and health instructions and procedures, including on the use of personal protective equipment.
 - Participate in safety and health training and awareness-raising activities.
 - Cooperate with their employer in measures related to their safety and health at work.
 7. The World Congress on Safety and Health at Work is an ideal forum to share knowledge and experiences in achieving safe, healthy and productive workplaces.
 8. Progress made on achieving safety and health at work should be reviewed on the occasion of the XIX World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in 2011.
 9. The Summit participants commit to taking the lead in promoting a preventative safety and health culture, placing occupational safety and health high on national agendas.

Signatories of Seoul Declaration


Samir ABDALLAH ALI
Minister
Ministry of Labour Palestinian National Authority



Shunichi ARAKI
President
Japan National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, Japan



Lee CAREY
Vice President
National Safety Council, United States


Antoine FREROT
Chief Executive Officer
Veolia Water, France


Hyun Jong HONG
Vice President
GS Caltex Corporation, Republic of Korea


Youngdae Kim
Vice-Chairman & Chief Executive Officer
Korean Employers Federation, Republic of Korea,


Suk Chaeung LEE
President
Korean Confederation of Trade Unions,
Republic of Korea,

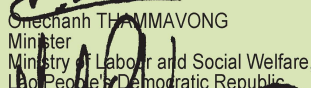

Mmamagani MDLADLANA
Minister
Department of Labour, South Africa


Benoit BOUMI
Director General
National Social Insurance Fund,
Cote d'Ivoire


Gerhard PECH
Board Chairman
HOCHTIEF Construction AG, Germany


Subramaniam CATHASIVAM
Minister
Ministry of Human Resources, Malaysia



Chee Seng SOH
Chief Executive Officer
Social Security Organization of Malaysia, Malaysia

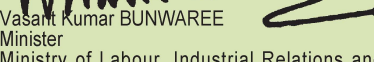

Chechanh THAMMAVONG
Minister
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare,
Lao People's Democratic Republic



Mark VERGNANO
Group Vice President
DuPont, United States


Hans-Joachim WOLFF
Chairman
German Social Accident Insurance, Germany


Assane DIOP
Executive Director, Social Protection
International Labour Office


Noori AL-HILFI
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Iraq


Vasant Kumar BUNWAREE
Minister
Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and
Employment, Mauritius

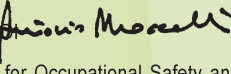

Ahmadou Yeri DIOPO
Chairman
Interafrican Association for the Prevention of
Occupational Risks


Mody GUIRO
Vice President
International Trade Union Confederation


Seok Chun JANG
President
Federation of Korean Trade Unions,
Republic of Korea



Cathy KOPP
Vice President
ACCOR SA, France

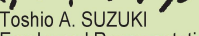

Sang Bai LEE
Vice President
Samsung, Republic of Korea


Antonio MOCCALTI
President
National Institute for Occupational Safety and
Prevention, Italy


Michele PATTERSON
President
International Association of Labour Inspection


Sudha PILLAI
Government Representative
ILO Governing Body Tripartite Delegation



Terttu SAVOLAINEN
State Secretary
Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finland



Toshio A. SUZUKI
Employers' Representative
ILO Governing Body Tripartite Delegation


Cardinal Leroy TROTMAN
Workers' Representative
ILO Governing Body Tripartite Delegation


Keith WILLIAMS
President & Chief Executive Officer
Underwriters Laboratories, United States

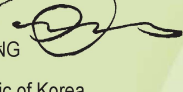

Corazon DE LA PAZ-BERNARDO
President
International Social Security Association


Junna ALJUMA
Minister
Ministry of Manpowe, Oman


David CAPLE
President
International Ergonomics Association


Mustafa KUTLU
Deputy Undersecretary
Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Turkey


Andre HOGUET
Vice President
National Commission of the Accident Insurance
Scheme, France


Byung Moon JUNG
Vice President
Hyundai, Republic of Korea


Young Hee LEE
Minister
Ministry of Labour, Republic of Korea


Ahmed LUQMAN
Director General
Arab Labour Organization


Innocence Ntap NDIAVE
Minister
Ministry of the Civil Service, Labour, Employment
and Professional Organisations, Senegal



Antonio PENALOSA
Secretary General
International Organization of Employers


Jorma RANTANEN
President
International Commission on Occupational Health


Yohtaro SAWADA
President
Japan Industrial Safety and Health Association, Japan


Jukka TAKALA
Director
European Agency for Safety and Health at Work


Supphan VEERASINGAM
Secretary General
Asia-Pacific Occupational Safety and Health Organization


Glenis WILLMOTT
Member
European Parliament


Min-Ki NOH
President
Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency,
Republic of Korea,



International Labour Organization



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Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency