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Report VI

ILO standards-related activities in the area
of occupational safety and health: An in-depth study
for discussion with a view to the elaboration of a plan
of action for such activities

Sixth item on the agenda

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ILO

ILO standards-related activities in the area of occupational safety and health: An in-depth study for discussion with a view to the elaboration of a plan of action for such activities

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Abbreviations and acronyms used in the report

ACT/EMP	Bureau for Employers' Activities
ACTRAV	Bureau for Workers' Activities
ANSI	American National Standards Institute
APOSHO	Asia Pacific Occupational Safety and Health Organization
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
CAN	Andean Community of Nations
CEACR	Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations
CEN	European Committee for Standardization
CIS	International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centre
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FINNIDA	Finnish Department of International Development Cooperation
GDP	gross domestic product
GHS	Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals
GNP	gross national product
IACRS	Inter-agency Committee on Radiation Safety
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IALI	International Association of Labour Inspection
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICEM	International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ICOH	International Commission on Occupational Health
ICRP	International Committee on Radiological Protection
ICRU	International Commission on Radiation Units and Measurements
ICS	International Chamber of Shipping
ICSC	International Chemical Safety Card
IEA	International Ergonomics Association
IFCS	Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety
IFP/SEED	InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development
IFP/SKILLS	InFocus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability
IGO	intergovernmental organization
IMF	International Metalworkers' Federation
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOE	International Organisation of Employers
IOHA	International Occupational Hygiene Association
IOMC	Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals
IPCS	International Programme on Chemical Safety
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

IRPA	International Radiation Protection Association
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ISSA	International Social Security Association
ITC	information and telecommunications
ITF	International Transport Federation
JSHC	Joint safety and health committee
LABORSTA	ILO database on labour statistics
LEGOSH	CIS Database of Legislative Texts on Occupational Safety and Health
LILS/WP/PRS	Working Party on Policy regarding the Revision of Standards of the Committee on Legal Issues and International Labour Standards
MARIT	Maritime Industries Branch
MDT	Multidisciplinary Advisory Team
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market
MNE	multinational enterprise
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NGO	non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD/NEA	OECD Nuclear Energy Agency
OSH	occupational safety and health
OSHMS	Occupational safety and health management systems
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PIACT	International Programme for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment
PROTECT	Social Protection Sector
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RBTC	Regular Budget for Technical Cooperation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SafeWork	InFocus Programme on Safety and Health at Work and the Environment
SECTOR	Sectoral Activities Department
SLIC	Senior Labour Inspectors Committee
SMEs	small and medium-sized enterprises
SOC/POL	Social Security Policy and Development Branch
STEP	Strategies and Tools against Social Exclusion and Poverty Programme
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNSCEAR	United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation
VDU	visual display unit
WHO	World Health Organization
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

Introduction

1. The ILO's primary goal is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity. In this formulation of decent work in the context of ILO action, the protection of workers against work-related sickness, disease and injury, as embodied in the Preamble to the Constitution of the ILO, is an essential element of security and continues to be a high priority for the ILO. While operationally the InFocus Programme on Safety and Health at Work and the Environment (SafeWork) represents a focal point for the ILO's work in this area, concern for occupational safety and health (OSH) is engrained in the very fabric of the daily activities of the Office in a large number of the areas of action presented under the ILO's four strategic objectives.

2. Over the years, the ILO has multiplied the number of tools and activities in which it is engaged in order to carry out its mission. This multiplication stems from the realization that actual impact requires more than the signature of an instrument of ratification of an ILO Convention and that such a signature does not by itself guarantee that the objectives the constituents articulated in such an instrument will become reality. The promotion of standards is thus a fundamental task, and an indispensable complement to the process of developing them. There are many standards to be promoted and transformed into reality and the ILO's normative mission has to be carried out on a large number of fronts at the same time.¹ But today, the role and function of the diverse activities in relation to the standards which they are intended to promote, and vice versa, does not appear to be sufficiently clear. Furthermore, as different standards-related activities – development, supervision, promotion, technical assistance and cooperation – are functionally separated within the Office, it is institutionally difficult and cumbersome to create synergies and avoid fragmentation of action and dispersion of resources, both human and financial.

3. Remediating this situation is a major challenge. It is against this background that at its 279th Session (November 2000) the Governing Body of the ILO decided to apply on an experimental basis an integrated approach to ILO standards-related activities in order to increase their coherence, relevance and impact. This approach aims to develop a consensus among the ILO's constituents on a plan of action in a specific subject area through a general discussion at the International Labour Conference. A plan of action which reflects the common vision of the ILO constituents will have great potential to help realize increased synergies between the standards and related activities of the ILO.

4. This discussion will address not only standards – Conventions and Recommendations – but also other types of instruments such as codes of practice, as well as promotional activities, technical cooperation and the dissemination of information. The Governing Body selected ILO standards-related activities in the area of occupational safety and health

¹ The recently concluded review of ILO standards by the Working Party on Policy regarding the Revision of Standards of the Committee on Legal Issues and International Labour Standards of the Governing Body (LILS/WP/PRS) has, however, considerably clarified the status of the current instruments and will allow for more targeted standards-related activities. For a summary of the decisions taken see GB.283/LILS/WP/PRS/1/2.

as the first item for this approach and included this item on the agenda of the 91st Session (2003) of the International Labour Conference.²

5. At the First Session of the International Labour Conference in 1919, the ILO adopted the White Phosphorous Recommendation 1919 (No. 6). This instrument invited ILO member States to ratify the Berne Convention of 1906. This is one of the earliest international conventions on occupational safety and health and it was aimed at banning the use of white phosphorous. Since the mid-nineteenth century white phosphorous was widely used in the match-making industry, however it caused matchmakers – mostly children – to contract the dreaded, disfiguring “phossy jaw”. What compounded the tragedies caused by this occupational hazard was that they were avoidable. Another non-hazardous form of phosphorus, red phosphorus, worked just as well for making matches. However, the abundance of cheap labour and the absence of industrial health regulations made a shift in production patterns slow. It took legal compulsion, along with international action, to eventually eliminate the problem. This example illustrates the issues that are still today at the heart of ILO work and of the decent work paradigm in terms of worker protection, economic constraints and the role of regulatory mechanisms in maintaining compliance with ethical principles, rights and obligations.

6. Since the turn of the twentieth century when the first legal relationships between exposure to hazards and the world of work were being established, occupational safety and health has grown into a multifaceted discipline. This discipline has implications not only for human lives, enterprise development and national efforts to increase productivity and alleviate poverty, but also for the human environment. It is also recognized today as an essential component in the global efforts to develop production and consumption patterns which are sustainable and which respect the global environment in the face of increasing demographic pressures.

7. The place of occupational safety and health, particularly in relation to chemicals, on the global agenda was discussed in August 2002 when the world community met in Johannesburg to develop a global consensus on how to integrate social, economic and environmental policies to achieve globally sustainable development.³ Cleaner production systems and the environmentally sound management of chemicals were advocated. The strong link between OSH and public health was recognized with the recommendation to strengthen and promote ILO and World Health Organization (WHO) programmes aimed at reducing occupational deaths, injuries and illnesses, and enhancing the integration of occupational health and public health to increase synergies and improve overall health levels.

8. Through a unique tripartite consensus-building process the ILO contributes to setting minimum standards in the form of Conventions and Recommendations. International labour standards are adopted by the International Labour Conference. Contrary to Recommendations, Conventions are destined to create legally binding commitments for member States, which are subject to international supervision by the ILO. While Recommendations most often accompany Conventions on the same subject, they may also be autonomous and provide guidance on the subject matter they regulate. International labour standards are inspired by, and rely on, existing national law and practice. For some countries, a comparison of national law and practice with international standards may reflect a large level of correspondence with existing national standards, while for others it may highlight a gap that should be filled. For yet others, the protection offered in the national context goes beyond that provided for in international standards. Whatever the situation may be at the

² See Governing Body doc. GB.279/4, GB.279/5/1 and GB.280/2.

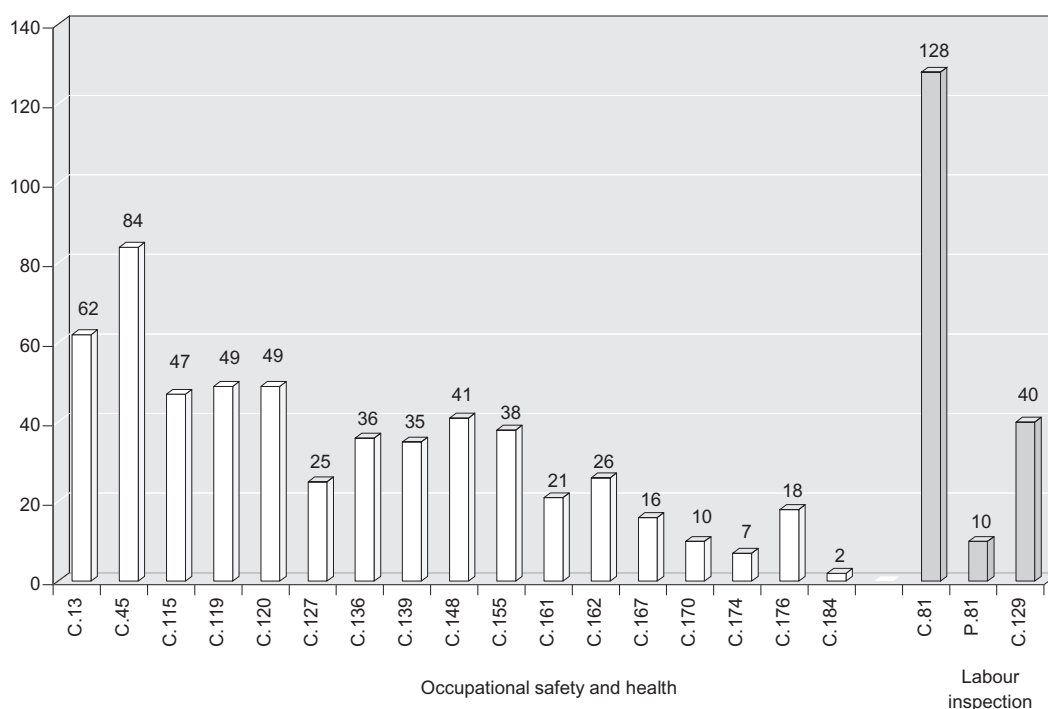
³ See Governing Body doc. GB.285/ESP/6/2.

national level, at the global level international labour standards are designed to be a dynamic element, a driving force and a goal for the constituents to achieve.

9. International labour standards have not been designed as a comprehensive legal code but are a series of individual instruments, where Conventions are individual treaties subject to ratification and Recommendations are non-binding instruments. By ratifying a Convention, a State undertakes to apply the provisions of that Convention, and that Convention alone. Unless expressly provided there are no legal links between Conventions. Those principally concerned as beneficiaries of the rights and duties contained in the standards are persons and entities engaged in the world of work. But, it is through action by member States to give effect to adopted standards and – more specifically – to comply with the legal obligation of implementing provisions in ratified Conventions that standards are expected to achieve a real and tangible impact for those concerned. Although it is an incomplete measure, the legal undertaking to comply has justified the traditional use of ratification levels as a convenient measure of impact. Information on the actual situation at the national level is made available through the regular reporting systems on which the supervisory system is based.

10. What has been the impact of ILO efforts in the area of occupational safety and health? If the ratification levels of the relevant Conventions are taken as a measure then there is cause for concern. A look at the number of ratifications that they have attracted is telling (see figure 1). The Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) – a priority⁴ Convention – has attracted a significant level of ratifications. The two OSH instruments that have attracted the highest numbers of ratifications (Underground Work (Women) Convention, 1935 (No. 45), and White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921 (No. 13)) are not up to date.

Figure 1. Number of ratifications of ILO occupational safety and health and labour inspection Conventions as at 1 January 2003



⁴ See para. 27.

The Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176), has attracted a significant number of ratifications over a short period of time.⁵

11. It is generally agreed, however, that ILO standards have an impact which goes beyond that measured through ratifications and the supervisory procedures. Non-ratified Conventions and Recommendations, as well as other voluntary instruments such as codes of practice, are frequently used as models for national law and practice, as a point of reference for enterprises and workers or as a gauge for determining the international consensus on day-to-day issues in the world of work. Information on the actual impact of non-ratified Conventions and Recommendations on national law and practice is occasionally collected and examined through General Surveys.⁶ Occasional specific impact studies have been carried out but the information is incomplete and outdated.⁷ The extent to which ILO instruments are used as a reference in the national judicial systems could provide additional information on this issue but would require a substantial research effort.

12. As regards the usefulness and impact of ILO standards in other respects, the tip of this iceberg is the daily and increasing demand for information on ILO standards and related activities, through the level of consultation of the ILO web site, requests for information and daily references in newspapers and the media in general.⁸ Information on the actual impact of non-ratified Conventions and Recommendations is, however, not collected systematically and is therefore difficult to measure. Yet, if the ultimate goal of ILO standards is to raise the level of national regulatory standards, this impact constitutes one of the most important indicators of the success of the ILO's work and is the very justification for the substantial investment of human and economic resources that the ILO as an organization represents.

13. The need to increase the real impact of ILO standards was emphasized in the Decent Work Agenda and as a result placed increased demands not only on our means and methods for measuring this impact, but also on the standards themselves and their related activities. A more effective promotion of standards in the international arena, as proposed in the Decent Work Agenda, calls for less emphasis on individual instruments and increased demands for systematic assessments of their collective coherence, relevance, and ultimate impact. Present-day promotion is heavily influenced by the ongoing revolution in information technology, calling upon the ILO to formulate and express in simple media-friendly terms the basic principles that are advocated in ILO standards. These developments are certainly affecting the means and methods that are used to present and promote the application of ILO standards on a general level. A central issue in this context is to what extent, if any, these developments will require the consideration of new standard-setting criteria and methodologies, in this case in the area of OSH, to address the form of the standards, the subject matter they cover and how they are promoted.

⁵ Information has been received that the Parliament of Zimbabwe approved the ratification of Conventions Nos. 87, 155, 161, 162, 174 and 176 on 19 December 2002.

⁶ General Surveys are based on the practice of the Committee of Experts, since 1951, to prepare each year a report on the obstacles to ratification and implementation of one or more instruments on a particular subject matter. These General Surveys are valued as instruments of reference to ascertain the position of national law and practice in respect of a given subject, remove obstacles to the implementation of the Organization's instruments and identify the ratification prospects for Conventions. In this way General Surveys can contribute to the promotion and evaluation of standards, including the assessment of the possible need for their revision (for a brief outline of the purpose and function of article 19 reports see GB.282/LILS/9).

⁷ ILO: *The impact of international labour Conventions and Recommendations* (Geneva, 1976).

⁸ This rapidly expanding part of the services the ILO provides on a daily basis is largely "invisible" and consideration should perhaps be given to the most efficient way of handling such requests on an Office-wide basis. See also "Knowledge management and information exchange" in Ch. V.

14. The formulation, implementation and promotion of international labour standards were the first *raison d'être* of the ILO, the very reason for its creation. Over time, the ILO's range of action and means used to achieve its objectives have expanded to include knowledge management and research, inter-agency cooperation, and, since the 1950s, the provision of direct help to member States in the form of technical assistance or technical cooperation.⁹ The ILO is facing increasing competition in the international arena and resources devoted to OSH both nationally and internationally do not seem to match the needs in this area. Against this background, increasing the impact of ILO efforts to make the SafeWork dimension of the Decent Work Agenda a reality for a larger number of persons engaged in gainful activities around the world through standards seems to call for a sustained effort to focus and streamline the ILO's related activities, to seek synergies and self-supporting win-win situations.

15. While the ILO, on three different occasions, has examined the status of existing standards on a case-by-case basis,¹⁰ the present report proposes a subject-wide examination of the coherence and relevance of current OSH standards and related activities with the purpose of increasing their real impact.

16. The time available for substantive discussions at the Conference is brief, and given the scope, difficulty and importance of the subject matter an effort has been made to prepare a discussion on principles, processes and trends in this area and not on details, keeping in mind that the objective is to look to the future rather than describe the past. Nevertheless, the subject matter is vast, multifaceted and at times highly technical. Descriptive details and background information can be found either in the annexes or on the accompanying CD-ROM.

17. In preparing this report, a survey was carried out among ILO constituents.¹¹ The ILO received replies and detailed information (including in several cases copies of relevant and newly adopted legislative texts) from 103 member States.¹² The Office also received individual replies from 47 representative employers' and workers' organizations transmitted either by governments or sent in separately.¹³ It should be noted that the survey contained complementary questions on the method of consultation with employers' and workers' organizations. Among the respondents, all regions of the world were well represented and the responses submitted were not only detailed and informative, but evidenced, in a large majority of cases, a broad process of consultation with the tripartite constituents as well as

⁹ The distinction between the two concepts has been blurred over time but technical assistance is used to denote help provided to member States in relation to specific Conventions while technical cooperation addresses wider issues and serves a more general purpose.

¹⁰ The most recent examination was concluded in March 2002, (Governing Body doc. GB.283/LILS/WP/PRS/1/2).

¹¹ For more details about the survey, see Ch. IV.

¹² Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Singapore, Seychelles, Slovakia, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In addition a reply was received from Trinidad and Tobago. This response was received too late and could not be taken into account in the report or in the summary. Three replies, not accompanied by a Government response, were received from Business South Africa, the Federation of Uganda Employers and the All Pakistan Federation of Trade Unions. The details of these replies are available on the accompanying CD-ROM and a summary of the replies can be found in Annex II of this report.

¹³ See Annex III "Survey responses from employers' and workers' organizations".

national expertise on OSH.¹⁴ The results of the survey are summarized in Annex II and are presented in more detail on the attached CD-ROM. Furthermore, in order to give full justice to the wealth of information that the ILO constituents were willing to provide, the results of the survey have been used to set up a trilingual (English, French and Spanish) database.¹⁵ This database is accessible through the Web and – in a technically simplified form – on the attached CD-ROM.

18. The present discussion is aimed at examining the impact, coherence and relevance of ILO standards and related activities in the area of occupational safety and health and to develop a consensus on a plan of action to increase their impact.

¹⁴ In total five member States did not provide additional information in respect of the questions asked, however, two of these included copies of their national OSH policy with the reply.

¹⁵ The replies to the survey are available in a technically simplified form on the CD-ROM that accompanies this report and which builds on the CD-ROM that accompanied the survey. This CD-ROM also includes a more detailed version of Annex II including references to the replies each respondent provided, the full text of relevant ILO instruments (in English, French and Spanish) and additional information, including a copy of the legislative database (LEGOSH) maintained by the International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centre (CIS) at the ILO. This database includes references to more than 3,500 laws and regulations on OSH in approximately 140 countries, and to international legal instruments. The CD-ROM also contains a number of relevant codes of practice in full text as well as other relevant information.

Chapter I

Occupational safety and health standards and other instruments

Occupational safety and health: A matter for urgent global action

19. The definition and scope of OSH has evolved over the years and, through a gradual and continuous process, the areas of concern for OSH have expanded from the workplace, via branches of economic activity and national concerns, finally to attain the global arena and include environmental concerns. According to the comprehensive definition adopted by the Joint ILO/WHO Committee on Occupational Health at its First Session (1950) and revised at its Twelfth Session (1995), occupational health should “aim at the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of workers in all occupations”. For the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA), “Occupational hygiene is the science of the anticipation, recognition, evaluation and control of hazards arising in or from the workplace, and which could impair the health and well-being of workers, also taking into account the possible impact on the surrounding communities and the general environment”. The American Society of Safety Engineers has a definition very similar to that of the IOHA but with additional emphasis on the “designing out” of hazards and on hazard control programmes.

20. The increasing linkage between OSH and environmental concerns, the large number of specific disciplines involved and the numerous workplace and environmental hazards which have to be dealt with provide a concrete perception of the complexity of the domain, the breadth and level of structures, skills, knowledge and analytical capacities needed for the adequate and coordinated implementation of all of the “building blocks” making up national OSH systems, and the extent of the task of protecting both workers and the environment. In this context, the development of means and approaches to achieve effective global coherence, the coordination of action, focus, impact and the use of investments is becoming a high priority both for member States and international organizations with mandates related to OSH and the environment.

21. Although precise and comprehensive data collection systems are not globally harmonized and information concerning developing countries is difficult to obtain, conservative estimates and projections based on data from industrialized countries as well as a few developing countries, are considered as sufficiently reliable for the “construction” of global statistics that provide a useful perception of the magnitude of the problems at hand. In a recent ILO report, the worldwide occupational fatality level was estimated at 2 million¹ per year and there are indications that the levels of occupational accidents and diseases are on the increase in developing countries. The major contributing factors to these statistics are

¹ ILO: *Decent Work – Safe Work* (Geneva), Introductory report to the XVIth World Congress on Safety and Health at Work, Vienna, 26-31 May 2002.

work-related cancers, circulatory and cerebrovascular diseases, and some communicable diseases.

22. The overall annual rate of occupational fatal or non-fatal accidents is estimated at 270 million. Some 160 million workers suffer from work-related diseases and about two-thirds of those suffer from illnesses causing a loss of four working days or more. After work-related cancer and circulatory diseases, accidental fatal occupational injuries are the third main cause for work-related fatalities. The impact of fatal occupational injuries is, however, compounded by the fact that they usually happen to workers who could still have had a long working career ahead of them, resulting not only in loss of life but also of working years. In contrast, both work-related cancer and work-related circulatory diseases tend to occur quite late in working life and often only after retirement. Furthermore, while the prime cause for certain disease-related fatalities may be work-related, other factors that are difficult to identify and eliminate may also contribute to the fatality rate. Occupational accidents are all, however, caused by preventable factors which could be eliminated by implementing known measures. This is demonstrated by continuously reduced accident rates in industrialized countries. The application of preventive strategies may therefore result in significant human and economic benefits.

23. The ILO report referred to above² and recent available data from the WHO³ indicate that overall rates are going slowly downward in most industrialized countries but are level or increasing in developing and industrializing countries. For example, for the European Union (EU),⁴ although the number of occupational accidents fell by about 10 per cent between 1994 and 1998, the latest levels (1999) are still 5,500 deaths and 4.8 million accidents resulting in three days or more off work. In Japan, the overall number of fatal occupational injuries has fallen from 5,269 in 1973 to 1,790 in 2001. In terms of the most dangerous industries, data for Japan show that about 60 per cent of all fatalities and injuries for 1999 occurred in the construction, manufacturing and road cargo transport industries. Data from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics for the period 1992-2000 indicate that the number of fatal occupational injuries decreased from 6,217 to 5,915 while construction fatalities rose from 963 to 1,182 for the same period. A similar trend was recorded for overall occupational injuries resulting in death or requiring an absence from work of four days or more. Annual estimates from the ILO report, rounded by region, are given below.

24. The related economic costs are colossal at the enterprise, national and global levels. It is estimated that the losses due to compensation, lost work days, interruption of production, training and retraining, medical expenses, and so on, routinely amount to roughly 4 per cent of global GNP, and possibly much more. Overall estimates of compensation expenditures for a group of OECD⁵ countries were US\$122 billion for 1997 alone, with 500 million working days lost as a result of accidents or health problems. If one considers property losses from accidents, and more specifically major industrial accidents,⁶ recent studies suggest that insured losses are in the vicinity of \$5 billion annually. Furthermore, losses are increasing. In 1970, comparable figures were around 1,000 deaths with insured

² *ibid.*

³ WHO: *The World Health Report 2002, Reducing Risks, Promoting Healthy Life* (Geneva, 2002).

⁴ Commission of the European Communities: *Adapting to change in work and society: A new Community strategy on health and safety at work 2002-2006* (Brussels, 2002), at <http://www.etuc.org/tutb/uk/pdf/com2002-118-en.pdf>

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 4. Note: This figure excludes Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain.

⁶ James K. Mitchell: *The long road to recovery: Community responses to industrial disaster*, at <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/uu211e/uu211e00.htm>

Table 1. Fatalities caused by work-related diseases and occupational accidents, 2002

	Economically active population	Total employment	Global estimates	
			Total work-related fatalities	Fatal accidents
Established market economies	409 141 496	380 833 643	297 534	16 170
Formerly Socialist economies of Europe	184 717 127	162 120 341	166 265	21 425
India	458 720 000	419 560 000	310 067	48 176
China	708 218 102	699 771 000	460 260	73 615
Other Asia and islands	404 487 050	328 673 800	246 720	83 048
Sub-Saharan Africa	260 725 947	10 540 604	257 738	54 705
Latin America and the Caribbean	193 426 602	114 604 962	137 789	29 594
Middle Eastern crescent	112 906 300	48 635 240	125 641	28 019
World	2 732 342 624	2 164 739 590	2 001 717	354 753

ILO: *Decent Work - Safe Work* (Geneva), Introductory report to the XVIth World Congress on Safety and Health at Work, Vienna, 26-31 May 2002, updated for 2003.

losses of \$1 billion. No comprehensive data on global losses have been compiled, and the above figures mainly pertain to acute and intensive events. They do not report uninsured losses, delayed losses associated with acute events, the environmental impact and losses due to chronic industrial pollution such as in Minamata, Japan, or the long term social costs of the Bhopal and Chernobyl disasters.

25. Despite slow but continuous improvement in many countries, occupational accidents and diseases and major accidents are still too frequent and their cost in terms of human suffering and economic burden continues to be significant. Many countries still do not have effective systems for the recording and notification of work-related accidents and diseases. The recent adoption of a Protocol to the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), on the recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases, and of a revised ILO list of occupational diseases, underlines the serious need for more reliable and comprehensive statistics in this area. Apart from the obvious alleviation of human suffering, any significant reduction in the incidence of occupational accidents and diseases, as well as accidental property losses, over a reasonable period of time, has high value in terms of socio-economic benefits and thus deserves to be given higher priority.

ILO action through standards and other instruments

26. How has the ILO dealt with the challenges set in the area of OSH? First and foremost the ILO acts through standards. The ILO's basic function is to formulate international labour standards, setting minimum standards of fundamental human rights at work and other standards regulating conditions across the entire spectrum of work-related issues. Its actions are thus dependent on the inherent wisdom, logic and usefulness of the standards which constitute the backbone of the ILO's mission.

Standards

27. Ratified Conventions that have entered into force⁷ are subject to the ILO's international supervisory machinery, which is unique. This machinery calls for regular reporting on ratified Conventions (article 22 reporting) and has on several occasions been adapted and simplified to take into account the continuous increase in the number of reports on ratified Conventions. Following the most recent review concluded in March 2002, the Governing

⁷ Conventions normally enter into force one year after the ratification of the Convention by two member States. However, different entry-into-force requirements exist, in particular in the area of Conventions concerning seafarers.

Body decided to maintain the current reporting cycles of two years with respect to fundamental and priority Conventions and five years as regards other Conventions.⁸ It decided, however, to introduce the innovation that as of 2003 member States will be called upon to submit in the same year regular reports due on the application of ratified Conventions on the same subject.⁹ Conventions have thus been grouped for reporting purposes. Supervision through the regular reporting mechanisms is complemented with the procedures of representation and complaint, which depend on specific allegations of non-compliance with undertakings in Conventions.

28. In terms of possible content and function, a Recommendation is a more flexible type of instrument than a Convention, but the adoption and revision processes are, in essential aspects, similar for both types of instrument. Most Recommendations accompany or supplement Conventions on the same subject and may provide guidance and further detail on the manner of implementing the provisions of the Conventions. Such Recommendations would tend to reinforce the possible impact of Conventions. A Recommendation may also contain provisions that were not suitable for, that lacked the necessary support, or that go beyond those of the Convention it accompanies, i.e. by covering matters not included in it, extending its scope or setting higher standards. Recommendations can also be “autonomous”, i.e. regulate a subject matter in its own right without an accompanying Convention. Such Recommendations are comparable to non-ratified Conventions as they both express a common international tripartite agreement on the best way to regulate a specific subject matter at a specific time, and can serve as guidelines for the ILO’s constituents in the area concerned. In these latter cases, the choice of a Recommendation as the regulatory form would seem to emphasize the voluntary nature of the provisions at issue.

Other instruments

29. Some Conventions, but more frequently Recommendations, refer to other instruments adopted within the framework of the ILO – such as codes of practice – or under the auspices of other international organizations. These other instruments are valuable tools to help national authorities apply the provisions of the standard in question and adapt those measures to future developments. At the same time, their use by national authorities will lead to consistency between measures taken in different member States, an important factor when, for example, hazardous substances are imported.

30. Some of these references are very specific. The Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170), for example, requires that classification systems and criteria, and the marking and labelling requirements for the transport of chemicals take into account the United Nations Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods. It also provides that requirements for marking or labelling chemicals, and criteria for the preparation of chemical safety data sheets, shall be established in accordance with national or international standards. These two provisions were at the origin of major international efforts to develop the now adopted United Nations Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS).¹⁰

31. The value of references of this kind in giving substance to the provisions of Conventions is illustrated by the practice of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) in relation to the Radiation Protection

⁸ These reporting cycles are based on a decision by the Governing Body in November 1993 (GB.258/6/19) and have been fully implemented as of 1996.

⁹ See Governing Body docs. GB.282/LILS/5 and GB.283/LILS/6.

¹⁰ See Ch. V and Governing Body doc. GB.282/STM/6.

Convention, 1960 (No. 115). This Convention requires ratifying States to keep maximum permissible doses of ionizing radiations under constant review in the light of current knowledge, and the Radiation Protection Recommendation, 1960 (No. 114), provides that the levels for such doses should be fixed with due regard for the relevant values recommended from time to time by the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP). Through this system Convention No. 115 is kept up to date.

32. The ILO has also drawn up numerous codes of practice in the field of OSH. Like standards they are developed in a tripartite context. But the process of developing codes of practice is less cumbersome and is done through a meeting of experts, who are nominated by the Governing Body. Once the meeting of experts has drawn up the code, the Governing Body is invited to approve its publication. Like Recommendations, codes of practice are not legally binding. They contain practical, and sometimes highly technical and scientifically detailed recommendations to be used as guidance by national authorities and services, employers, workers and enterprises both in the private and public sectors on how to implement the standards at issue or address a particular aspect of OSH. Traditionally, codes of practice have been drafted in the form of model regulations, which provide a framework for implementation of policy at the national level. Their use and function seem to be evolving, however, and an emerging trend is to place increased focus on the possibilities codes of practice offer in providing technical, hands-on advice addressed directly to enterprises.

33. It should be noted, however, that there is neither any specific methodology for the identification and selection of subject matters for new codes of practice nor any mechanism to evaluate their impact or continued relevance. Furthermore, apart from promotion in the context of technical cooperation activities, there is no specific procedure to encourage their application in member States.

Relevant standards and other instruments

34. The standards relevant in the area of OSH obviously include the Conventions on fundamental human rights at work, as they constitute the enabling environment for other labour standards. Among the four priority standards the Conventions on tripartite consultation and labour inspection are particularly relevant as well. The driving force for ILO work in the area of OSH is, however, the labour standards which specifically regulate the main principles and the essential means and methods to deal with OSH concerns. These are laid down in 17 Conventions, one Protocol and 23 Recommendations (see Annex I), which constitute the focal point in terms of standards in this report. In addition, relevant codes of practice developed in the area of OSH, have also been taken into account in this context. It should be noted that as OSH is a cross-cutting issue, OSH concerns are also addressed in a large number of other ILO standards although these standards mainly regulate different concerns.

35. A review of the status and need for revision of ILO standards adopted before 1985 was concluded in March 2002 by the Working Party on Policy regarding the Revision of Standards of the Committee on Legal Issues and International Labour Standards (LILS/WP/PRS).¹¹ Of the relevant standards examined by it, 35 were considered up to date, ten were in need of revision¹² and two were considered as no longer fully up to date but still relevant

¹¹ See Governing Body doc. GB.283/LILS/WP/PRS/1/1. The Office is preparing a guide on international labour standards which will be published in the spring of 2003.

¹² In the proposals for the agenda of the 90th Session (2002) of the International Labour Conference (GB.276/2), possible ways to revise these instruments were submitted to the Governing Body.

in certain respects. Since March 2002 two further instruments – one Protocol and one Recommendation – have been adopted at the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference in June 2002.

36. As regards codes of practice, no similar systematic evaluation of their status has been carried out. In selecting the ones to take into account in the present context the list of codes of practice annexed to the *Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems* was used as the principal guide. Their inclusion on the CD-ROM, attached to the survey and the present report, enables increased access to these codes.

37. In the survey, three respondents considered that the codes of practice were not being used to their full extent due to the lack of codes that had been translated into different regional languages. Two member States emphasized the importance of codes of practice as a flexible tool. Furthermore, one respondent commented that it would be useful to develop a system to update codes of practice in accordance with the evolution of science and technology.

Occupational safety and health standards and other instruments over time

38. The standards and other instruments that have developed over the past 84 years reflect and illustrate the historical evolution of how to address existing and emerging workplace issues. They are the product of distinct historical and legislative eras and are also a reflection of different stages of scientific, technological and industrial evolution. In order to assess their current impact, coherence and relevance, it seems appropriate to situate these instruments in their historical context.

39. In the early years, the ILO focused on increasing safety in factories and providing protection against industrial hazards caused by individual, particularly hazardous, substances such as white lead, anthrax and white phosphorous. The focus on the specific regulation of these substances was continued until 1971 when the Benzene Convention, 1971 (No. 136), was adopted. In 1986, the Asbestos Convention, 1986 (No. 162), was adopted, which is the most recent example of this approach. These standards essentially consist of a straightforward set of rules to be observed.

40. In parallel, during the 1930s broader sectoral perspectives were introduced through the adoption of standards on hygiene in offices and safety in construction. Standards addressing common concerns in specific branches of economic activities have continued to be developed since then with a focus on the most hazardous industries and sectors such as construction (the Safety and Health in Construction Convention, 1988 (No. 167)), mines (Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176)), and most recently agriculture (Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184)). The need for common international directions concerning the question of the classification and labelling of dangerous substances was recognized as early as the 1930s. It was only in June 2002, however, that the GHS was adopted (see Chapter V).

41. It was in the area of OSH that the need for model regulations, the precursor to codes of practice, emerged and where they have been most extensively used. A model code was adopted in 1937 as an annex to the Safety Provisions (Building) Recommendation, 1937 (No. 53), which accompanied the Safety Provisions (Building) Convention, 1937 (No. 62).¹³ Member States were invited to “give the fullest effect possible and desirable under national conditions to the provisions of, or provisions equivalent to the provisions of, the

¹³ Convention No. 62 and Recommendation No. 53 were revised in 1988 by the Safety and Health in Construction Convention, 1988 (No. 167), and Recommendation (No. 175).

annexed Model Code.” Subsequently, due to pressing needs in the industry in the reconstruction phase after the Second World War, two model regulations were passed through the Governing Body in 1949¹⁴ and 1950 and made public without prior sanction from the International Labour Conference. This adoption procedure was then maintained, but in 1951, when yet another model regulation was at issue, the Governing Body decided to replace the term “model regulation” with “code of practice” in order to clarify that such models were intended to serve as guidance and did not entail any legal obligations for ILO member States.¹⁵

42. In the post-war era, increased emphasis was placed on the protection of health and the need for occupational health services. The “merger” between these disciplines was not entirely ready at the time of the adoption of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and this Convention contains only a very brief reference to occupational health services. A few years later, in 1985, a separate instrument on this issue was adopted. The post-war era up to the 1970s was marked by an emphasis on the specific need for protection against occupational cancer and an increasing awareness of the need for a more comprehensive approach to the human environment in general but also to the working environment. The “Robens Report”,¹⁶ published in 1972, was a significant element in this development. International standards adopted since then have introduced a number of new, more comprehensive approaches and elements. A first ILO effort resulted in the adoption of the Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977 (No.148), which was a much more comprehensive standard than any of the previous OSH standards. Its scope is nevertheless limited to physical hazards and hazardous substances and agents to the extent that they fall within the definitions of air pollution, noise and vibration in the Convention.

43. It was the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), that clearly marked a new departure in that, as well as dealing in a comprehensive manner with OSH and the working environment, it is to a large extent a policy instrument rather than an instrument laying down precise legal obligations. It prescribes the formulation, implementation and periodic review of a national policy with the overriding comprehensive aim “to prevent accidents and injury to health arising out of, linked with or occurring in the course of work, by minimizing, so far as is reasonably practicable, the causes of hazards inherent in the working environment.” With two exceptions,¹⁷ all instruments adopted after Convention No. 155 include a provision calling for a national policy on the subject matter they regulate. Unlike Convention No. 155, but like the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161), none of these Conventions elaborates on the substance of the policy. Instead they turn straight to the measures to be taken for the application of the Convention.

¹⁴ See Minutes of the 109th Session of the Governing Body, June-July 1949.

¹⁵ See Minutes of the 114th Session of the Governing Body, March 1951.

¹⁶ A. Robens, Great Britain Committee on Safety and Health at Work: *Safety and Health at Work, Report of the Committee, 1970-1972* (London, 1972). This report noted the slowness in the decrease of occupational injuries and diseases and highlighted the lack of political will in regard to occupational health practices as well as the piecemeal nature of OSH legislation. One of the most significant recommendations of the Robens Report was that industry-specific safety and health legislation should be progressively repealed and replaced by a framework statute that was to cover all industries and all workers. Safety and health issues arising from specific hazards or industries should be addressed in regulations and codes of practice promulgated under this framework enactment. In addition, the report suggested that one of the ways to dispel the apathy in companies in relation to OSH was to increase the participation of workers in the formulation and implementation of the policy. This report became the impetus behind reforms, not only at the national level but also the international level, towards the replacement of detailed technical standards with standards based on broad general duties imposed on employers and others, and the inclusion of rights and duties for workers.

¹⁷ The Asbestos Convention, 1986 (No. 162), and the Safety and Health in Construction Convention, 1988 (No. 167).

44. A major reason for the trend away from Conventions laying down precise legal standards and towards more policy-oriented instruments was undoubtedly the realization that substances and processes, as well as techniques for dealing with them, are constantly evolving. It is thus necessary to have international standards that are sufficiently flexible to adapt to change and that provide for the periodic review of national policy, as well as measures adopted at the national level in the light of current technical progress and advances in scientific knowledge. The foundation for this approach is laid down in Convention No. 155 which requires in Article 7 that the situation regarding occupational safety and health and the working environment shall be reviewed at appropriate intervals, either overall or in respect of particular areas, with a view to identifying major problems, evolving effective methods for dealing with them and priorities of action, and evaluating results.

45. The need for adaptability of OSH standards was already recognized in the drafting of the Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 (No. 115), which requires that the maximum permissible doses of ionizing radiations fixed by ratifying States shall be kept under constant review in the light of current knowledge. The Occupational Cancer Convention, 1974 (No. 139), requires ratifying States to “periodically determine” the carcinogenic substances and agents to which the Convention shall apply. The Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977 (No. 148), introduced a greater degree of flexibility by leaving it to the competent authority to establish criteria for determining the hazards of exposure and to specify exposure limits where appropriate as well as requiring that these should be supplemented and revised regularly in the light of current international knowledge and data. The Asbestos Convention, 1986 (No. 162), requires that national laws and regulations prescribing measures for safety in the use of asbestos be periodically reviewed in the light of technical progress and advances in scientific knowledge, while the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170), requires the competent authority to establish systems and specific criteria for the classification of chemicals so as to assess whether a chemical is hazardous, and that the classifications systems and their application be progressively extended. The Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174), requires employers to review, update and amend the safety report required by the Convention, “when developments in technical knowledge or in the assessment of hazards make this appropriate”. In all these cases, either the Convention itself or the supplementary Recommendation makes reference to other texts that will provide guidance in keeping the measures taken, to give effect to the Convention, up to date. The new List of Occupational Diseases Recommendation, 2002 (No. 194), contains an innovation specifically designed to respond to the need for adaptability to scientific progress. The Recommendation includes in its annex a list of occupational diseases to be regularly reviewed and updated through tripartite meetings of experts convened by the Governing Body. Lists established this way are to be submitted to the Governing Body for approval, and upon approval shall “replace the preceding list” and be communicated to the Members of the ILO.

46. In terms of basic underlying principles, a driving force in the evolution of standard setting in the field of OSH has been the move towards the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases as opposed to the sole prescription of protective measures. However, it is sometimes difficult to separate the two or qualify a particular measure as one or the other. For example, the earlier Conventions, which are considered to be protection-oriented, contain preventive elements (e.g. the White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921 (No. 13), and the Benzene Convention, 1971 (No. 136), which both prohibit certain uses of the respective substances). Nonetheless, while these earlier Conventions, along with the more recent ones, continue to contain both preventive and protective elements, a decisive thrust in the direction of prevention was given with the adoption of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and the Occupational Health Services Convention,

1985 (No. 161), which are essentially aimed at preventive policies and measures. The more recent Conventions place due weight on the priority to be given to preventive measures; protective measures being a last resort if risks cannot be prevented, minimized or eliminated.¹⁸ It may also be considered that the first tentative references to ergonomics (see Chapter IV) are a reflection of the move towards prevention.

47. In 1975, the International Labour Conference adopted a resolution¹⁹ that called for national policies as well as policies at the enterprise level. This was the first step in a shift towards a management approach to OSH, and is noticeable in Conventions adopted since the resolution in the emphasis placed on the responsibilities of the employer and the rights and duties of the workers. Part IV of Convention No. 155 deals with action at the level of the undertaking and these rights and responsibilities are also the subject of separate parts of Conventions Nos. 170, 174 and 176. The aim was to give employers and workers in the enterprise the responsibility of managing the OSH system in order for the policy to be better adapted to the undertaking. In order to address an increasing application of management principles to OSH and demand for standards in this area, in 2001 the ILO adopted *Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems*.

48. The adoption of the International Programme for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment (PIACT) in 1976²⁰ marked an important parallel development in the ILO's approach to OSH. The PIACT philosophy was and remains remarkable because it brought together developments in policy instruments and the expansion of OSH to take into account environmental concerns. It clarified the respective roles of the ILO and the WHO, i.e. the same issue of health in relation to work is addressed by the WHO through public health strategies, health policies and laws, and by the ILO through labour strategies to improve working conditions and the working environment, tripartism and labour laws. It also constructed a comprehensive model for an occupational safety and health policy, which embodies the basic principles contained in ILO instruments on OSH. It advocated that this should be coupled with a "participatory approach", preparing the ground for ILO support for the concept of "safety culture" which emerged in the aftermath of Chernobyl (1986). According to current thinking on OSH, the building of a "safety culture" is a key to effective preventive action. In enterprises, safety cultures must be built from within through a management systems approach. OSH is composed of specific and interrelated components, each serving individual functions and with specific characteristics, but each also contributing, albeit in different ways, to the functioning of the system. The management systems approach constitutes the framework which can make these components function together and the *Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems* embody these principles.²¹

Preliminary conclusions

49. The areas of concern for OSH have expanded from a workplace, sectoral and national focus to the global arena. OSH is firmly embedded in the concept of decent work and also

¹⁸ See the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), Part II Article 4(2); the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170), Article 13.1; the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174), Preamble; and the Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176), Article 6.

¹⁹ ILO: *Resolution concerning future action of the International Labour Organisation in the field of working conditions and environment*, International Labour Conference, 60th Session, Geneva, 1975.

²⁰ ILO: *Improving working conditions and environment: An international programme (PIACT)* (Geneva, ILO, 1984).

²¹ In response to the survey, the Ministry of Labour of Finland stated: "The starting point and aim of the revisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Act and its safety policy was that the safety management carried out by the workplaces on their own initiative is the best way to improve and maintain the safety of workplaces and work. So the principle of continuous improvement and development has already been incorporated in the purpose of the Act."

represents a platform for action to contribute to the development of a global consensus on how to integrate social, economic and environmental policies, in order to achieve globally sustainable development. In this context, there is a strong link between poverty alleviation and OSH. Safety and health at work is an urgent concern in all regions of the world and there are indications that the levels of occupational accidents and diseases are on the increase.

50. The ILO's tools for action in this area include some 45 Conventions and Recommendations. A recent case-by-case evaluation of these standards has permitted a determination of their status resulting in the conclusion that while the large majority of these instruments are up to date, ten of them require revision. Further guidance, inter alia, on the implementation of standards is also provided in a number of codes of practice in the area of OSH that have been developed since the 1950s. The importance and relevance of these instruments is documented in certain cases, but more general information is lacking as to their current status.

51. A review of the development of ILO standards and other instruments over time reveals that current ILO standards reflect several parallel, complementary and indeed ongoing developments. In terms of legislative techniques these developments include an evolution from rules to policy, from detailed to comprehensive standards and from rigid, precise rules to more flexible process-based provisions. In more substantive terms, the scope and coverage of OSH provisions have evolved from a focus on industrial safety to one on workplace safety and health, to the adaptation of the working environment to the worker, and from protection to prevention and assessment of risks. Modern OSH standards clearly reflect not only collective responsibilities towards workplace safety but also the respective roles, responsibilities and cooperation between employers, workers and their representatives. The most recent and significant change is the development of cross-cutting concepts such as working or safety cultures, the renewal of work ethics and, more recently, the development of quality management systems and the move from technical rules to systems-based approaches, which require fully functional management frameworks.

Chapter II

The place of occupational safety and health in ILO activities

52. Concern for OSH has always been a central part of the ILO's mandate. The directions set and the impetus provided by the Decent Work Agenda confirms this view by stating that decent work must be safe work. While the InFocus Programme on Safety and Health at Work and the Environment represents a focal point for ILO work in this area, concern about the safety and health of workers is a significant element in a large number of actions implemented under the ILO's four strategic objectives, including, in particular, the following briefly summarized programmes and activities.

53. A large number of areas of action presented under the major ILO objectives include an OSH or OSH-related component, such as employment, child labour, the informal economy, gender mainstreaming, labour statistics, standards, labour inspection and maritime safety, among others. This gives a clear indication of the importance of OSH as a major element of overall ILO action, and particularly in the context of the Decent Work Agenda. The cross-cutting themes and areas of action presented here are considered the ones where OSH is a key element in the objective of achieving sustained decent working conditions and environment and strong safety cultures. These should therefore be taken into account in future ILO plans of action in the area of OSH.

Core responsibilities for occupational safety and health

The SafeWork programme

54. SafeWork is responsible for developing and implementing ILO OSH standards and related activities, with the exception of maritime standards dealing specifically with OSH issues, which are the responsibility of the Maritime Industries Branch of the Sectoral Activities Department. This division of responsibilities is based mainly on availability of specific expertise in relation to the subject matter, and SafeWork involvement in all OSH standards-related actions is systematic. The programme's main tasks are the development of the basis for adoption of OSH standards by the International Labour Conference and the development of non-binding standards, such as codes of practice, guidelines and technical publications. In the same way, the provision of technical advisory services and assistance to ILO constituents in all aspects of OSH represents a major permanent task. Another major area of responsibility for SafeWork is the design and implementation of technical cooperation projects and programmes. SafeWork is also responsible for providing ILO input into environmental issues that relate to the world of work and it acts as the ILO focal point in the context of collaboration with other intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) involved in this area.

55. The recent integration of the ILO Labour Inspection and the ILO Workers' Health Promotion and Well-being at Work (drug and alcohol abuse at work) programmes in SafeWork has brought strengthened expertise and a wider scope to the programme. The

International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centre (CIS), which is a part of the SafeWork programme, is described in detail in paragraphs 225-228. The collaboration of SafeWork with other international organizations and bodies is also described in detail separately in this report. The action of SafeWork is strengthened and extended to the field by a number of OSH experts stationed in the ILO multidisciplinary advisory teams (MDTs) around the world (see Annex V). SafeWork collaborates with, and provides technical assistance to, other ILO programmes responsible for areas of action that have significant OSH content. The current operational objectives of SafeWork as defined in the 2002-03 programme and budget are as follows:

The InFocus Programme on Safety and Health at Work and the Environment (SafeWork) targets improvements in preventive policies and programmes such as voluntary application of safety and health management systems, workers' health promotion and environmental issues in the world of work. These efforts are predicated on promoting the application of ILO standards. The goal is to extend the protective coverage and to demonstrate that safety pays.

Sectoral activities

56. The objective of the Sectoral Activities Programme is to facilitate the exchange of information between the ILO's tripartite constituents on labour and social developments in particular economic sectors through the holding of tripartite sectoral meetings, to undertake practically oriented research and to provide technical assistance. In many instances, OSH issues relevant to a particular sector are raised and discussed in this context. As a result, a number of OSH codes of practice and guidelines for sectors of economic activity such as forestry, dock work, accident prevention on board ship at sea and in port, and on OSH in the non-ferrous metals industries, have been developed by the Programme with the collaboration of SafeWork. A Convention and a Recommendation for the fishing sector placed on the agenda of the 2004 session of the International Labour Conference will also cover some OSH-related aspects. SafeWork and the Sectoral Activities Programme are currently jointly developing guidelines on safety and health in ship breaking.

57. Over the years, the long-standing collaboration between the two programmes and mutual input into their respective activities has generated strong synergies and complementary action. The current work carried out by the Sectoral Activities Programme concerning the promotion of the agriculture and mining Conventions illustrates the importance of its role in OSH. This fruitful collaboration is essential and should be strengthened, particularly in view of the ongoing development of a new approach to sectoral activities designed to maximize impact within the limits of available resources.¹

58. Because of the unique character of seafaring, most maritime countries have special laws and regulations covering this occupation. Consequently, the ILO, since its founding, has had special "machinery" for seafarers. The machinery includes the Joint Maritime Commission, which advises the Governing Body on maritime issues, and special maritime sessions of the International Labour Conference, which focus solely on the preparation and adoption of maritime labour standards. These include standards directly addressing the safety, health and welfare of seafarers, dock work safety and labour inspection.² Within the ILO, maritime issues are dealt with by the Sectoral Activities Department (SECTOR). A number of codes of practice, guidelines and reports that address seafarers' issues have also been developed. The ILO cooperates with other United Nations agencies with an interest

¹ See Governing Body doc. GB.285/STM/1.

² The list of ILO maritime labour standards and detailed information on ILO activities in this area are available at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/sectors/mariti/standards.htm>

in the maritime field, such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in London and WHO in Geneva.

59. The ILO has launched a major consolidation of the existing body of more than 60 maritime labour instruments into a single instrument in line with recommendations made by the ILO Joint Maritime Commission in January 2001 (the Geneva Accord) and approved by the ILO Governing Body at its 280th Session (March 2001). The objective of the consolidation is to bring the system of protection contained in existing standards closer to the workers concerned, in a form that is consistent with this rapidly developing, globalized sector, and to improve the applicability of the system so that ship owners and governments interested in providing decent conditions of work do not have to bear an unequal burden in ensuring such protection.

Extension of social protection

60. For the ILO, social protection corresponds to a set of tools, instruments and policies which aim to ensure that men and women enjoy working conditions that are not only not harmful, but are as safe as possible, and that respect human dignity, take into account family and social values, allow for adequate compensation in case of lost or reduced income, permit access to adequate social and medical services and respect the right to free time and rest. It is also indispensable to accord priority to promoting effective equality of opportunity between men and women and adequately confronting new, emerging and growing trends and challenges such as international migration and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In bringing together under one structure all the ILO activities related to the protection of workers in terms of OSH, social security, conditions of work and welfare facilities, HIV/AIDS and migration, the Social Protection Sector (PROTECT) ensures the synergies and integrated actions needed to achieve effective promotion of values and standards and higher impact in this area.

Labour inspection

61. Labour Inspection³ has been recognized by the ILO as a fundamental element of labour protection since its inception. Standard setting in this area culminated in the adoption of the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), followed by the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129). A Protocol to Convention No. 81 was adopted in 1995 to cover the non-commercial services sector. Substantial new developments and changes have been occurring in many countries, in terms of both policy and practice.

62. Labour inspectorates everywhere are facing the challenge of evolving from enforcement of labour relations regulations to more holistic strategies that include OSH and, in some cases, environmental issues, the provision of technical advisory services and an important role in the building of prevention cultures⁴ within the enterprise. Another challenge will be to upgrade the national inspection systems' capacities and strategies to deal with the wide range of issues identified earlier. They will have to promote the application of OSH management systems and add value to inspection through the provision of expert technical advice. Labour inspection technical cooperation activities are currently focused on integrating child labour issues and the concepts of OSH management systems in the training of inspectors, developing a computerized knowledge base on national inspection systems and strengthening links with external labour inspection bodies such as the

³ W. von Richthofen: *Labour inspection: A guide to the profession* (Geneva, ILO, 2002).

⁴ ILO, Labour Administration Branch: *New prevention strategies for labour inspection*, Doc. No. 56 (Geneva, 1998).

European Union Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC) and the International Association of Labour Inspection (IALI).

Well-being at work

63. The Workers' Health Promotion and Well-being at Work programme focuses on the promotion of health among all workers and their families and within the community through preventive and assistance programmes in the areas of drug and alcohol abuse, tobacco, HIV/AIDS, stress and violence at work. In all these areas, and particularly in the area of drug and alcohol abuse, the ILO's comparative advantage lies in its experience of using the approach of social dialogue. This approach has resulted in the implementation of very successful workplace and community initiatives, with the involvement of employers, workers, governments, public services and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and more recently the development of an integrated course on drug and alcohol abuse, tobacco, HIV/AIDS, stress and violence at work.

HIV/AIDS

64. The spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, particularly in developing countries, is a crisis of exceptional proportions. In a large number of developing countries, HIV/AIDS now represents a major obstacle to economic growth and sustainable development. The ILO's share of the global action against this major health disaster has focused on achieving three objectives,⁵ namely, to raise awareness of the economic and social impact of HIV/AIDS in the world of work, to help constituents prevent the spread and reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS and to fight discrimination and stigma related to HIV status. Recognizing that to be successful the fight against this terrible disease had to be carried out not only on all fronts but also in a globally concerted and coordinated manner, the ILO became a co-sponsor of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in October 2001. The most obvious direct link between HIV/AIDS and OSH is the exposure of health-care workers to the virus. Other OSH-related aspects include exposure risks of sex workers and the physical and psychological stresses and weakening of strength induced by the disease, which may put workers more at risk of suffering accidents. The confidentiality of medical data and the risk of discriminatory termination of employment are other areas linking HIV/AIDS and the world of work. The ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work contains principles for policy development and practical guidelines from which concrete responses can be developed at enterprise, community and national levels.

Social security, insurance and welfare

65. The Social Security Policy and Development Branch (SOC/POL) assists member States and constituents in the design, reform and implementation of social security policies based on the principles embodied in international labour standards and thereby contributes to the effective governance and management of these policies. As a follow-up to a general discussion on social security at the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference in 2001,⁶ special emphasis is placed on developing strategies to extend social security coverage. The Strategies and Tools against Social Exclusion and Poverty (STEP) programme promotes and supports the development of innovative ways of extending social protection coverage using linkages between public systems and community-based

⁵ ILO: *Resolution concerning HIV/AIDS and the world of work*, International Labour Conference, 88th Session, Geneva, 2000.

⁶ ILO: *Social security: Issues, challenges and prospects*, Report VI, International Labour Conference, 89th Session, Geneva, 2001.

initiatives. It places special emphasis on access to health care for workers in the informal economy.

66. In the effort to achieve decent working conditions and environment, social security and OSH are complementary means to afford extended protection to workers and should be the object of increased collaboration in this area with other bodies involved in accident compensation schemes such as the International Social Security Association (ISSA). The Employment Injury Benefits Convention, 1964 [Schedule I amended in 1980] (No. 121), illustrates the direct link between social security and OSH, as this Convention provides for the compensation of employment injuries and also provides a list of occupational diseases which are to be compensated at the national level. In addition, the International Labour Conference adopted in 2002 the List of Occupational Diseases Recommendation, 2002 (No. 194), which contains a further list of occupational diseases that can be updated through a new simplified mechanism involving tripartite meetings of experts and the Governing Body. Preparations are under way to update this list through a tripartite meeting of experts in the near future.

Other ILO areas of action with significant occupational safety and health content

Child labour

67. The rapid ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), is creating an overwhelming demand for specific guidance on the implementation of Article 4 concerning the identification of hazardous occupations.⁷ SafeWork and the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) are currently in the process of developing tools and methods for identifying hazardous child labour and setting priorities for action by authorities, inspectors, employers' and workers' organizations, OSH professionals and their organizations, as well as key NGOs involved in the elimination of child labour. These tools and methods will be tested and the results used within the context of improving implementation of the provisions in ILO OSH standards for preventing dangerous child labour at the enterprise level.

Occupational safety and health and small and medium-sized enterprises

68. The existing OSH standards apply in principle to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). However, practical experience clearly shows that the application of the standards is limited in this area. Primary reasons are the limited awareness among SMEs of the existence of OSH standards and, where there is awareness, the limited experience and knowledge of how to comply with the standards without jeopardizing business performance. Furthermore, there are often no support services available to these enterprises to assist them in complying. Local institutional capacity is often limited both in the institutions that are traditionally responsible for OSH as well as in the institutions providing business development services to SMEs, and it is not able to address their specific needs and demands in terms of compliance. Standards become relevant to SMEs only when a "win-win" situation can be created and practical guidelines, which fully recognize and accommodate their specific needs, are made available to them. The ILO InFocus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability (IFP/SKILLS) and the ILO InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development (IFP/SEED) both include occupational health and safety in their small enterprise development activities and address

⁷ ILO: *IPEC action against child labour: Highlights 2002* (Geneva, 2002).

those needs to a significant extent by promoting safe work practices within a business context.

Poverty alleviation

69. In the context of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)⁸ process, the ILO is working to ensure that employment and other aspects of decent work are addressed as an integral part of the economic and social analyses and policies comprising the initiative. As the safety and health of workers is a fundamental concern of decent work, it should be an equally important concern in the poverty alleviation agenda for the simple reason that for workers to keep their employment, they must, among other things, stay healthy. They must therefore have a minimum knowledge of occupational hazards in their working environment and learn basic prevention principles. Serious consideration should be given to the possibility of using projects related to poverty alleviation as vehicles for conveying basic prevention information related to safety and health to individual families and to micro-enterprises operating in the informal economy through family planning microcredit schemes. The provision of basic OSH information at the level of the family unit could also be a way to increase the safety and health of children.

Older workers

70. The ILO has always been committed to the issue of ageing, specifically in elaborating international labour standards in the field of invalidity, old age and survivors' insurance. The most comprehensive instrument on this subject is the Older Workers Recommendation, 1980 (No. 162), which aims to protect the right of older workers to equality of treatment and stresses the measures that should be implemented to protect their needs, including the identification and elimination of the occupational hazards and working conditions which hasten the ageing process and reduce their working capacity. The ILO contribution⁹ to the 2002 Second World Assembly on Ageing¹⁰ stressed this fact and called for measures to promote the adaptation of working conditions for older workers. The ageing of the world workforce is a major issue, which raises many concerns, including OSH concerns.

Gender equality

71. Increased feminization of the workforce worldwide is now recognized as having a major influence on the world of work. The issue of integrating gender mainstreaming approaches in OSH is not by any means new. A 1985 ILO resolution¹¹ recommended that measures should be taken to extend special protection to women and men concerning reproductive hazards and sexual harassment. The consequences of the feminization of the workforce in terms of safety and health have become a key issue for action in many countries. By establishing a Bureau for Gender Equality, and placing gender equality as a key element on the Organization's Decent Work Agenda, the ILO has recognized this phenomenon and has identified it as a cross-cutting issue and one of the strategic objectives of its global agenda. As a result, gender concerns and perspectives are automatically mainstreamed in all its policies and programmes, including those related to OSH.

⁸ See Governing Body doc. 285/ESP/2.

⁹ ILO: *An inclusive society for an ageing population: The employment and social protection challenge* (Geneva), paper presented to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8-12 Apr. 2002, at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/index.htm>

¹⁰ See Governing Body doc. GB.285/ESP/6/1.

¹¹ ILO: *Resolution on equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women in employment*, International Labour Conference, 71st Session, Geneva, 1985.

Occupational safety and health and the informal economy

72. The extension of fundamental rights and social protection to workers in the informal economy has been the subject of major papers and discussions at the ILO during the past five years. These have culminated with the preparation of a report¹² on the subject followed by a general discussion at the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference in 2002, the adoption of a resolution¹³ and a basis for a future plan of action. A major reason why social protection, (particularly safety and health) is especially critical for informal workers is that they are much more likely to be exposed to poor working environments, low safety and health standards and environmental hazards resulting in poor health outcomes than formal workers are. Most often they have little or no knowledge of the risks they face and how to avoid them. For many women workers who have to combine work at home with child rearing and household chores, the usual hazards are compounded by poor housekeeping, long work hours and the extension of exposure risks to the whole family. The general lack of sanitary facilities, drinkable water, electricity and waste disposal systems is another underlying aggravating factor. The intrinsically undefined structure of the informal economy makes it almost impossible for governments to collect the vital statistics needed to take appropriate remedial action and, since much informal work takes place in homes, inspectorates cannot investigate work conditions or bring much-needed information and advice.

73. The ILO has already started to develop tools and methodologies to address training, awareness raising and other needs in order to start the process of improving the working conditions and environment of informal workers. A range of ILO programmes linked to employment and production is being used to integrate OSH requirements in skills development, policy and technical support activities in this area. Trade unions have begun to cover the informal economy as a complementary organizing activity. Employers' groups could also further expand the extension of services and negotiations to cover informal producers. Both social partners have produced information and methodologies aimed at introducing OSH principles in the informal economy. Key information on chemical and other hazards is produced and made available in many languages for use in the agricultural and manufacturing areas of the informal economy. Examples are too numerous to describe here and detailed information on ILO action in this area can be found on the ILO web site.

The role of employers and workers

74. If laws and regulations are essential in determining the legal framework regulating the administration of national OSH infrastructures, the successful application of laws and regulations within the workplace rests to a large extent with employers, workers and the organizations representing them.¹⁴ Often, the subject of OSH has been the starting point for developing wider bipartite dialogue. Both employers and workers, and particularly employers' and workers' organizations, give OSH an important place in their collaborative or separate actions. The inclusion of the subject of OSH has long been a standard feature of collective bargaining agreements. Although the legal basis for collective bargaining, the

¹² ILO: *Decent work and the informal economy*, Report VI, International Labour Conference, 90th Session, Geneva, 2002.

¹³ ILO: *Resolution concerning decent work and the informal economy*, International Labour Conference, 90th Session, Geneva, 2002.

¹⁴ For further information on the role of employers and workers, please see: R. Husbards: "National level tripartite and bipartite cooperation on health and safety", in ILO: *Encyclopaedia of occupational health and safety*, 4th edition, 1998, Vol. 1, ILO: *Voluntary initiatives affecting training and education on safety, health and environment in the chemical industries*, Report for discussion at the Tripartite Meeting on Voluntary Initiatives Affecting Training and Education on Safety, Health and Environment in the Chemical Industries, Geneva, 22-26 Feb. 1999, M.J. Wright: "Collective bargaining and safety and health", in ILO: *Encyclopaedia ...*, op. cit.

level at which bargaining occurs and even the process of bargaining may differ significantly from country to country, the legislation of most industrialized and developing countries includes a system for regulating collective bargaining.

75. National legal frameworks also affect how collective bargaining applies to OSH. Mandatory joint safety committees are often the main mechanism for bipartite management of OSH within the enterprise. Although the traditional vision of collective bargaining is one of a formal periodic process of negotiation, it is also a flexible continuous mechanism for solving problems as they arise. OSH is frequently seen as an ideal subject for mutual gains bargaining since both sides are interested in avoiding occupational accidents and diseases. The promotion of OSH and improvement of working conditions has certainly benefited greatly from such dialogue. The ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy underlines the importance of collective bargaining as a mechanism for dialogue and conflict resolution.

76. The national consultative structures on OSH that exist in most developed countries and a number of developing countries (e.g. the National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health in the United States, the Health and Safety Commission in the United Kingdom and the European Union Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work) are examples of important mechanisms where employers and workers participate in the development of policies and action plans related to OSH. Employers and workers are also involved in the management of specialized OSH institutions such as the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work in Bilbao. In developing countries, similar consultative mechanisms exist, such as Fundacentro in Brazil.

77. Employers have developed a number of voluntary initiatives dealing with various OSH aspects and specific sectors of economic activity (e.g. the Responsible Care initiative and its worldwide programmes aim to make the chemical industry safer, increase respect for the environment and increase transparency in providing information to the public). Within the ILO, the Bureaux for Employers' and Workers' Activities carry out activities related to OSH, including the provision of technical assistance and training to their national counterpart organizations. Because of their technical capacities, employers' organizations are also involved in the development of technical standards directly related to many aspects of OSH. This occurs at the national level through the specialized standardizing institutions (e.g. the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) or the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)) and at the international level through organizations such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). At the international level, both the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) give a significant place to OSH in their activities and their worldwide information and training activities. The European Trade Union Technical Bureau for Health and Safety is an example of the involvement of trade unions in promoting OSH principles and providing technical training to affiliates.

78. This overview of the key mechanisms used by both employers' and workers' organizations to address OSH issues does not provide a fully comprehensive "map" of existing mechanisms, bodies, and activities but illustrates clearly the magnitude of the efforts made by both social partners and thus the high importance given by employers' and workers' organizations to OSH. This input is a vital element in the development of safety cultures and the management of OSH in the enterprise.

79. Of course, many unresolved issues and areas for improvement exist. Trade unions in industrialized countries could consider more concerted resource mobilization actions to

assist developing and transition countries in building their national OSH systems. This point was raised in the survey as a possible direction for policy development. Given the major impact of the joint action of employers' and workers' organizations in recommending the ILO as the appropriate forum for developing, on a tripartite basis, international guidelines on OSH management, and the subsequent success of these guidelines, the collaborative principles of collective bargaining could certainly be extended to ensure stronger and more effective consultation and participation of workers in the process of developing much-needed voluntary technical standards, initiatives and information materials. These are essential tools in the complex process of transposing the provisions of laws and regulations into concrete preventive and protective action in the enterprise. The informal economy is one major area where worldwide networks of employers' and workers' organizations could be mobilized in a more concerted and systematic way to assist in raising awareness and bringing much-needed knowledge on best practices and preventive and protective measures to SMEs doing contract work for larger companies. The promotion of ILO OSH instruments and information materials such as codes of practice and guidelines could also be greatly enhanced by more visible support from employers' and workers' organizations, both nationally and internationally.

Occupational safety and health and multinational enterprises

80. The subject of multinational enterprises (MNEs) has been a recurrent issue in discussions which culminated in the adoption by the Governing Body at its 204th Session (November 1977) of the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy. The Declaration was further amended in 2000 to take account of new declarations and standards adopted after 1977, seven of which relate to OSH.¹⁵ The Tripartite Declaration of Principles, the only set of global voluntary guidelines agreed upon and followed up by governments and employers' and workers' organizations, takes into account various minimum standards including OSH standards, as well as codes of practice. The Tripartite Declaration of Principles is a very important framework that could be an effective tool for the promotion of OSH and particularly for the implantation and strengthening of safety cultures in countries in which MNEs operate. MNEs could contribute to ILO efforts in the area of OSH by making available much-needed technical information on best practices.

International collaboration

Partnerships

81. International collaboration in the area of OSH includes all activities undertaken by the ILO jointly or collaboratively with other IGOs and NGOs, as well as with regional bodies such as the European Commission and specialized national institutions. These include the development of policies and programmes, the preparation of technical standards, the delivery of technical cooperation projects, the preparation of training material, the development of databases and information materials, as well as the organization of conferences, symposia and workshops. Among the United Nations specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and WHO are the ILO's key partners. The ILO also collaborates from time to time with regional bodies such as the European Commission, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asian Development Bank, the Pan American Health

¹⁵ Governing Body doc. GB.279/12 and Addenda I and II to the Declaration, available at <http://ilo.org/public/english/employment/multi/index.htm>

Organization (PAHO) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The IALI, the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) and IOHA are some of the ILO's main specialized NGO partners.

Areas of collaboration

Chemical safety

82. In the past ten years, chemical safety has represented a major area of collaboration with other IGOs and one in which the ILO has made a major and sustained input. This has resulted in the establishment of important mechanisms, standards and other related outputs focused on developing an integrated and environmentally sound management of chemicals. During the past two decades, the major part of the ILO's input in the area of chemical safety has been provided within the context of a number of interagency cooperation mechanisms. Following the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, the ILO, UNEP and WHO established together the International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS) in 1982, with its main objective to provide internationally peer-reviewed chemical risk assessments and to carry out a number of activities related to chemical safety.

83. Ten years later, the ILO participated in a very significant way in the development of cooperative frameworks aimed at implementing the recommendations set by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 concerning environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals. The first result of these efforts was the creation of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) in 1994 as an advisory mechanism to coordinate national actions and to make recommendations to the international organizations in terms of priorities for action. The Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) was established in 1995 to coordinate the chemical safety activities of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), ILO, OECD, UNEP, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and WHO.

84. These structures are now recognized as very effective channels for promoting worldwide a systems approach to the sound management of chemicals and are, at the same time, good channels for promoting the relevant instruments and technical guidelines and assessments developed by the IGOs involved in chemical safety. The participation of the ILO ensured that the steering mechanisms of the IPCS and the IFCS included representation of employers and workers. The provisions in the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170), and the Chemicals Recommendation, 1990 (No. 177), played a significant role in shaping outputs such as the IPCS International Chemical Safety Cards and the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) (see boxes 1 and 2).

Other areas of collaboration

85. A very large number of activities involving one or more organizations have been carried out over the years. Key mechanisms have been designed to coordinate interagency collaboration, sometimes with programmatic capacities, such as the ILO/WHO Joint Committee on Occupational Health, the IFCS, the IOMC and the IPCS. A collaborative mechanism also exists with the IAEA on radiation safety standards. Joint programmes such as the ILO/WHO Global Programme on the Elimination of Silicosis and the ILO/UNAIDS partnership are examples of other types of joint collaboration between the ILO and its United Nations partners. A significant number of key, international, technical

Box 1
The Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS)

- The ILO initiated this project as a follow-up to the adoption of the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170), and steered its development under the umbrella of first the IPCS and then the IOMC. It was carried out by three focal points, namely the OECD for the harmonization of classification criteria for health and environmental hazards, the United Nations Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (CETDG) for physical hazards and the ILO for the harmonization of chemical hazard communication (labelling and chemical safety data sheets).
- More than 200 experts, including employers' and workers' experts, provided technical input into this project until its completion in 2001. In order to provide a mechanism for maintaining and promoting application of the GHS by member States, the United Nations Economic and Social Council decided in 1999 to reconfigure the CETDG as the United Nations Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals. At its December 2002 session in Geneva,¹ the full Committee adopted the final version of the GHS, which will be officially published in 2003 in the six languages of the United Nations.
- The GHS has been designed to cover all chemicals including pure substances and mixtures and to provide for the chemical hazard communication requirements of the workplace, transport of dangerous goods, consumers and the environment. As such it is a truly harmonized and universal technical standard that should have a far-reaching impact on all national and international chemical safety regulations. Successful completion of the GHS was due in great part to the full involvement of the employers' and workers' organizations in the process. Their input at both the policy and the technical levels was critical in overcoming many significant obstacles.

¹ All relevant working papers and meeting reports for each session of the Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals are available in full text in English and French at <http://www.unece.org/trans/main/dgdb/dgsubc4/c4age.html>

Box 2
The International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS)
International Chemical Safety Cards (ICSCs)

- The ICSC project was developed in 1984 in the context of cooperation between the IPCS and the European Union. Funding is provided by the EU, the ILO and WHO. The project is currently managed by the ILO on behalf of the IPCS. The ICSCs summarize essential health and safety information on chemical substances in a clear way and are intended for use at the shop-floor level by workers, and by those responsible for workplace safety and health. To a large extent, the information provided in the ICSCs conforms to the provisions in the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170), and the Chemicals Recommendation, 1990 (No. 177), related to Chemical Safety Data Sheets. The ICSCs are designed to serve as an international reference with respect to chemical safety information and are therefore prepared through an ongoing process of drafting and peer-reviewing by scientists from specialized institutions designated by the member States who contribute to the work of the IPCS. This process also takes account of the advice and comments provided by manufacturers, workers' and employers' organizations and other specialized institutions.
- A large number of national institutions are involved in the translation of the ICSCs into different languages. Currently about 1,300 ICSCs are available free of charge on the Internet in 16 languages: Chinese, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese. A measure of the impact and usefulness of the ICSCs is given by the number of ICSCs downloaded from the Internet, which is estimated to be over 1.5 million per year.

references and standards are produced in the context of this collaboration, such as the IPCS ICSCs and the United Nations GHS, the *International basic safety standards for protection against ionizing radiation and for the safety of radiation sources*, the *ILO International classification of radiographs of pneumoconioses*, and the *ILO Encyclopaedia of occupational health and safety*. Further details are provided in Annex VII.

86. Another important area of collaboration is the preparation and organization of major international conferences and congresses such as the triennial World Congress on Safety and Health at Work and the International Conference on Occupational Respiratory Diseases. Major conferences with a high level of ILO participation are very effective means of promoting ILO standards and other related materials such as codes of practice and guidelines, particularly in the area of OSH, where the ILO is regarded as the leading international organization.

87. In the process of developing these materials and activities, a significant part of the technical work is often borne by experts from national specialized institutions and non-governmental bodies as well as national organizations representing employers, specific industrial sectors and workers. Without their dedication and expertise, very little could be achieved. The elaboration of the GHS and the ongoing production of the IPCS ICSCs are examples of activities where input from international, regional and national organizations and bodies was, and still is, a critical factor of success. Annex VII provides a more detailed description of the key international cooperation frameworks, partners, objectives, activities and outputs related to ILO work in OSH. It also illustrates the global scope and diversity of this cooperation and the significant role played by the ILO.

Assessment

88. Over the years, international cooperation has proven to be a very effective way of ensuring that ILO values and views are taken into account in the activities of other bodies and used as a basis for the development of technical standards and methodologies pertaining to OSH. ILO participation is increasingly sought, not only for its technical expertise in OSH matters but also for its experience in knowledge management issues, its organizational capacity, its skills in developing consensus on delicate issues and in developing standards and other materials, as well as its expertise in the delivery of technical and capacity-building assistance to constituents.

89. All the activities and outputs listed above have, or have had, a very significant impact on the application of OSH principles and requirements and are used directly as a basis for the provision of technical assistance to constituents in the context of technical cooperation, as reliable references for the production of policy documents, regulations, technical standards and other tools relevant to OSH at both the national and the enterprise levels and as models for other IGOs.

90. International collaboration puts the ILO at the centre of global networks and alliances, which are vital mechanisms for maintaining the currency of its technical knowledge bases as well as for influencing those of other bodies. It is also very effective in ensuring complementarities of mandates and avoidance of duplication of efforts. One example is the very specialized scientific work done by the IPCS in developing chemical risk assessments, which are recognized by countries as an authoritative basis for developing regulatory and guidance tools such as occupational exposure limits for hazardous chemicals.

91. An essential aspect of this mechanism is that it provides opportunities for employers' and workers' experts to influence the shaping of standards and outputs developed in the

context of joint work with other organizations. Experience has been that the ILO's international partners have always valued the input provided by employers and workers and often seek ILO participation to ensure that employers' and workers' views are taken into account. The significant involvement of employers' and workers' experts in a major undertaking, such as the development of the GHS, provided a striking demonstration to other stakeholders of the high level of their expertise and capacity to develop consensus-based solutions to very complex technical and policy issues. Their participation also resulted in strengthening the presence and leadership of the ILO in the process.

Issues

92. International cooperation has proven to be an effective means of promoting ILO standards and views every time the Office has taken the lead in joint activities and provided sufficient resources and input to maintain this lead role on a sustained basis. However, it has not been able, in some cases, to muster the resources needed for effective follow-up, as in the case of the GHS. A similar problem is occurring with the IPCS International Chemical Safety Cards project, which despite obvious success and impact is having great difficulties in attracting adequate resources.

93. International cooperation is generally given a very low profile in the process of periodic reporting to the Governing Body, particularly for activities based on official inter-agency agreements such as Memoranda of Understanding. As a result, there is no systematic assessment of progress of long-term projects, review and endorsement of the recommendations made by interagency coordination structures, such as those of the IPCS and the IOMC, or ultimately recognition of the overall value of international cooperation in furthering the objectives of the ILO in particular areas.

Preliminary conclusions

94. This overview represents the collective action taken by the ILO that is devoted wholly or in part to the promotion of ILO values and standards in the area of OSH and provides a measure of the importance of achieving safe and healthy working conditions and environment as a major ILO objective in the context of the Decent Work Agenda. A number of the cross-cutting themes identified, which have strong links with the objectives of the ILO in the area of OSH (including hazardous child labour, work in the informal economy, OSH in small and medium-sized enterprises, the role of collective bargaining in promoting OSH standards, the role of employers and workers in building safety cultures, and gender mainstreaming) will need to be taken into account in the elaboration of a future ILO plan of action on OSH.

95. In view of the wide-ranging OSH-related activities undertaken by the ILO as a whole, there is a strong need to maintain overall coherence of action in this area to ensure that the ILO's "occupational safety and health message" is a consistent one. In this context, effective approaches for the mainstreaming of OSH in relevant ILO areas of action may need to be considered. In order to increase the awareness of constituents concerning the breadth of the collective efforts of ILO in the area of OSH, SafeWork could develop a web page linking all the web pages of ILO programmes involved in OSH-related activities. Consideration could also be given to further improve complementarities of action, particularly in the delivery of technical advice, cooperation and assistance to ensure that multiple technical cooperation delivery in any given country concerning different aspects of OSH is adequately coordinated.

96. In taking action to improve the streamlining and impact of ILO action in the area of international collaboration on OSH, consideration could be given to a systematic periodic review of activities in this context. International collaboration in the area of OSH could be made a specific item in the programming and budgeting process for allocation of adequate resources. This would encourage its use as a valuable mechanism to develop alliances and networking, particularly in areas where the mandate is shared between several organizations, as is the case for OSH, where the ILO and WHO have complementary responsibilities.

Chapter III

Occupational safety and health at global, national and workplace levels

The global context

97. The reasons urgent action is needed in the area of occupational safety and health reflect the workings of the many interrelated forces that continuously affect humanity, societies and consequently the world of work. In this past decade the ongoing process of globalization of the world economies and its consequences have been perceived as the major current driving force for changes affecting the world of work, and consequently OSH, both in positive and negative ways. In the past few years, there has been an accelerating and growing liberalization of world trade, fuelled by rapid technological progress and significant developments in transport and communication. In addition, there has been underlying concern about the effects of demographic growth and dynamics, population movements and increasing pressures on the global environment. As a result, all countries have been and are still undergoing profound structural adjustments, which affect their economic, social and cultural fabric.

The world of work and the environment

98. The direct relationship between the magnitude of environmental pollution and the world of work is illustrated by the impact of major industrial accidents such as Seveso and dioxin, or Bhopal and methyl isocyanate. The release of a number of chemicals, such as certain fluorocarbons, fossil fuel combustion products, persistent organic pollutants and agricultural pesticides, has been identified as the likely cause of long-term environmental damage.

99. The potential for immediate or long-term environmental damage is highest in the agricultural, chemical and energy sectors. Workplace-related improvements in process safety, the use of cleaner production processes, management procedures, emergency planning and response capacities, treatment of hazardous wastes (and generally any improvement in technical and policy measures to prevent air, water and soil pollution) are measures that are an inherent part of OSH objectives and may have a beneficial impact on the global environment. Chemical safety is a major field in which the ILO has been active and has accumulated a vast body of expertise. The Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170), and the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174), are the most recent instruments adopted by the ILO in this area. Convention No. 174 provides for the development of a “coherent national policy concerning the protection of workers, the public and the environment”, whereas Convention No. 170 does not contain a similar reference. The provisions on labelling and marking in Convention No. 170 have, however, had a significant influence on the development of global tools for the environmentally sound management of chemicals as recommended by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio.

100. The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)¹ held in Johannesburg reconfirmed the importance of promoting the use of cleaner production systems and of achieving an environmentally sound management of chemicals. It also recognized the strong link between OSH and public health by recommending the strengthening and promotion of ILO and WHO programmes aimed at reducing occupational deaths, injuries and illnesses.

Demographic factors and employment dynamics

101. According to the latest United Nations estimates and projections² the world population was 6.1 billion in mid-2000 and is expected to reach between 8 and 9.3 billion by 2050. Because of low fertility levels, the population of more developed regions is anticipated to change little during the next 50 years and then decline by mid-century while the population of the less developed regions will rise steadily.

102. As world fertility continues to decline and life expectancy rises, the population of the world will age faster in the next 50 years than during the past half century. The ageing of human populations is one of the most significant demographic processes shaping the world today. In many countries, developed and developing, the ratio of people over the age of 60 to the working-age population is projected to more than double between now and 2050, creating problems not only for the financing of pensions, but also for health care and other social supports for older persons owing to a general increase in accident and disease rates.

103. Large movements of people from rural to urban areas are continuing in most developing countries, and the urban population is growing three times as fast as the rural population and will make up half of the world's population by 2050. In many countries, the out-migration of younger rural residents, combined with fertility declines and increases in mortality among younger adults due to HIV/AIDS, is leading to the rapid ageing of rural populations, sharp increases in old-age dependency and a widespread reduction in labour supply. Out-migration or international migration often results in increased levels of precariousness and risks of adverse health outcomes.

104. According to United Nations data, the world's economically active population of more than 3 billion, over half of which lives in developing countries, is expected to rise to over 5 billion by 2050. In most economies of the world, employment has been shifting from agriculture and industry to the service sector. In the developed economies, the proportion of total employment within the service sector exceeded 50 per cent in practically all economies in 1999. In sub-Saharan Africa and some Asian economies, agricultural employment remains relatively high, while it is very low in developed economies. Transition economies and Asia and the Pacific show a more even distribution both among the three sectors and in terms of which sector has the majority share of employment.

105. The proportion of women workers is fast reaching or exceeding the 50 per cent³ mark in many countries and sectors of activity. For example, in the United States,⁴ nearly 60 per

¹ See Governing Body doc. GB.285/ESP/6/2.

² United Nations: *Demographic dynamics and sustainability*, Report of the Secretary-General, Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, United Nations Economic and Social Council, Doc. E/CN.17/2001/PC/2, 15 Mar. 2001.

³ ILO: Labour Statistics Yearbook Database (LABORSTA).

⁴ Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health: *Women in the construction workplace: Providing equitable safety and health protection*, Study and Recommendations submitted to the United States Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), June 1999. This document is based on the work of the Health and Safety of Women in Construction (HASWIC) workgroup, established by the OSHA Advisory Committee on Construction Safety and Health (ACCSH), at <http://www.osha-slc.gov/doc/accsh/haswicformal.html>

cent of women aged 16 and over participate in the workforce. In 2000, women accounted for more than 40 per cent of the European Union working population. This ongoing feminization of the workforce raises OSH issues in terms of exposure to new occupational hazards for which the exposure risks and outcomes may have been evaluated for the standard male worker and not for women, meaning that specific physiological differences and child-bearing aspects, particularly with respect to exposure to chemicals, have not necessarily been taken into account. Other particular gender-related problems are the health consequences for women who work and who have also to care for their family. The massive entry of women in many sectors of economic activity results in their increased exposure to non-gender-specific hazards such as sensitizing agents, ergonomic hazards (resulting in musculoskeletal disorders), noise, vibration, etc.

106. The growth of the world population, its changing age and sex distribution, and its global movements are all major factors affecting the world of work. The fact that the majority of new workers and moving populations will find work mostly in small-scale enterprises in the informal economy⁵ raises issues such as the lack of social and legal protection nets, and the lack of education, skills and OSH training, which are likely to result in highly precarious situations and increased vulnerability in terms of accidents and diseases. Older workers suffer a greater incidence of diseases with long latency periods but tend to suffer less traumatic accidents due to their experience. Younger workers with less experience, and often in precarious jobs, tend to suffer more traumatic accidents. Employment shifts from production to services tend to change the nature and level of risks and raise problems of adaptation to different working environments and patterns.

The information and telecommunications revolution

107. The ongoing information and telecommunications (ITC) revolution is having a major impact on knowledge as it relates to OSH in the same way as it is deeply affecting the whole field of development, processing and dissemination of all forms of knowledge. This impact is comparable to that of railways in the nineteenth century or electricity some hundred years ago.⁶ One element common to these revolutions is that they all went through a process of very fast and universal dissemination and democratization, triggering brutal social and economic adjustments along the way. A number of ILO reports⁷ have come to the same conclusions concerning this impact on life at work and on employment.

108. The main elements of the telecommunication revolution are the rapid spread of the Internet as a major information exchange tool and the mass production of computer hardware and software at rapidly decreasing costs. One visible beneficial result is that computers are now available and in common use in all countries, regardless of their level of development. A recent study⁸ concluded that over 93 per cent of the information produced in 1999 in the world was in digital format. The second important finding is the rapidly increasing democratization of data and the fact that a vast amount of unique information is created and stored by individuals. The third finding is the dominance of digital information production, which is the largest in total and growing at the amazing rate of 100 per cent per year. In the context of OSH, these extremely rapid advances in the area of ITC are

⁵ WHO: *Global strategy on occupational health for all* (Geneva, 1995).

⁶ International Monetary Fund: *The information technology revolution*, a World Economic Outlook Report, Oct. 2001, at <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2001/02/index.htm>

⁷ ILO: *Life at work in the information economy*, World Employment Report (Geneva, 2001); ILO: *Globalizing Europe: Decent work in the information economy*, Report of the Director-General, Vol. I, Sixth European Regional Meeting, Geneva, Dec. 2000.

⁸ P. Lyman; H.R. Varian: *How much information?* (School of Information Management and Systems, University of California at Berkeley, 2000), at <http://www.sims.berkeley.edu/research/projects/how-much-info/>

having some already visible positive effects on access to and the exchange of information. However, the traditional barriers, such as access costs, lack of information management skills and easy access to telecommunication networks, are still significant and call for continued action to minimize or remove them. The specific aspects of the information revolution and their impact on OSH and ILO actions in this area are developed further later in this report.

National-level concerns

Regulation

109. The globalization process puts strong pressure on governments to establish an adequate balance between formal regulatory and voluntary standards likely to achieve the flexibility needed to respond faster to the demands of global economic and technological forces, while preventing an erosion of the social protection provided through overall regulation mechanisms. This is illustrated by the current trend toward deregulation, particularly in industrialized countries, and the increasing development and promotion by industry of globally harmonized voluntary standards such as international or regional technical and management standards, codes of conduct, and technical and ethical guidelines for national application. This trend may not be as marked in developing countries where regulatory needs remain high. Examples of such technical standards are the product and management quality and environmental management standards, OSH management standards developed by national and industry organizations as well as international organizations, and voluntary initiatives such as the Product Stewardship and Responsible Care programmes developed by the chemical industry. The development of these standards is not a new process and collective bargaining agreements and other voluntary agreements and standards, whether sectoral, national or international, have been in existence for a long time. In recognizing not only their importance, but also the substantial difficulties in linking them to ILO work because of their large number and diversity and the fact that their development rarely involves consultation with organizations of workers, the ILO has developed and made available for public consultation a database listing practically all existing voluntary standards, which could serve as a good basis for further research.⁹

110. Although these voluntary tools are usually well designed and useful, they lack a global framework and linkages to formal regulatory systems capable of ensuring their overall coherence and soundness and of monitoring their effectiveness and the ethical aspects of their application. Frequently, voluntary standards are audited by third parties which are often self-licensed and self-monitored, i.e. outside the formal licensing mechanisms that would normally control the level of skills such as in the technical, medical or engineering sciences. Another major problem is the fact that the development and application of most of these voluntary standards do not include the participation of workers' organizations. In order to be accepted and be an effective and integrated part of the overall regulation process, they must be elaborated through a consensus-based process involving all the stakeholders concerned, especially the social partners who make up the constituency of the ILO. Research could be pursued on possible ways to link voluntary standards and formal regulatory frameworks.

⁹ See <http://oracle02.ilo.org:6060/dyn/basi/vpisearch.first>

Economic aspects

111. While there have been many studies that apply economic analysis to specific questions in the area of occupational safety and health, there has been no comprehensive economic study of the entire field. In broad terms, there are three big questions that need to be addressed: how to give more visibility to the economic role of OSH within the enterprise; how to respond to the dramatic changes now taking place in the world of work; and how to extend OSH research, advocacy and intervention to the developing world. Within the enterprise the two obstacles to be overcome are the identification of the invisible, or indirect, costs of ill-health and the allocation of these costs to the activities that generated them so that they do not appear as overheads. Society's task, in addition, is to internalize as much of the external cost as is practicable, so that the incentives for the firm correspond more closely to the needs of society. While the general framework is clear, the details of how these goals are to be pursued are not, and would require further research. In terms of policy, it is clear that new ways to reach the small and informal enterprises that employ the majority of the world's workers must be found, and simple but powerful instruments that can help illuminate the often overlooked costs of unhealthy work must be developed.

Occupational safety and health strategies

112. Based on information in publicly available sources, it appears that in the past five years several industrialized, transition and developing countries have developed strategies to improve their OSH regulatory and operational systems in order to adjust them to various demographic, technological and economic changes, the pressures relating to the global harmonization of standards, and the development and widespread use of new approaches to OSH implementation, such as OSH management systems and other voluntary initiatives and standards. These actions demonstrate how changes resulting from globalization are affecting working conditions and the working environment, and highlight the urgent need to put OSH higher on the agenda of both individual countries and international organizations.

113. In a recent document presenting proposals for a new Community strategy on health and safety at work for the period 2002-06,¹⁰ it was reconfirmed that safety and health at work constituted one of the European Union's most concentrated and important social policy sectors and that it was an essential element of the quality of work. Although occupational accidents and diseases were showing a marked decline, the fishing, agriculture, construction, and health and social services sectors were still 30 per cent above average. New priorities and strategies were needed to adapt to the ongoing transition toward a knowledge-based economy marked by profound changes affecting society at all levels, such as employment and organization of work – particularly the increased use of temporary and part-time work as well as non-standard working times, which was generating stress-related problems associated with well-being at work – and the increasingly feminized, but also ageing, active population. The European Union strategy will focus on: adopting a global approach to well-being at work, taking account of changes in the world of work and the emergence of new risks, especially of a psychosocial nature; consolidating a culture of risk prevention by combining a variety of political instruments, including legislation, social dialogue, progressive measures and best practices, corporate social responsibilities and economic incentives; and building partnerships between all the players on the safety and health scene.

¹⁰ Commission of the European Communities: *Adapting to change in work and society: A new Community strategy on health and safety at work 2002-2006* (Brussels, 2002), at <http://www.etuc.org/tutb/uk/pdf/com2001-118-en.pdf>

114. The strategies proposed by other countries, such as Australia,¹¹ are similar in focus but with emphasis on improving the capacity of business operators to manage OSH, a more effective prevention of occupational diseases, the elimination of hazards at the design stage, and the strengthening of government capacity to influence OSH outcomes. In New Zealand¹² the focus is on developing an innovative injury prevention strategy aimed at integrating the activities of government agencies, non-governmental organizations, communities and individuals in this area, through the building of a safety culture and the promotion of safe environments in all settings, e.g. workplaces, homes, public places, schools, etc.

115. In Central and Eastern European countries, after an initial period of low priority having been given to OSH issues, new legal frameworks and institutional structures have been set up in most countries. This has been most noticeable in the European Union candidate countries for which the process of accession involves the adoption of European Union directives on OSH. In this period of transition, the former labour systems are gradually being replaced by new legislation based on both ILO and European Union standards. Many countries are modernizing their labour inspection services, changing them into state systems that integrate health and safety responsibilities. The long tradition of trade union expertise in the area is being added to by autonomous employers' organizations in bipartite and tripartite decision-making mechanisms on OSH matters. The successful transfer of responsibility for OSH from the trade unions to the State is currently a key issue in most of these countries.

116. In the Latin American region, organized efforts in the area of safety and health are being made within the framework of regional agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Andean Community of Nations (CAN). In 1998, Brazil launched a national programme aimed at reducing the rate of fatal occupational accidents by 40 per cent by 2003 through a number of key actions such as upgrading the OSH capacities of its labour inspectorate, creating a National Tripartite Steering Committee on OSH, and establishing a formal partnership between the ministries of labour, health, social insurance and welfare, and environment to coordinate their efforts in implementing the national programme.

117. Many developing countries have also been focusing in recent years on upgrading their labour laws to conform to international labour standards, including in the area of OSH, and on strengthening labour inspection systems to include OSH capacities and national accident compensation and insurance schemes.¹³ Another area which has seen a significant level of activity in developing countries is the adoption and implementation of OSH management systems approaches. For example, Viet Nam is considering a proposed national action programme on OSH and health care for workers during the period 2000-10 developed with the assistance of the ILO.¹⁴

118. In the Philippines, the National Occupational Safety and Health Centre has developed strategic plans.¹⁵ The Government of Mongolia established a National Programme on

¹¹ National Occupational Health and Safety Commission: *National OHS Strategy 2002-2012* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2002), at <http://www.nohsc.gov.au/nationalstrategy/>

¹² R. Dyson: *New Zealand Injury Prevention Strategy* (Accident Compensation Corporation, New Zealand, 2002), at <http://www.nzips.govt.nz/strategy.htm>

¹³ S. Machida; P. Markkanen: *Occupational safety and health (OSH) in Asia and the Pacific – Recent developments and challenges for the new millennium*, Asian-Pacific Newsletter, Vol. 7, No. 1, Mar. 2000.

¹⁴ Investigation study on occupational safety and health (OSH) and proposal of recommendations for upgrading OSH practice in urban and industrial areas in Viet Nam, 2002, at http://www.oshvn.net/en/workshop10_2k/index.htm

¹⁵ The Strategic Plan of the Occupational Safety and Health Center, 1998, at <http://www.oshc.dole.gov.ph/straplan.htm>

the Improvement of Occupational Safety and Health Conditions in 1997.¹⁶ Thailand formulated a national OSH programme using an ILO advisory report developed in 1998.¹⁷ China is currently considering the establishment and implementation, with ILO assistance, of a national OSH programme (see Chapter V). With some ILO assistance, the SADC countries are taking common action to improve their national OSH systems.¹⁸

Workplace concerns

Workplace safety cultures

119. A workplace safety culture can be understood as comprising all the values, attitudes, rules, managerial systems and practices, participatory principles and working behaviour conducive to creating a safe and healthy working environment where people can produce with a high degree of quality and productivity. As seen from the experiences of industrialized countries, which took over a century to build a safety culture, the progressive integration of safety principles and reflexes into the workplace is a fundamental prerequisite for any improvement in the reduction of occupational accidents and diseases. In many of the rapidly industrializing countries, there is a very strong need to build a similar level of safety culture and awareness of the positive values of a safe and healthy working environment – a fundamental principle of decent work – at the enterprise and national levels in terms of social and economic benefits.

120. The implementation of good safety, health and environmental practices, i.e. the continued promotion of a workplace safety culture as an important part of the more general public safety culture, is essential in the fight to curb the spiralling cost of overall health care delivery, including the costs of occupational accidents and diseases and major industrial and environmental disasters, while increasing general productivity. Effective safety cultures can be built only through a continuous process of awareness raising and education at all levels, consultation and consensus building among the social partners, as well as the economic and financial institutions, and periodic review of progress and issues.

121. Through the transfer of new technologies and work organization practices, the globalization process is engendering significant changes in the current employment patterns and movement of workers. Subcontracting by large enterprises is fuelling the growth of small and medium-sized undertakings that more often than not do not have the necessary awareness, technical means or resources to implement health and environmental hazard control programmes, particularly when they operate in the informal economy.

122. The trend toward more flexible forms of work organization, such as a strong growth of temporary employment relationships, particularly in the construction industry and in health and social services, may have significant OSH consequences, particularly in terms of stress. Part-time work and non-standard working times are factors that add to risks due to lack of proper training, psychological pressures and comportmental effects engendered by insecure work. New work patterns, such as longer or compressed shifts, may result in new exposure patterns and possible adverse health effects. The tangible link between the physical location of the enterprise and the work to be done is weakening due to the rapid

¹⁶ Government of Mongolia, resolution No. 257 of Dec. 1997, at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/asiaosh/country/mongolia/natproim.htm>

¹⁷ *Programme of action for occupational safety and health in Thailand towards the 21st Century: An advisory report*, ILO East Asia Multidisciplinary Advisory Team (ILO/EASMAT), Bangkok, May 2000, at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/asiaosh/country/thailand/progact/index.htm>

¹⁸ ILO technical cooperation programme for SADC countries, at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/techcoop/danida/m01/dansadc.pdf>

spread and wide impact of information technologies. One effect is the blurring of the distinction between employed and self-employed persons and the possible blurring of the employer's responsibilities for OSH training and information as well as overall monitoring of working conditions.

New enterprise structures

123. SMEs are recognized as the engines of local economy and the major source of present and future employment in all countries. In response to the demands for flexibility made by globalization forces, many large companies have been fragmented into smaller units in search of flexibility. The outsourcing and subcontracting of the larger multinational enterprises have led to the establishment of high numbers of micro-enterprises, small and medium-sized enterprises and self-employed workplaces. The SMEs in industrialized countries are striving to attain more strength and opportunities for specialization and sustainability through networking either horizontally with each other or vertically with big and often multinational main contractors. Much of the experience in networking is positive, but there are also negative effects from this fragmentation process, such as the disappearance of a holistic view of production processes, construction sites and service systems.

124. It is estimated that the majority of the world's approximately 100 million enterprises are small ones. More than 1 billion workers, of the total 3 billion throughout the world, are self-employed in agriculture or work in small facilities. Over 98 per cent of the European Union's 15 million enterprises are SMEs employing some 60 per cent of the 88 million total workforce. If the 26 million self-employed are included, about 85 per cent of the European workforce is employed in small facilities.¹⁹

125. Occupational hazards and risks are more prevalent in SMEs than in large enterprises because they sometimes do not have adequate resources to deal with them and often operate outside national OSH systems. The situation is particularly poor in developing countries, where most enterprises are small and informal, particularly in agriculture. Small enterprises need new occupational safety and health service provision models based on external service provision units, as they are not able to sustain special OSH personnel. Such models are currently being trialled in several countries but no universal solutions have so far been found.²⁰

Preliminary conclusions

126. Other priorities for action identified in the proposed regional and national strategies were the need to: (i) strengthen hazard and risk monitoring and alert systems for early detection of emerging risks, encouraging close linkages with research and enhanced prevention of occupational diseases, with particular emphasis on asbestos, hearing loss and musculoskeletal and psychosocial problems; (ii) use financial incentives to integrate OSH requirements and systems at the enterprise level, particularly for SMEs; (iii) strengthen linkages between primary health care systems and occupational health, particularly in relation to SMEs, temporary work and the workforce in the informal economy; (iv) take account of demographic changes in relation to risks, accidents and diseases, as well as the influence of the feminization and ageing of the workforce, and in particular the mainstreaming of the gender dimension and protection of young workers; and (v) introduce

¹⁹ Work in the Global Village, an International Conference on Work Life in the 21st Century, Oct. 2001, Helsinki, Finland, at <http://www.occuphealth.fi>

²⁰ *ibid.*

OSH concepts, particularly hazard and risk concepts, into school curricula and educational systems in general, as a means of building strong and sustained safety cultures.

127. Overall, the strategies reflect the OSH issues that are of concern in most countries in terms of new hazards, regulatory mechanisms, legislative gaps, knowledge building and management techniques. The correlation between the concerns of member States and current ILO areas of action relevant to OSH are coherent to a large extent. In this context the ongoing ILO work to promote the establishment of national OSH programmes and develop related methodology such as national OSH profiles and indicators (see Chapter V) could help member States transform their strategies for OSH into reality.

Chapter IV

Impact, coherence and relevance

The impact of standards and other instruments

Measuring impact

128. The impact of ILO Conventions is frequently expressed by reference to the number of ratifications they have attracted. Although this is only an incomplete measure of impact, it is a convenient, well-known and easily “marketed” measure, which is influential and relevant to take into account. An evaluation of the impact of the OSH standards should therefore first be examined in relation to their ratifications.

129. It is, however, generally agreed that the ratification levels and the outcomes of supervisory procedures do not constitute a sufficient measure of impact of ILO standards. Non-ratified Conventions and Recommendations are used as models for national legislation, as a point of reference and as a gauge for establishing international consensus on relevant issues in the world of work to an extent that is difficult to map and capture.

130. The ILO experiences a reflection of this on an everyday basis in its interface with the general public through the media and various forms of communication channels, including the increasingly frequent consultation of the web site. The ILO also regularly responds to requests for information on its standards and related activities. The informalization of such requests, often by email, has rendered the time and efforts attributed to these services a largely invisible but significant undercurrent in the daily activities of the ILO. Web site consultation statistics exist, and more efforts could be made to analyse these in order better to map the areas of interest and the origin of the connection.

131. It is also well known that the real impact of ILO standards in the world of work is notoriously difficult to measure. The ILO is presently engaged in several parallel efforts to develop indicators that would be able to measure the real progress of ILO efforts in implementing the Decent Work Agenda. One of the major challenges is to develop tools to operate effectively the newly introduced results-based strategic budgeting system. However, qualitative, as opposed to quantitative, indicators are often difficult to come by, define and measure.

132. In the absence of any more sophisticated measure of impact in the survey conducted among ILO constituents for the preparation of this report, it included a simple device – member States were asked whether ILO instruments had been used as guidance or as models for national law and practice. Although care will have to be taken regarding the inference that can be drawn from the answers to such a question, it is nevertheless interesting to note the results of the survey in this respect.

Ratification and supervision

Ratification levels, intention to ratify and obstacles to ratification

133. Only Conventions can be ratified, but through article 19 of the ILO Constitution, the ILO disposes of a procedure which enables it to follow up the implementation of non-ratified Conventions and Recommendations. The ratification levels of individual OSH Conventions, the increases in numbers of ratifications over certain periods of time, in particular in comparison with, for example, ratifications of the fundamental Conventions on human rights at work, are all indications that point in the same direction (see Annex IV): neither in absolute terms, nor over time, nor in relative terms, are the ratification levels of the relevant OSH Conventions impressive. On the contrary, their ratification levels appear to be low, particularly against the background of the importance of the issues they address.

134. In absolute terms, the ratification levels of two instruments stand out: the Underground Work (Women) Convention, 1935 (No. 45), and the White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921 (No. 13). Neither of these two instruments is up to date. The recently adopted Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176), has received a number of ratifications over a short period of time. The central importance of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), among the OSH standards is not reflected in the ratification levels. Overall, the ratification levels of the OSH instruments are not above the average ratification levels of other instruments and are clearly below the average ratification levels of the Conventions on fundamental human rights at work. The Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), and the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129), are priority Conventions and the latter has indeed acquired a high level of ratifications (see figure 1 in the Introduction).

135. International labour law is a dynamic field but the national ratification processes are often lengthy. There is, therefore, often a substantial time lag between the adoption of a Convention, the decision at the national level to ratify an instrument and the point in time when these intentions are manifested in the deposition of an instrument of ratification. In order to be able to appreciate possible future developments in relation to the ratification of the relevant Conventions, the survey asked member States about their intentions in this respect.¹ The number of positive indications in the survey was significant. Forty-three member States indicated their intention to consider ratification of 18 of the relevant Conventions. Several member States indicated an interest for several instruments. Twenty separate ratification procedures had already been initiated. While it obviously may take time for these intentions to materialize, these declarations demonstrate a political will and represent at the very least a positive interest in the Conventions in question. As such they will, inter alia, serve the useful purpose of assisting the ILO and its offices in the field to prioritize any assistance member States may require in order to be able to fulfil the declared intentions. These intentions may also be a demonstration of the promotional impact generated by the survey itself and by the preparations for the 2003 general discussion.

136. In the survey, member States were also asked (Question 19) if there were any specific reasons why they had not ratified the up-to-date standards. Twenty-one respondents stipulated that there were no specific Articles that represented obstacles to ratification and a further six respondents stated that there were specific Articles that represented obstacles but did not specify which ones. Another 16 respondents referred to 58 different Articles in 12 up-to-date standards that represented obstacles for a number of reasons mostly related to differences between their national legislation and the provisions at issue. In addition,

¹ See Annex II for a summary of replies to the survey and the CD-ROM for further details.

respondents referred to the following obstacles: lack of infrastructure (17 respondents), detailed and technical nature of the standards (six respondents), lack of political will (five respondents), heavy reporting obligations (four respondents) incompatibility with national legislation (four respondents), federal national structure (three respondents). Among the instruments' different provisions, Articles in the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), were most often mentioned.

137. The survey also contained a question on the proposed measures to take to overcome these obstacles. Only a few respondents proposed – in general terms – a revision of the instruments at issue. One employers' organization advocated a review of the denunciation procedure of Conventions and that more use should be made of non-binding instruments. Several member States underscored the need for technical and financial assistance from the ILO in reform of legislation and capacity building. The main thrust of the proposals was, however, directed at required actions at the national level in the form of national legislative review and reform (with ILO assistance) and a need for national capacity building (e.g. training of personnel and recruitment of trained personnel for inspection services and competent authority).

Supervision

138. The essential feature of ILO Conventions is that the ILO supervisory bodies monitor their application. The purpose of the supervisory mechanisms is to ensure an effective application of ratified Conventions. The CEACR examines the regular reports under article 22 of the Constitution and communicates its findings on the substance of these reports to member States through “direct requests” and “observations”. Given the low levels of ratifications of the OSH instruments, the number of such direct requests and observations could be expected to be low. In addition, as several of the current instruments have recently been adopted and have a reporting cycle of five years, it will take at least a few reporting cycles to fully appreciate the application of a Convention in a member State. Besides, the majority of the comments of the CEACR under these Conventions reveal that detailed technical, legislative, institutional and practical measures requested by the instruments that depend heavily on technical, human and financial resources are lacking. The number of cases selected for consideration in the context of the Conference Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations is also correspondingly low. Two special (complementary) procedures enable representative employers' and workers' organizations (article 24) or governments (article 26) to allege non-compliance with individual Conventions. It should be noted that the regular and traditional supervisory mechanism is problem-oriented, in the sense that it seeks to identify specific problems in order to seek to redress the situation.

Best practices in national law and practice

139. A different approach to the application of ILO instruments is identifying and documenting examples of good or best practices in relation to their application. Such examples are intended to serve as a source of inspiration for other member States and possibly to assist countries in finding a proper way of implementing an ILO standard. This approach can be a powerful and convincing tool to initiate policy changes. In the effort to find such good practices for present purposes, the article 22 reports submitted in the context of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), have been examined in order to determine whether any cases of best practice could be identified. In the comments it makes on article 22 reports, the CEACR has developed a practice of referring to cases of progress in the implementation of ILO Conventions. It notes distinct positive legislative developments such as an adaptation of an instrument or a provision in national law and practice to

a provision in an ILO Convention “with satisfaction”. On this basis, the following three cases can be qualified as good practice examples in the context of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) (see box 3).

Box 3

Occupational safety and health in practice: Three national approaches

(based on reports submitted by governments pursuant to article 22 of the ILO Constitution)

Cyprus: Implementation of national occupational safety and health policy through a Declaration

- In Cyprus, the principles of a national policy on OSH are laid down in the “Declaration – National Policy for Occupational Safety and Health”, which is based on an agreement concluded between the social partners in May 1995 and implemented through the Safety and Health at Work Law No. 89(I) of 1996. This Declaration governs national activities in the field of OSH by defining the objectives and measures for the prevention of occupational accidents and the improvement of safety and health standards in all branches of economic activity. It further establishes the framework of obligations and rights for the main actors: the employers and the workers. Primary responsibility for implementation of the policy in the workplace lies with the employers. Obligations are also defined for manufacturers, designers of machinery and suppliers. The Labour Inspection Services have a series of enforcement tools at their disposal, including the issuing of Improvement and Prohibition Notices in cases of serious risks to workers' health. They also play a promotional role in the field of OSH through advice, proposals to improve the national policy and existing legislation, research, guidance to employers and encouragement of employer/worker cooperation at the workplace and through the development of databanks containing information on the prevention of occupational risks, and the organization, in cooperation with the social partners, of the yearly “Safety and Health Campaign”.

Netherlands: Rallying employers' support for yearly occupational safety and health action plans

- In 1991, the Integrated Policy Plan on Working Conditions was adopted based on the principle that the primary responsibility for OSH lies with the employers and the workers. The Working Conditions Act of 1990, which implements the policy, emphasizes the premise that safety and health is the joint responsibility of employers and workers. The Act includes standards on both the physical and physiological aspects of work, the aim being to ensure a fair standard of health, safety and well-being. The Act's approach is to give priority to objectives rather than to provide specific measures, allowing for a higher degree of flexibility with regard to differences between enterprises. The Labour Inspectorate undertakes enforcement of the requirements. In 1998, the Dutch Government and the social partners decided to go one step further and establish joint sector agreements, twenty of which have been signed so far.

Norway: Institution of internal control system

- The need to adapt legislation to rapid technological developments prompted the approach of Act No. 4 of 4 February 1977 respecting workers' protection and the working environment. The Act stipulates general obligations for those with chief responsibility in the area of OSH, i.e. employers and workers, as well as manufacturers, importers, sellers and leasers of equipment for occupational use and suppliers of substances, rather than attempting to regulate the multitude of hazards in detail. The underlying philosophy of the Act is that the primary responsibility lies with those who create the risks and those who work with them. Another implementation tool was introduced in 1992 by the Regulations on Internal Control of the Working Environment, supplemented by non-binding explanatory guidelines. The Regulations underline the special responsibility of management, but presuppose active participation from all persons involved and focus on systematic monitoring to ensure that health and safety control measures are performed in accordance with legal requirements.

Standards and other instruments used as a model or as guidance

Conventions and Recommendations

140. As already stated, the survey asked member States to indicate whether they had used, or intended to use, up-to-date Conventions they had not ratified and Recommendations as guidance or as models in shaping their national law and practice or in any other way (Question 17). The responses indicate that some 75 per cent of respondents (representing 45 per cent of ILO member States) have used the relevant OSH and labour inspection Conventions as guidance or as models in shaping their national legislation. In a number of cases, the respondents made specific reference to certain instruments. The Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), was the instrument that was most frequently referred to. It is noteworthy that, with one exception, the respondents did not refer to Recommendations in this context.

Codes of practice

141. Measuring the impact of codes of practice is particularly difficult as there are no feedback or follow-up mechanisms once they have been published. Traditional indicators used to measure the impact of codes of practice include, for example, the number of countries using them as a basis for national policy development, their use of codes of practice in technical cooperation activities and the number of requests received to translate them. As regards the latter indicator, the most recent code of practice on guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems already appears to have created a significant level of interest since it was adopted in May 2001, as it has been translated into 14 different languages and has been officially introduced in eight countries. The code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work is also being put into practical application in several countries, as it has also been translated into several different languages over an equally short period of time.

142. The difficulties in measuring the impact of codes of practice were one of the reasons for including a specific question in the survey on their impact. It is significant that 64 respondents indicated that codes of practice had been, or were to be, used as guidance. In half of the cases, member States made specific reference to one or more codes of practice that had been used as guidance. Although adopted only a few years ago, 13 member States specifically referred to the code of practice on guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems.

Current standards: A coherent global model?

143. The number of instruments to take into account in this area is large and their scope and content varies. They are the result of a long process during which the scope of relevant instruments has been gradually expanded in different ways. Resulting overlaps between the instruments are thus, to a certain extent, intended. This is particularly the case in the context of efforts to develop comprehensive standards in this area, in particular through the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155). The other OSH Conventions at issue are “self-contained” entities, in the sense that the legal obligations each of them entails are limited to each particular instrument. But overlaps and differences between them make them appear to lack a certain coherence or logic when viewed collectively.² Most of the relevant OSH Recommendations supplement the Conventions at issue, and the provisions they contain therefore create similar types of overlaps.

² See “Thematic index to the provisions in relevant instruments” on the CD-ROM.

Overlaps

144. Overlaps exist, for example, for hazardous substances, which may be covered by more than one Convention. Carcinogenic substances and agents are dealt with directly in the Occupational Cancer Convention, 1974 (No. 139). However, ionizing radiation, the subject of the Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 (No. 115), is also carcinogenic and thus comes within the scope of both Conventions. In so far as their use results in air pollution, carcinogens are covered by the Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977 (No. 148), and carcinogenic chemicals come under the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170). Benzene, which is the subject of the Benzene Convention, 1971 (No. 136), is not only a chemical within the meaning of Convention No. 170, it is also a carcinogen within the ambit of Convention No. 139. In so far as its use releases vapours into the air, it is also covered by Convention No. 148. Asbestos, the noxious effects of which may include cancer, is covered by Convention No. 139, as well as by the air pollution provisions of Convention No. 148. It was nevertheless considered necessary to adopt the Asbestos Convention, 1986 (No. 162), which contains more detailed and precise provisions than were possible in the Conventions of more general application. As to the subject of the White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921 (No. 13), the air-polluting effects of white lead are covered by Convention No. 148, and as a chemical it is also within the scope of Convention No. 170.

145. There are also overlaps between sectoral Conventions and Conventions regulating specific hazards. The subject of the Guarding of Machinery Convention, 1963 (No. 119), is also dealt with in the Safety and Health in Construction Convention, 1988 (No. 167), and the Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184). Certain of its effects would also come within the scope of the Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977 (No. 148). Hazardous substances and agents are addressed in the Hygiene (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1964 (No. 120) (which also deals with noise and vibration), Convention No. 167, the Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176), and Convention No. 184. Finally, Convention No. 184 contains provisions on the handling of loads, which is the subject of the Maximum Weight Convention, 1967 (No. 127).

Differences

146. Differences in the manner in which the subjects covered by the Conventions are handled result obviously from the differing nature of the subjects they cover. This is evident for Conventions dealing with a specific branch of economic activity. But a distinction is also found between Conventions that deal with a single specific hazard (white lead, ionizing radiation, machinery, maximum weight, benzene, asbestos), which can prescribe precise preventive and protective measures adapted to the hazard covered, and Conventions dealing with a category of hazards (carcinogenic substances and agents, air pollution, noise and vibrations, chemicals), which inevitably have to be more general in their terms and leave the detailed identification of the hazards to be covered, and the measures to be taken to deal with them, to national authorities.

147. There are also a series of specific differences between the individual standards. The Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 (No. 115), contains no provisions on personal protective equipment or clothing or on penalties for non-compliance. The Benzene Convention, 1971 (No. 136), and the Occupational Cancer Convention, 1974 (No. 139), do not deal with the responsibilities of importers, suppliers, etc. The Occupational Cancer Convention, 1974 (No. 139), contains no provisions on exposure limits, monitoring of the working environment (covered by the Recommendation), personal protective equipment,

labelling, warnings or penalties. The Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977 (No. 148), contains no provisions on monitoring of the working environment (dealt with in the Recommendation), labelling or warnings. The Asbestos Convention, 1986 (No. 162), does not cover the right of workers to remove themselves from a dangerous work situation (dealt with in the Recommendation). Finally, the maintenance and transfer of workers' health records are covered uniquely in the Recommendations and only Convention No. 162 and the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170), require that the records of the monitoring of the working environment and of workers' exposure to hazards shall be kept for a period prescribed by the competent authority. Neither Convention No. 170 nor the Chemicals Recommendation, 1990 (No. 177), contain any measures for the establishment of infrastructures such as inspection services, which are provided for in all other Conventions dealing with specific hazards, with the exception of the Maximum Weight Convention, 1967 (No. 127).

148. A major difference between later instruments and the Occupational Cancer Convention, 1974 (No. 139), is the lack of provisions concerning the responsibilities of employers and the duties of workers or their representatives. In addition, there are no provisions concerning classification and labelling, safe methods for the handling, collection, recycling, storage or disposal of hazardous substances (as in the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170)) or for the provision of personal protective equipment (found in instruments concerning chemicals, asbestos, air pollution, noise and vibration, and lead). Some provisions, such as those concerning consultation, cooperation and coordination between the relevant parties, as well as provisions on the recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases, are found only in the Recommendation.

Need for rationalization

149. Against this background, it seems appropriate to consider whether there is a need for rationalization of these standards. In the survey, five member States referred to the apparent lack of coherence and the need for a rationalization of these standards. Among these, one member State proposed the incorporation of key elements or principles into a single overarching Convention that sets appropriate minimum standards for OSH generally. This "head" Convention should specify broad principles focused on the appropriate goals and protection, and should be flexible enough to accommodate different national situations and levels of social and economic development, as well as future developments. Another member State emphasized the need to adapt and simplify (while maintaining equal protection) the existing body of standards. One member State proposed the development of a framework Convention, incorporating all the provisions of existing Conventions in force on OSH matters, which could be generally ratified and would encourage the definition and application of national policies on prevention of occupational risks.

Comprehensive standards

150. The first attempt at developing a comprehensive standard in the area of OSH was the adoption of the Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977 (No. 148). The Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment (1972) and several resolutions of the International Labour Conference marked a broadening of the scope of OSH to encompass the "working environment". The efforts made to give Convention No. 148 a general scope did not succeed and it eventually became an instrument limited to air, noise and vibration. The subsequent adoption of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), however, marked the decision to aim for a more systems-based approach that has continued to evolve since then, and which is clearly visible in current developments, both at national and international levels. Against this background, it

seems relevant to examine whether Convention No. 155, which sets out to be a comprehensive instrument in the area of OSH, is such an instrument and/or if it provides an operative framework for the other OSH standards.

Comprehensive status of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)

151. Convention No. 155 applies to all branches of economic activity and all workers in those branches and it requires member States to formulate, implement and periodically review a coherent national policy on occupational safety, occupational health and the working environment. The aim of the policy (Article 4) shall be to prevent accident and injury to health arising out of, linked with, or occurring in the course of work, by minimizing, as far as it is reasonably practicable the causes of hazards inherent in the working environment. The Convention provides for the development of national strategic programmes (Article 8), a recognition system for OSH situations and problems (Articles 7, 8, 11) and a system of inspection and enforcement of OSH provisions (Articles 8 and 9). It does not provide any further details regarding the provision of occupational health services, OSH training and education systems or a nationwide network of OSH services, which are regulated separately in the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161). Convention No. 155 also specifies, in general terms, the spheres of action that shall be taken into account in the policy, and prescribes rules on specific actions to be taken at the national and enterprise levels. In comparison with other up-to-date instruments adopted both before and after Convention No. 155, these rules are mostly general and reference is made in the Occupational Safety and Health Recommendation, 1981 (No. 164), to the more detailed provisions of other OSH instruments listed in the annex to the Recommendation.³ Most of the instruments contained in this list are under review in the present context as well as in relation to proposals submitted to the Governing Body for consideration in the context of the agenda of the Conference, including children and young persons,⁴ seafarers⁵ and dockworkers.⁶

152. However, it contains general provisions for the establishment of programmes for safety culture creation through education and training (Article 14) and concerning personal protective equipment (employers are to provide it “where necessary”), while other Conventions such as the Hygiene (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1964 (No. 120), and the Asbestos Convention, 1986 (No. 162), have more specific provisions. Convention No. 155 does not call for the setting up of a national tripartite coordinating body for OSH matters (Article 15) nor does it contain clear provisions on workers’ right to participation, or reference to workers’ injury insurance or social benefits systems or provisions concerning the question of classification and labelling (although this is referred to in the Occupational Safety and Health Recommendation, 1981 (No. 164)).

Instruments adopted subsequent to the adoption of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)

153. Since the adoption of Convention No. 155, seven new Conventions have been adopted. The Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161), regulates the question of occupational health services, which is only briefly referred to in Convention No. 155. With the exception of the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170), the remaining instru-

³ The Occupational Safety and Health Recommendation, 1981 (No. 164), provides in Paragraph 19(2) that its annex may be modified by the International Labour Conference, by a two-thirds majority, in connection with the future adoption or revision of any Convention or Recommendation in the field of safety and health and the working environment.

⁴ See Governing Body doc. GB.285/2, Part I, 2.

⁵ See Governing Body doc. GB.285/LILS/7.

⁶ See Governing Body doc. GB.285/2, Part II, 9.

ments address specific OSH issues but also contain several general provisions, which overlap with the general requirements in Convention No. 155.

154. Contrary thereto, the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170), is a targeted and specific instrument. It does not, for example, contain provisions prescribing the setting of specific exposure limits; instead it refers to the need to apply limits if they have been set by the competent authority. Convention No. 170 thus presupposes the existence of a system for assessing risks and setting limits where limits are required. It does not contain provisions on medical surveillance, which is regulated in the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161). Furthermore, the whole question of recording and notification is not addressed in Convention No. 170, neither does the Convention deal with the question of the establishment of joint safety and health committees. There is no Article for the provision of appropriate penalties or for the suspension, restriction or prohibition of work in case of violation of laws and regulations or imminent threat. In summary, Convention No. 170 sets out to provide a system for the sound management of chemicals, and it does focus on those issues. But other issues, which relate to the functioning of a national OSH system, are not addressed in it. Convention No. 170 is thus less “self-contained” than some of the other instruments but clearly more focused on the specific subject matter it sets out to regulate.

155. Although Convention No. 155 is the most comprehensive instrument among the OSH instruments at issue, it does not regulate, for example, the provision of health services. Furthermore, as the preceding analysis of instruments adopted after 1981 indicates, it does not seem to have been attributed the framework status it was intended to have. According to the responses in the survey, several member States indicated an interest in ratifying these instruments, while a comparable number of member States identified specific Articles in Convention No. 155 as an obstacle to ratification. The survey also gives an indication that the Convention is used in several countries as a model or a guide for national legislation.

Current standards: A relevant response to national concerns?

156. Through the survey, information was collected in three main areas. First, it invited member States to report on national law and practice, not only in relation to the relevant Conventions and Recommendations but also in relation to codes of practice. Second, it addressed the provisions in the OSH standards as a group and sought to establish correspondence between national law and practice and ILO standards, based around the 15 main themes that emerged from a detailed analysis of the substantive content of the relevant standards. Third, the survey invited the submission of information on current relevance and past and future impact of standards, codes of practice, and technical cooperation and information. Member States were invited to provide information on their views regarding future action in relation to standard setting.

157. As will be outlined subsequently, the information gathered through the survey provides useful insights into the view of the member States on the relevance of ILO standards and the objectives they seek to achieve. In addition, however, there are other parameters that should be taken into account in an examination of the relevance of the current standards. Against the background of the examination in Chapter II, it is proposed also to take into consideration the global, national and workplace level trends that have emerged from research and analysis of the current situation. Finally, the possible need for standard setting in this area will be considered in the light of previous Governing Body decisions to revise instruments in this area, the results of the survey on national law and practice and the replies by member States to the additional questions concerning such needs.

158. The information collected through the survey on national law and practice is summarized in Annex II. The high response rate (103 member States)⁷ is significant and is an element to take into account in the evaluation of the outcome of the survey. The most striking result of this survey is the number of positive responses to the questions of correspondence between the main trends and objectives in the current standards and national law and practice. As regards specific categories of workers, the information gathered seems to indicate that while national law and practice and ILO standards correspond regarding the issue of special legislation for young workers (90 per cent of the respondents), national law and practice in relation to other specific categories of workers differ in important respects from the provisions in the standards. This variety of rules is particularly visible in the context of national law and practice in relation to gender-specific provisions, which are based either on the protection of the reproductive health and family responsibilities of women or on prohibitions and limitations on the employment of women in hazardous work. The most frequently mentioned categories of workers excluded from protection are workers in the informal economy, household domestic workers and self-employed workers. This disparity, and correspondence in other respects, is shown in the figures used to present the quantifiable parts of the results. With one noticeable exception, there seems overall to be a high level of correlation between ILO standards and national law and practice in terms of mechanisms and measures. However, over half of the respondents state that there are no provisions for, or offer no information regarding, the provision of information by an exporting State to an importing State (the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170), Article 9, and the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174), Article 22).⁸

159. Other parameters to take into account include OSH and global, national and workplace trends. One issue, which follows from this analysis, relates to the importance the ILO attributes to OSH and how to articulate a link between OSH and decent work. As noted in Chapter I, the whole concept of decent work is firmly anchored in the concept of safe work, but this would perhaps merit being given clearer visibility.

160. Furthermore, recent developments at the global level place a significant emphasis on the role of the sound management of chemicals in relation to the environment. Among current ILO instruments, the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174), provides that each Member shall “formulate, implement and periodically review a coherent national policy concerning the protection of workers, the public and the environment against the risk of major accidents”, while the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170), provides that “each Member shall formulate, implement and periodically review a coherent policy on safety in the use of chemicals at work”. A reference is made to the environment, however, in the context of the disposal of hazardous waste. The Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), makes a general reference to the narrower concept of the working environment.

The need for revision and possible lacunae

161. Following the examination of the need for revision of ILO standards, the Governing Body has decided that, in total, ten OSH instruments are to be revised. These instruments all relate to protection against specific risks which, according to the traditional classification of OSH standards, concern three different kinds of hazards: (a) toxic substances and agents; (b) machines; and (c) maximum weight. The first group comprises six instruments. One of these instruments, the Anthrax Prevention Recommendation, 1919 (No. 3), regu-

⁷ See Introduction, footnote 12.

⁸ It should be noted that a similar provision is included in the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, 1998.

lates a biological, and not a chemical, hazard. It is proposed to examine that standard, in the context of the examination of the proposal for standards in the area of biological hazards. The other two groups comprise one Convention and one Recommendation each. In the contexts of previous Governing Body examinations, some alternative options to identify for standard setting were examined. It is proposed to take a fresh look at these proposals, taking into account the larger context in which the present discussion is being held.

162. Furthermore, in the survey, the respondents proposed in all 17 subjects for new standard setting, an additional 17 subjects for standard setting or for codes of practice and another two subjects for codes of practice only.⁹ Eight respondents proposed new standards or a code of practice in the area of ergonomics and concerning musculoskeletal disorders and another eight respondents proposed new standards or a code of practice concerning mental health and stress. A few respondents proposed the following subject matters for standard setting or for codes of practice: OSH in the informal economy, SMEs and OSH, OSH management systems in the enterprise, agriculture, OSH in restaurants and in the food-processing industry, OSH and ageing workers, prevention of biological hazards and HIV/AIDS and work.

163. The most frequently mentioned topics specifically for codes of practice were violence at work (four respondents) and visual display units (VDUs) (four respondents). In the context of possible ILO action in this area, issues raised previously (see paragraph 32) about the need to improve the structure and aim of codes of practice and the process of developing them could perhaps be taken into account.

164. Thus, in the present context three different elements have been taken into account. Firstly, the outcome of the Working Party on Policy regarding the Revision of Standards and the Governing Body decisions based on their work; secondly, relevant proposals for standard setting submitted previously to the Governing Body for consideration in the context of the agenda of the Conference; and thirdly, the results of the survey, and in particular the proposals for standard setting made in this context. In order to be able to develop coherent proposals and pursuant to the method of the integrated approach, these different elements will be taken into account and examined by subject matter in the following pages.

Chemicals

165. In the area of chemicals, the revision of five instruments is at issue. They include the Lead Poisoning (Women and Children) Recommendation, 1919 (No. 4), the White Phosphorus Recommendation, 1919 (No. 6), the White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921 (No. 13), the Benzene Convention, 1971 (No. 136), and the Benzene Recommendation, 1971 (No. 144). The concerns raised as a reason for revising these instruments included: (1) the practice of regulating, in detail, an individual hazardous substance in a single instrument is considered outdated;¹⁰ (2) Recommendation No. 4, Convention No. 13, Convention No. 136 and Recommendation No. 144 all contain specific provisions prohibiting the employment of women in certain areas and for certain processes;¹¹ (3) it is inappropriate to include specific limits for exposure in standards (such as in Convention No. 136) and provisions

⁹ See Annex II, table 2.

¹⁰ In spite of that fact, it was applied again in the case of the Asbestos Convention, 1986 (No. 162).

¹¹ This is also the case in relation to the Maximum Weight Convention, 1967 (No. 127), and Recommendation (No. 128). In addition to these provisions, gender-specific provisions are also to be found in five other up-to-date instruments (Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184), Article 18; Safety and Health in Agriculture Recommendation, 2001 (No. 192), Paragraph 4(3); Radiation Protection Recommendation, 1960 (No. 114), Paragraph 16; Chemicals Recommendation, 1990 (No. 177), Paragraph 25(4); and Safety and Health in Mines Recommendation, 1995 (No. 183), Paragraph 21); as well as in one standard with interim status (Underground Work (Women) Convention, 1935 (No. 45)).

should be drafted in order to ensure that ILO instruments are kept up to date with scientific and technological progress.

166. The individual regulation of these five substances is considered outmoded and appears inefficient. This argues against a revision of the individual instruments. Following written consultations with member States on this issue, it has been proposed to the Governing Body to envisage a joint regulation of these individual substances. This was also proposed by one member State in the survey. If these instruments were to be linked to an instrument of a more general nature, the main option would seem to be to regulate these five specifically dangerous chemicals in a Protocol to the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170). To the extent that fixed limits should also be regulated, a system for easy updating of such limits should be included. The possible removal of the gender-specific provisions, which are considered discriminatory by a large number of ILO member States, could be considered in the context of such a revision. The survey has provided additional and detailed information on the state of national law and practice on this issue, which seems to indicate that national law and practice is not entirely consistent in this matter. Given the cross-cutting nature of gender issues, it might be relevant and appropriate to complement any action in relation to the gender-specific provisions in these standards by taking up a proposal in the survey to consider gender-related issues in OSH in the framework of a code of practice. As regards the need for regular updating of standards in this area, it should be recalled that the current standards contain several different approaches to how such updating can be made. A reference to a code of practice or a similar type of instrument could be retained as a possible mechanism.

167. Another issue that could be taken into consideration in this context is that of the question of transfer of information from an exporting State to an importing State, which the survey seemed to reveal. Article 19 of the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170), provides that “When in an exporting member State all or some uses of hazardous chemicals are prohibited for reasons of safety and health at work, this fact and the reasons for it shall be communicated by the exporting member State to any importing country” and Article 22 of the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174), provides that “when, in an exporting member State, the use of hazardous substances, technologies or processes is prohibited as a potential source of a major accident, the information on this prohibition and the reasons for it shall be made available by the exporting member State to any importing country”.

168. What appears to be the problem is the difficulty that a member State has to comply with the obligation to transmit information that it does not directly possess. An analysis should be carried out in order to examine, in the light of national practice, how such an obligation could be fulfilled. A partial revision of the regulation of this particular issue might remove what appears to be a significant obstacle to ratification of these two instruments.

Mechanical hazards

169. The Guarding of Machinery Convention, 1963 (No. 119), and the Guarding of Machinery Recommendation, 1963 (No. 118), are among the instruments that are to be revised. The concerns raised include that Convention No. 119 (and Recommendation No. 118) were considered too complex to be effectively implemented¹² and in need of updating

¹² ILO: *Safety in the working environment: General Survey of the reports on the Guarding of Machinery Convention, 1963 (No. 119), and the Guarding of Machinery Recommendation, 1963 (No. 118), and on the Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977 (No. 148), and the Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Recommendation, 1977 (No. 156)*, Report III (Part 4B), International Labour Conference, 73rd Session, Geneva, 1987. At the time the General Survey was conducted, Convention No. 119 had attracted 35 ratifications. It has since been ratified by a further 14 member States.

in order to take into account new concepts in the field of occupational safety and health and technical developments regarding machinery.¹³ There was also a need to introduce provisions addressing the question of safety in the international transfer of machinery and technology, as well as the problems developing countries have with the importation of second-hand machinery.

170. In the context of the previous consultations on this matter, two main options could be envisaged. One would be to carry out a partial revision of the Guarding of Machinery Convention, 1963 (No. 119), and adjust the provisions that have been indicated as presenting problems. The other would be to consider a more comprehensive revision of this instrument in order to simplify it, while maintaining the same level of protection, to have it reflect recent international developments and technical progress in this area, and to include relevant provisions to accompany the transfer of technology with appropriate safety and health-related information and training.

Biological hazards

171. In the survey, two respondents expressed a need to develop a standard on the prevention of biological hazards. The need to regulate the question of HIV/AIDS and work was also brought up. The only existing standard on biological agents, and one of the oldest ILO instruments, is the Anthrax Prevention Recommendation, 1919 (No. 3), which is to be revised. In the context of the examination of this instrument by the Working Party on Policy regarding the Revision of Standards, the main concerns raised were that this standard focused on a single hazardous substance and that it contained only one provision, which invites member States to make arrangements for the disinfection of wool infected with anthrax spores. It was also noted that, as the illness in question is still included in the list of occupational diseases, preventive measures continue to be necessary. While some of the OSH standards, including the one most recently adopted on the agricultural sector, do mention biological hazards,¹⁴ no instrument provides directly for measures in relation to biological risks.

172. Prevention of risks related to biological hazards is a subject matter that has been the object of preliminary consideration in the Governing Body following the adoption by the International Labour Conference in 1993 of the resolution concerning exposure to and safety in the use of biological agents at work, requesting the Director-General to take steps to address the question of exposure to and safety in the use of biological agents at work and to consider the need for new international instruments in order to minimize the risks to workers, the public and the environment. Since the resolution, the Governing Body has considered three proposals for standard setting on this subject in the context of the agenda of the International Labour Conference.¹⁵ In these proposals it was noted that the increasing use of biological agents places an estimated 16 million workers worldwide at risk (particularly in the agriculture and pharmaceutical industries). It could be considered whether it would be appropriate to develop a comprehensive assessment of issues and national law and practice with a view to deciding on eventual standard-setting action in this area, including the revision of the Anthrax Prevention Recommendation, 1919 (No. 3).

¹³ Directive 98/37/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 June 1998 on the approximation of the laws of the member States relating to machinery.

¹⁴ Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), Articles 5(a), 11(f), 12(b) and 16(2); Occupational Health Services Recommendation, 1985 (No. 171), Paragraphs 24(a) and 28; Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184), Article 14; and Safety and Health in Agriculture Recommendation, 2001 (No. 192), Paragraph 8.

¹⁵ Governing Body docs. GB.270/2, paras. 243-254; GB.273/2, paras. 167-176; and GB.276/2, paras. 151-161.

Ergonomics/maximum weight

173. Ergonomics and hazards causing musculoskeletal disorders were the other subject matters proposed for labour standards or a code of practice by several member States in the survey. Ergonomics has so far received little attention in ILO instruments. It is mentioned in the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161), where advice on ergonomics and collaboration in providing information, training and education in the field of ergonomics are listed among the functions of occupational health services. Further references are found in the Safety and Health in Construction Convention, 1988 (No. 167), which requires ergonomic principles to be taken into account in the design and construction of vehicles, earth-moving or materials-handling equipment, plant, machinery and equipment including hand tools and protective equipment and clothing. At issue is also the revision of the Maximum Weight Convention, 1967 (No. 127). The proposal to consider a code of practice on ergonomics and hazards causing musculoskeletal disorders could perhaps usefully be examined together with the proposal to develop a “comprehensive set of rules”, including rules on maximum weight. An emerging issue in this context is the specific ergonomic implications of the ongoing ageing of the workforce.

174. The Maximum Weight Convention, 1967 (No. 127), and the Maximum Weight Recommendation, 1967 (No. 128), are the last two instruments that were considered to be in need of revision by the Working Party on Policy regarding the Revision of Standards in this area. The main concerns raised are that Convention No. 127 and Recommendation No. 128 have a basic protective, instead of preventive, approach to the issues they regulate, that Recommendation No. 128 contains a specific maximum permissible weight limit and that gender-specific rules should not be included. It should be noted though that the limit is regulated not in the Convention itself but in the Recommendation. Two options could be considered in this context. A first option would be to address the question of handling and transport of loads as a whole with a preventive approach. New instruments would be needed for this purpose. In such a context, it would be possible to remove the gender-specific provision Convention No. 127 contains. Careful consideration should, however, be given to the necessity of maintaining the level of protection offered by this instrument. Manual lifting may be more prevalent in developing than in developed countries and thus the existing standards could remain unchanged for the benefit of those countries which still need a protective approach. A second option would be to consider developing a more comprehensive set of rules in this area. The necessary guidance needed to implement these measures into a comprehensive preventive approach is too detailed to be incorporated in an international standard. Taking into account the proposals in the survey for developing a code of practice in this area, such action could be considered by the ILO.

Psychosocial hazards

175. Mental health and stress was proposed by eight member States¹⁶ as a possible subject for standard setting or for the development of a code of practice. It was suggested that “the impact of psychological factors on worker safety and health, physical effort, stress at work, job insecurity, relations with superiors or colleagues, living conditions”, be considered in a Recommendation. A code of practice on this subject was also proposed. Consideration of this subject matter in the context of standards was raised for the first time by the Ventejol Working Party in 1987.¹⁷ It was again raised in the context of the portfolio (November 1999),¹⁸ which contained a proposal for standard setting in relation to risks associated with

¹⁶ Australia, Cyprus, Finland, Gabon, Lebanon, Malaysia, Norway and Ukraine.

¹⁷ Final report of the Working Party on International Labour Standards, in *Official Bulletin*, Vol. LXX, 1987, Series A, App. II.

¹⁸ Governing Body doc. GB.276/2, paras. 332-333.

psychosomatic disorders and mental stress. The undertaking of a comprehensive analysis of law and practice, and particularly of best practices, in this area would be a prerequisite for assessing possible future ILO standard-setting action.

Preliminary conclusions

176. What emerges from the preceding examination of the impact of current OSH standards is that the levels of ratification of OSH Conventions are, on average, low. The results of the survey indicate that there are prospects that ratification levels – in particular for the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) – may increase in the future. Furthermore, the information collected through the survey also permits the conclusion that the actual impact of the OSH standards, and of Convention No. 155 in particular, appears to be greater than the ratification levels indicate. Several member States indicate that not only Conventions but also codes of practice are used as guidance or as models in shaping national law and practice. Nevertheless, overall, the impact of current up-to-date standards does not seem to be level with the importance given to OSH in a human, national and global perspective.

177. With respect to the foregoing analysis concerning coherence of the present standards, it seems to follow that current standards in this area represent a complex system of principles, rules and detailed prescriptive solutions to address OSH concerns. They lack certain coherence in the sense that they reflect and illustrate a historical evolution of how to address existing and emerging hazards in the workplace. Although the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), is an up-to-date instrument and contains several of the basic elements for setting out a framework for a national occupational safety and health system, it does not seem to have acquired the central function it was intended to fulfil. Against the background of proposals made in the survey, consideration might be given to the development of a framework instrument for the sound management of occupational safety and health – regulating the basic building blocks required for the management and operation of a national OSH system.

178. As regards the relevance of the current standards, it follows from the result of the survey, in particular from the analysis of relevant national law and practice that, overall, and subject to certain exceptions, the ILO constituents that have responded to the survey share the objectives expressed in the current OSH standards. This gives a clear indication that current ILO standards are, overall, a relevant response to national concerns. On the basis of the work of the Working Party on Policy regarding the Revision of Standards, the proposals for standard setting previously considered by the Governing Body and the survey responses, it has been possible to propose directions for the revisions already decided as well as for filling the lacunae that have emerged in the present analysis. Against this background, a future plan of action could include consideration of standard-setting action in the following subject areas.

179. With regard to chemicals, a possible need for standard setting on three separate issues has been identified and is proposed for consideration in the context of a Protocol to the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170) (and possibly also to the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174)). First, the means and measures through which an exporting State carries out its responsibility of transferring information to an importing State appear as a difficulty in relation to both of these Conventions. Second, current developments seem to call for an explicit reference to a national policy on safety in the use of chemicals at work to include concern for the protection of workers, the public and the environment. Third, the possibility of revising the five instruments – the Lead

Poisoning (Women and Children) Recommendation, 1919 (No. 4), the White Phosphorus Recommendation, 1919 (No. 6), the White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921 (No. 13), the Benzene Convention, 1971 (No. 136), and the Benzene Recommendation, 1971 (No. 144) – by developing a Protocol to Convention No. 170, containing provisions for the safe management of certain particularly hazardous substances, seems to merit further consideration.

180. It is proposed to consider two alternative avenues for the revision of the Guarding of Machinery Convention, 1963 (No. 119), and Recommendation No. 118: either to carry out a partial revision and revise certain provisions which represent technical difficulties in their application and possibly to adopt a Protocol to the Convention concerning the safety of machinery that is being transferred internationally, or to revise the instruments as a whole taking into account the latest technology and developments in legislation as well as the question of OSH in the context of machinery that is being transferred internationally.

181. It is proposed to consider revising the Maximum Weight Convention, 1967 (No. 127), and Recommendation No. 128, with three objectives in mind: to consider removing the gender-specific provisions they contain; to place an increased emphasis on a preventive approach to the regulation of these issues; and to consider developing a code of practice on ergonomics to provide practical advice and models for implementing a preventive approach.

182. It is proposed further to consider and to examine the possible need for new standards regulating the question of prevention of biological hazards, including a revision of the Anthrax Prevention Recommendation, 1919 (No. 3), and consideration of the possible need to regulate any OSH-related aspects of HIV/AIDS in that context.

183. As regards codes of practice, it is proposed to consider the development of new codes of practice in the areas of ergonomics and psychosocial factors and the possibility of updating certain existing codes. Furthermore, it is also proposed to consider developing a methodology for the regular updating, development and promotion of codes of practice.

Chapter V

Transforming rules into reality

Promotion of standards

184. The promotion of OSH standards is a fundamental mission and an indispensable complement to the process of developing them. But it is also an elusive activity as it permeates all the regular activities of the ILO. As a result it tends to become fragmented and dispersed which is noticeable at several levels related to ILO standards and related activities.

185. The ILO Constitution takes the importance of promotion into account by providing in its article 19 that all ILO member States have two specific obligations regarding all adopted standards, Conventions and Recommendations alike. First, all adopted standards are to be brought to the attention of relevant national competent authority(ies) for “enactment of legislation or other action”¹ and member States have undertaken to report to the ILO on the actions taken in this respect.² Second, member States are to report “at appropriate intervals as requested by the Governing Body” on non-ratified Conventions and on Recommendations,³ in particular on the position of their law and practice in regard to the matters dealt with in these instruments, and should show the extent to which effect has been given, or is proposed to be given, to them.⁴ It should be emphasized that these are reporting obligations and not obligations to comply with the substantive provisions in the standards at issue.

186. The levels of ratification of the OSH Conventions obviously depend on a series of different factors such as national legal, political and economic constraints, which are beyond the control of the ILO. However, these constraints may be compounded by a lack of awareness, perceived need for and interest in attributing priority to OSH concerns. Furthermore, for both individual member States and the ILO, the possibility of taking focused action aimed at increasing awareness and clarifying the potential benefits of investing in workplace safety appears to be hampered by the number of instruments that have to be promoted in order to have comprehensive coverage of the subject. A major issue to consider is how to make it easier for member States, as well as the ILO, to carry out efficient promotion of the relevant instruments in this area in order to improve workplace safety.

187. The mastering of promotional tools and processes is an important aspect of promotion, and is essential in achieving the desired level of impact. The Office has at its disposal a fairly large range of promotional tools. In particular, it should be noted that the possibilities of developing formal tools on the basis of article 19, paragraphs 5(e), 6(d) and 7(b) of

¹ Constitution of the ILO, article 19, para. 5(b).

² Reports on submissions are contained in the yearly *Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations* submitted to the Conference.

³ Article 19, paras. 5(e), 6(d) and 7(b) of the Constitution.

⁴ See Introduction, footnote 6.

the Constitution are extensive. The use of these provisions allows information to be collected on the state of national law and practice in member States with respect to non-ratified Conventions and Recommendations. Collecting information in this way would in fact, if performed regularly, contribute to the identification of possible obstacles to the implementation of Conventions and Recommendations and, when required, the need for technical assistance in order to overcome these obstacles. General Surveys and the present integrated approach are also based on article 19. Furthermore, it should be recalled that the provisions of certain old Recommendations actually invite member States to report on the follow-up given to these Recommendations. The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up is another illustration of the use of article 19. Besides, resolutions adopted by the Conference can also result in major undertakings with high programmatic and promotional value such as the 1989 resolution that started the work on the elaboration of a Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS), now a United Nations universal standard which has a clear linkage to the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170). On a daily basis, promotion is carried out through periodic awareness-raising events such as participation in or organization of conferences, dissemination of key publications, routine technical advisory services and technical cooperation or timely press releases.

188. One major need in terms of promotion is to achieve a certain level of sustainability of general awareness for a given issue or subject. This is most important in the case of OSH which often becomes news only when a major disaster occurs or exposure to a given hazard is linked to serious adverse health effects. One very effective way to maintain awareness on a long-term basis is the formal holding of periodic events such as major conferences, campaigns or the declaration of “World Days” such as those declared by the United Nations for women, by the WHO for tobacco and more recently the World AIDS Day or UNEP’s Environment Day. The declaration of a “World Day for Safety and Health at Work” by the ILO would certainly create sustained awareness of the importance of OSH in preventing occupational accidents and diseases. In this context the promotion of ILO OSH standards by both employers and workers would greatly enhance progress in the implementation of OSH standards at the national level.

189. Programmatic tools such as the provision of technical advisory services and technical cooperation form the baseline tools with which promotional efforts are carried out on a routine basis to make the ILO standards known and used. The promotional value of these tools is directly proportional to the available resources and can only be assessed on a long-term basis. A good and efficient inquiry response service and a web site which contains reliable and practical information will in themselves promote the value of the Organization to society in general. In the same manner the inclusion of strong promotional components in technical cooperation action in terms of resources and methodology will have a powerful influence on the impact of the ratification and application of standards. In this context, the integration of OSH requirements or considerations in Decent Work Country Programmes could result in significant promotion of OSH standards.

190. Finally, one less recognized but very effective means of promotion is the participation of the ILO in major undertakings by other international organizations in areas relating to OSH such as the ongoing actions on the environmentally sound management of chemicals carried out by the ILO’s partner organizations in the IOMC or the IPCS. ILO input in these actions ensures not only that the relevant ILO standards are taken into account but also that their outputs pass the test of tripartite scrutiny as was the case for the GHS standard (see Annex VII). Because OSH involves all the scientific and social disciplines in one way or another, the ILO has always been engaged in a large number of partnerships and

collaborative efforts aimed at developing needed tools and methodology, promoting OSH requirements and assisting constituents in building related adequate implementation and management capacities. International cooperation is a tool used in connection with all the other ILO means of action, including standard setting, technical cooperation and knowledge management.

191. The successful promotion of ILO standards will be achieved only if adequate specific resources are allocated for their promotion and identified as such in programme and budget exercises, particularly in the current context of the development and use of fundamental indicators of impact and application of strategic budgeting approaches.

Survey proposals for promotion

192. The responses to the question concerning the need to place OSH higher on national agendas, and whether this could be achieved by developing promotional means designed to raise awareness and foster a higher commitment at the national and enterprise levels to the application of the requirements in ILO OSH instruments included numerous and varied suggestions of action that could be taken not only by the ILO, but also at national and enterprise levels in order to raise awareness of OSH. Suggested ILO-specific action included the promotion and implementation of the ILO OSH standards, and technical assistance for the review of current standards before implementing a promotional plan or adopting new standards. The proposals also included the development of a framework Convention, the production of flexible codes of practice and the classification of all ILO OSH standards as priority standards. There were also suggestions that ILO technical cooperation could be used as a promotional tool as well as a means of assessing the needs of each member State in respect of how to raise awareness of OSH, assist in capacity building, provide information, education, technical seminars and workshops on OSH for employers, workers and inspection personnel, etc., and promote tripartite participation in OSH at the national level. The ILO should also highlight the benefits and importance of implementing OSH standards and raise the awareness of governments concerning the priority that should be given to the allocation of resources for OSH. Other responses highlighted the need to develop awareness-raising materials based on ILO documents and guidelines and, in this respect, the increased requests for translation of ILO standards, guidelines and publications.

Technical cooperation relating to occupational safety and health

Core activities and partnerships

193. Assistance to constituents in the area of OSH has always been a constant element in the technical cooperation programme of the ILO. In 1975, at its 60th Session, the International Labour Conference reaffirmed with the resolution concerning future action of the International Labour Organization in the field of working conditions and environment that the “improvement of working conditions and environment and the well-being of workers remains the first and permanent mission of the ILO” and decided to launch PIACT. At the time, the main focus of PIACT was already the provision of assistance in implementing ILO standards, building infrastructures, awareness raising, training and dissemination of information. These areas of action remain the focus of current technical cooperation activities. Although the regular budget for technical cooperation (RBTC) funding of PIACT was never formally discontinued, the programme effectively died through slow attrition of resources. OSH technical cooperation funding was overtaken to a large extent by the establishment of the long-term technical cooperation OSH programmes in the late 1980s and in 1995 funded by Finland⁵ and later Denmark.

194. The ILO/FINNIDA programme was specifically aimed at developing national OSH information capacities and regional networking in Asia and Africa. The ILO/DANIDA partnership, based on a new strategy of active multilateralism,⁶ led to the establishment of mutually recognized joint principles and priorities for several DANIDA-funded interregional programmes. These were based on the design and implementation of tripartite national OSH policies and measures, human resources development and capacity building, managing safety in particularly hazardous occupations and the elimination of silicosis. In addition, two subregional programmes were developed, one on OSH for the SADC countries and the other on Human Resources for OSH in the francophone African countries.

195. Technical cooperation activities related to OSH were mainly directed at supporting national efforts to improve safety and health in a variety of areas. For example, the upgrading of inspection and advisory services and the establishment of national tripartite councils and advisory bodies; the enactment of laws and regulations and the establishment of appropriate enforcement machinery; the provision of improved information services; support for employers and workers in implementing programmes; the development of guidelines for the establishment and functioning of enterprise-level safety and health committees; and the provision of appropriate training for managerial and supervisory personnel to strengthen their capability to assume responsibility for the safety and health of workers.

196. Numerous technical cooperation projects and activities fully focused or containing elements on OSH are regularly developed and executed by other departments in the Office. The Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) regularly provides technical cooperation assistance on OSH to national workers' organizations. The development of OSH management systems and increased understanding of linkages between good safety levels and high quality and productivity have in recent years led employers' organizations to participate in the OSH projects implemented by the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP). The ILO IFP/SKILLS and IFP/SEED programmes are both operating in a context that requires attention to working conditions, and include OSH modules in their training activities.

197. In many instances, ILO technical cooperation activities have been carried out successfully through technical expert input in collaborative and complementary projects funded by the ILO, the European Union (Phare and Tacis Programmes), bilateral projects, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, etc. Inter-agency cooperation has been particularly effective with the European Union in Eastern Europe (accession countries) and Central Asia, and with the development banks in Asia. Comprehensive information on overall ILO technical cooperation activities, including those related to OSH, is readily available in the progress reports presented annually to the Committee on Technical Cooperation of the Governing Body⁷ and the reports on general discussions at the International Labour Conference.

Assessment of approaches

198. Chronologically, three types of project design templates for technical cooperation delivery are employed, regardless of overall trends and strategies implemented over the years. These are country projects, multi-country or subregional projects, and more recently framework programmes. Sector-based projects have been included in all three as sub-

⁵ ILO InFocus Programme on Safety and Health at Work and the Environment, technical cooperation activities, at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/techcoop/index.htm>

⁶ *Plan of Action for Active Multilateralism*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DANIDA, 2000, Copenhagen, Denmark, at <http://www.um.dk/publikationer/fremmedsprog/English/Plan/ActiveMultilateralism/>

⁷ Documents presented to the Governing Body of the ILO, at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/reim/gb/>

elements or stand-alone mini-activities. These approaches reflect the interests of donors at specific periods and those of the Office in terms of management and technical input.

199. Country projects provide sufficient time to integrate the characteristics of the country in the development of its OSH system, but require relatively high budgets. Although the impact in terms of ratifications has not been high, a number of elements of the national OSH system were significantly strengthened, particularly the development of legislation, the reinforcing of inspectorates, and the provision of OSH information and training.

200. Multicountry or subregional projects combine countries with the same legal and administrative traditions and good cooperation, allowing them to divide work and support each other. However, this approach is effective only when countries are more or less of the same size, have similar traditions and social structures, and preferably a common language. Projects covering the SADC countries are an example of successful subregional programmes.

201. Framework programmes, which are now becoming the norm, require individual countries to prepare initiatives, set internal priorities, and develop project documents with the assistance of ILO regional offices. Other advantages are similar to those of subregional projects. They work well when the MDT system includes an OSH expert to backstop the programme, but they require a sustained level of resources and place higher demands on national activity management skills. The ILO/DANIDA framework programmes were a good example of this approach, which was used as a model by other donor countries.

Promotion and response to needs

202. Traditionally, OSH technical cooperation action undertaken by SafeWork has focused on very practical and technical issues. However, in accordance with the various ILO strategies to promote ILO outputs, and in response to the demands of constituents, this action has always used, and logically so, the ILO Conventions, codes of practice, guidelines, datasheets, databases and other relevant materials as a basis for providing the requested assistance. Since the OSH programme is also responsible for the development of these standards and materials, technical cooperation has always been perceived as the normal means of moving to the next step, namely the implementation of ILO standards, not only through assistance in upgrading national laws and regulations, but also through their promotion in the various sectors and enterprises, through the hands-on training of inspectors and by providing information to safety committees, safety officers and workers' representatives.

203. Therefore, the objective of the ratification of Conventions and the implementation of ILO standards, although not always explicitly expressed in project objectives or mentioned in evaluation reports, has always been an implicit goal of most technical cooperation action in the area of OSH. However, the present use of ratifications as an indicator of impact for ILO technical cooperation activities does not take into account the long-term and sustained step-by-step approach needed to bring the regulatory system of a target country to a level where ratification of a given ILO OSH standard is possible. One can only imagine the time and resources needed to upgrade all the national OSH laws and regulations of a country to put it in a position to ratify at least all the up-to-date OSH standards. The example given below illustrates the usefulness of technical cooperation in bringing about the ratification of a number of OSH standards.

204. The experience gained from the country projects executed in the period 1970-80 indicated that the most relevant needs of the constituents were information, capacity building and policy development. For the constituents, relevant information meant ILO standards

and codes of practice for the drafting of legislation, guidelines and datasheets for finding practical solutions to implement standards, manuals and training material for education and training, best practices and in-depth technical information for the safety professionals for the improvement of working conditions. The demands being continuous and broad, the most cost-effective solution was found to be assistance and training to set up national information and training facilities. Capacity-building assistance to enable national experts to use ILO standards as models and apply information and experience was equally relevant. As a result of this analysis, the ILO has based its technical cooperation activities on the three universal elements of labour protection programmes: policy, information and capacity building, essential in any functional national OSH system. In the last two years two more elements have been added to the three element matrix, namely the OSH management approach and the evaluation of the economic costs of poor working conditions. The survey responses to the question related to the usefulness of ILO technical cooperation by target area in the last ten years confirms the importance of the three elements (see Annex II, table 4).

Possible areas for further improvement

Survey responses

205. Survey responses by member States to the question on how the ILO could improve its activities concerning technical cooperation in the area of OSH covered a wide range of subjects which, after close analysis, revealed a very coherent and relevant set of suggestions for achieving an improved technical cooperation implementation framework. Most of the suggestions made below are in line with current ILO efforts to improve and streamline technical cooperation delivery structures, methodology and activities, but also show that past ILO technical cooperation action already regularly addressed those same issues.

206. In terms of general capacity building, respondents suggested that technical cooperation should be delivered through national or regional programmes, which would require member States to establish follow-up frameworks for projects undertaken. Projects should be designed in such a way that they could be easily replicated or used as models in countries other than the original target countries. A significant number of replies from workers' organizations called for the strengthening of national employers' and workers' participation and increased consultation with their organizations. The strengthening of communication between the ILO and national competent authorities, as well as between the ILO and national OSH experts, was considered as an important area for improvement.

207. Concerning the activities that should be the focus of ILO technical cooperation, those related to the strengthening and development of national regulatory systems were considered as important. Suggestions included the provision of assistance to develop national policies and legislation, carry out comparative analyses between national regulatory systems and ILO standards, and establish a formal procedure for the interpretation of the provisions in Conventions in order to have a clear understanding of the obligations they imply for member States.

208. Finally, knowledge management and communication was the object of a majority of the suggestions, including the provision of assistance to establish CIS national centres and other OSH information networks, to develop or provide technical and practical OSH information for specific sectors, to develop tools, such as legislative database systems to facilitate the process of ratification of ILO standards, to translate publications and standards into national languages and provide financial resources for their publication and dissemination, and to undertake research into specific aspects of OSH.

Current developments in methodology

209. The availability of coherent systems to collect and analyse country and regional data systematically, in this case on OSH issues and priorities, in order to develop a realistic picture of the current situation and progress of a given country in a given domain is critical to achieving effective technical cooperation and assistance. A well-designed centralized knowledge base containing this type of data would provide a common mechanism for the systematic exchange of information between field and headquarters' experts. It would also provide the data analysis tools necessary to assist in planning, designing and following project progress, as well as the capacity to construct general time-based views and projections.

210. Effective implementation of OSH requirements at the national and enterprise levels can be achieved successfully only through the full involvement of the social partners in the sustained process of continual action, review and improvement, all principles which are at the heart of a management systems approach. The long-term objective of delivering OSH capacity-building assistance to the tripartite constituents through the establishment and implementation of national OSH programmes or national SafeWork programmes is an appropriate response to this need and to the requirements of the ILO strategic programming approach to technical cooperation. Appropriate methodology for the establishment of national OSH programmes is currently being developed and tested by SafeWork.

211. The effective implementation of a national OSH system requires both the progressive construction and strengthening of the building blocks needed to run the system and the parallel development of a strong workplace safety culture. To achieve this goal, it is imperative that the capacity-building assistance provided by the ILO includes the development and provision of methodologies to be used by the constituents to build, strengthen and improve their OSH system themselves on a permanent basis, it being understood that ILO assistance would only be needed to help start the process and ensure its sustainability with more limited support. This approach would ensure an acceptable level of coherence in the process of technical cooperation delivery and a coherent and effective use of scarce resources. Technical cooperation action within the framework of national OSH programmes would also provide a common tool for both headquarters' and field experts to use for effective coordination of the planning, design and delivery of specific projects according to the overall objectives of the national programme.

212. The preparation of a national OSH profile is an essential initial step in the process of building a good national OSH programme. The profile is an inventory of all the tools and resources available in a country to implement and manage OSH and is designed to provide the data necessary for setting national priorities for action aimed at the progressive and continual improvement of workplace safety and health. Once the profile is completed it can be used not only as a basis for identifying priorities for action but also as a tool for measuring progress over time through its periodic updating. It could also become a key management tool for the continual improvement of national OSH systems. Concerning information on national law and practice, the possibility of collecting such information in relation to non-ratified Conventions and Recommendations under article 19 of the Constitution on a more regular basis could be considered in this context. This could on the one hand contribute to an identification of obstacles to the implementation of ILO Conventions that need to be overcome, and on the other to ensuring that the promotion of ILO OSH standards and related instruments such as codes of practice and technical guidelines becomes a major element in the implementation of national OSH programmes.

213. A number of countries have already started to prepare national OSH profiles and use them for the development of national OSH strategies. The efforts made in 1999 by the European Union in this area have resulted in the production of country profiles for all its Member States and more recently for the accession countries. National OSH profiles have been prepared or are being prepared in Malaysia, Pakistan and Thailand. A small ILO pilot project to evaluate the different aspects of developing national OSH profiles based on the outline developed by the Office is currently under way in Azerbaijan, China, Costa Rica, Mexico and Uzbekistan. It is hoped that after proper analysis and additional consultations, the results will lead to further improvements and the eventual publication of an ILO methodology for the preparation of national OSH profiles, including the development of a set of practical OSH indicators recipient countries would need to measure their progress. This work on methodology development should involve all countries interested in implementing a national OSH programme and could be the object of international collaboration.

Resources

214. Although over the years regular budget funding for OSH technical cooperation has maintained a baseline level of resources for pilot projects and micro activities, such as the provision of training fellowships, any significant level of technical cooperation programming has always been heavily dependant on the availability of donor resources. The focusing of a large part of extra-budgetary resources on the priority instruments, coupled with a significant reduction in both regular and extra-budgetary funding has brought the level of available resources for OSH to its lowest in the past two decades, thus making it very difficult to set up any coherent and sustained technical cooperation action to meet the needs of constituents for assistance. The ongoing Office action aimed at increasing the capacities of the field structure in terms of both human and financial resources should result in the enhanced effectiveness of the consultation processes with constituents, and of technical cooperation project development and delivery. Effective development and use of the national OSH programme approach will require a significant and stable level of technical cooperation funding.

Knowledge management and information exchange

215. The effectiveness and success of any process leading to prioritization, decision-making and action to solve or deal with any issue, whether political, social, technical or even personal, will always depend essentially on the capacity to access valid data related to the object of the decision or the problem at hand, to process this data, interpret correctly the results and finally feed them into a decision-making or priority-setting mechanism. In essence, any decision or action is only as good as the data it is based on.

216. In the field of OSH, adequate capacities to develop, process and disseminate knowledge – be it international labour standards, national legislation, technical standards, methodologies, statistics, best practices, educational and training tools, research or hazard and risk assessment data, in whatever medium, language and format needed – are a prerequisite for identifying key priorities, developing coherent and relevant OSH strategies and achieving measurable impact in terms of reducing occupational accidents and diseases. One has only to list the disciplines involved in OSH to measure the importance of mastering knowledge management tools. Like any field based on a multitude of disciplines, effective “data mining, processing and refining” is a fundamental need.

Barriers and improvements

217. Technical and scientific information is a commodity bound by the same economic rules as other commodities and thus often out of reach for many institutions in developing countries. Subscriptions to major knowledge bases providing the latest medical or toxicological data, or copies of technical standards, require a solid financial capacity, which is not the case for most national specialized bodies in developing countries. Although countries without widespread telecommunication networks could access information published in electronic media, such as the CD-ROM, subscription to these services is still a costly alternative. SMEs have the same access cost problems.

218. The lack of adequate training materials and scientific and technical information in local languages is still an important barrier to the proper establishment of new technologies and an understanding of their risks. The Internet is having a somewhat beneficial effect on facilitating the search for information in a specific language. It is a fact that the ILO, along with many other IGOs with activities related to OSH, produces and makes available on the Internet a large number of useful technical documents and databases in many languages. Although the ILO already provides its constituents with significant technical assistance in translating important legislative and technical documents, the needs exceed by far these efforts.

219. Another important area where there are serious disparities between countries is the capacity to collect and analyse vital statistics pertaining to OSH, more particularly occupational accident and disease statistics. Despite continuing efforts at all levels, and particularly the significant advances made during the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference on the recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases,⁸ and the ILO list of occupational diseases, national efforts in this area are far from being sufficient. Although national and global surveillance and alert systems and networks concerning public health threats of a pandemic nature, as well as for environmental threats, exist there is nothing comparable for occupational hazards and risks.

220. In countries where there are reasonable telecommunication structures and access to the Internet, SMEs, national competent authorities and most of all educational institutions have greater access to both general and specialized OSH information. By facilitating and speeding up communication between employers' and workers' organizations and their affiliates, both at the national and international levels, ITC has greatly facilitated and improved the information of employers and workers on many aspects of the world of work, including OSH. The web sites of the IOE and those of the ICFTU and the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM)⁹ provide access to very valuable information on OSH issues. Many national OSH institutions have established global Internet-based information networks, most of them accessible through the ILO SafeWork web site. These sites provide access to both legislative and technical information as well as to scientific databases on many aspects of OSH. Another important aspect of the information revolution is its positive impact on the language barrier. Internet-use statistics for the month of September 2002¹⁰ indicate that out of the online population of 619 million, 36.5 per cent were connected in English, 35.5 per cent used other European languages, and 28.3 per cent used Asian languages.

⁸ ILO: Report of the Committee on Occupational Accidents and Diseases, *Provisional Record* No. 24, International Labour Conference, 90th Session, Geneva, 2002.

⁹ See <http://www.ioe-emp.org>, <http://www.icftu.org> and <http://www.icem.org>, respectively.

¹⁰ See <http://www.glbstats.com>

Survey responses

221. The responses to the survey included a number of suggestions as to how the ILO could improve its activities concerning the collection, processing, maintenance and dissemination of OSH-related information and public access to it. In the area of infrastructure and systems, suggestions included the need to assist countries in building or improving access to modern telecommunication infrastructures and systems, particularly the Internet; to establish more focal points for the ILO; and to assist countries in building and improving their national knowledge management and dissemination systems.

222. In the area of access and dissemination, suggestions included the need to ensure that countries without the Internet are provided with OSH information on alternative supports and media such as paper and CD-ROM publications, to assist countries in translating key OSH information into national languages, to consider lowering the cost of ILO publications and to assist member States in accessing OSH publications. In the area of networking, the need was expressed to improve links with the national competent authorities (concerning the provision of OSH information) and to increase the level of cooperation between ILO regional offices and regional organizations dealing with OSH.

223. A majority of the suggestions reflect the impact of the information revolution as described above. They confirm also the importance developing countries are giving to ITC as a tool for linking them to global knowledge networks, which are thus supporting the rapid development of national capacities in many areas, including OSH.

Current ILO action

224. Within the ILO the need to adapt to this information revolution was understood very early and the process of integrating information technology into the various office work processes is now an established and permanent mechanism. The past five years have seen a very marked trend in the Office as a whole towards the transfer of the many knowledge bases of the ILO to the Organization's web site both on the Intranet for staff use and to the public web site where now all the ILO standards and many databases and documents are available in English, French and Spanish. The fact that important ILO information is now accessible free of charge and in several languages responds to a large extent to the points raised by constituents in the survey responses concerning free access to information. In the area of OSH, the ILO tool for the development, processing and dissemination of information is the CIS.

The International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centre

225. The CIS was created in 1959 as an OSH information clearing house for 11 national and three international bodies¹¹ and has now grown to a global network of 129 CIS national centres covering all continents and engaged fully in OSH information and technical assistance exchange. In its 45 years of existence, the CIS has been a pioneer in the use of the latest information technologies. Besides using the occupational safety and health, safety standards, chemical and physical hazards (CISDOC) database as the foundation of a periodic bibliographic bulletin, the CIS has produced many OSH publications and established an extensive OSH library (see Annex VI). All the original documents abstracted in the CISDOC database are archived on shelves or scanned and stored on microfilm and more recently on CD-ROM, depending on their size. The resulting "virtual ILO OSH library" is accessible to CIS centres.

¹¹ Libraries of OSH institutions in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The international participants were the ILO, the ISSA, and the European Coal and Steel Community.

226. More recently, the CIS has reorganized the ILO SafeWork web site into a very effective tool to access the available ILO OSH information. Together with key regional and national centres, it is leading the development of an Internet-based “Global OSH Information Network”¹² to provide access to the most reliable OSH information available on the Web. In the area of international cooperation, the CIS participates in the production of the IPCS International Chemical Safety Cards (ICSC). The latest edition of the ILO *Encyclopaedia of occupational health and safety* was produced by the CIS and was for the first time made available in both paper and CD-ROM form. Finally, the CIS provides the Office staff, the ILO constituents and the public in general with a very fundamental service – very time-consuming but also invisible in terms of programming and budgeting – namely the response to hundreds of queries per year on all aspects of OSH.

227. The CIS is well integrated in the overall ILO knowledge management strategy and is an essential element in the functioning of SafeWork. In terms of international impact, the CISDOC database is sold worldwide by two commercial operators and referenced in other major scientific databases. The CIS knowledge bases are often the only reliable sources of OSH information accessible in many developing countries and many national organizations of employers and workers rely on them. Since the placing of ILO OSH information on the Internet, the very high rate of use indicated by access statistics gives a more visible measure of its impact in terms of service to constituents. At the end of 2001,¹³ the CIS web page was consulted about 300,000 times a month, and its web traffic has grown at the rate of about 12 per cent a month since then. cursory analysis of the origin of queries shows that a majority come from developing countries and countries in transition.

228. All the OSH information outputs of the ILO, particularly the products developed by the CIS, the publications of SafeWork, those of other ILO departments dealing with specific or sectoral aspects of OSH, as well as the outputs developed through international cooperation, are used in a very significant way as input or the basis for providing technical or capacity-building assistance to ILO constituents. Technical cooperation projects carried out by the CIS have provided a significant number of CIS national centres with the means and training to gain access to the Internet.

Training in occupational safety and health

229. The International Training Centre of the ILO, situated in Turin, Italy, is the training arm of the ILO.¹⁴ Established in 1964 by the ILO and the Italian Government and originally conceived as a technical and vocational training institution, it has matured into an institute for postgraduate and high-level in-service training. Today, its alumni network of over 80,000 men and women is present in 172 countries. Among the many training areas it covers, the Turin Centre regularly offers two-to-three-week training sessions on a number of OSH subjects. Current course subjects include the comparative analysis of national systems of occupational safety and health, occupational safety and health management systems and occupational safety and health inspection systems. There is a strong linkage between the Centre’s training activities and technical cooperation programmes, which often provide funds to cover the costs of training. The ILO SafeWork programme regularly provides technical assistance and staff to support the OSH courses. Technical cooperation projects are also used to provide direct assistance to constituents on a number of OSH-

¹² CIS national centres’ global OSH information network, at <http://www.ciscentres.org>

¹³ ILO: *Second Supplementary Report: Activities of the International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centre (CIS) in 2000-01*, Report of the Director-General, Governing Body, 283rd Session, Geneva, March 2002 (GB.283/16/2).

¹⁴ See <http://www.itcilo.it/English/bureau/turin/sp/index.htm>

related subjects. In addition to the Turin Centre, the MDT experts are active in developing or participating in many regional or national training activities.

Research

230. The research efforts of the ILO in the area of OSH are mainly carried out on an ad hoc basis through the commissioning of publications on general or particular subjects. Some of the analytical reports that serve as a basis for developing ILO OSH standards can also be considered as research work. They can be separate from or part of the ILO Occupational Safety and Health Series publications. In a specific case, namely chemicals, scientific assessment of chemical hazards and risks is carried out as a collaborative effort with other organizations such as the WHO and UNEP. In the course of preparing the present report, a number of subjects for which research and analytical work would be useful as a basis for future action in the area of OSH have been identified, such as the economic aspects of OSH, including the cost of occupational accidents and diseases, and also of major industrial accidents, as well as the levels of national investments in OSH in relation to costs. Another subject is the relation between the world of work and the environment.

Preliminary conclusions

231. The crucial importance of the promotion of standards should be underscored, and the ILO does dispose of a number of different tools in this area. These include not only technical cooperation and the dissemination of information, but also a number of other different tools including resolutions by the International Labour Conference. In particular, the possibilities of developing formal tools on the basis of article 19 of the Constitution are extensive. The use of this provision allows for the collection of information on the state of national law and practice in member States with respect to non-ratified Conventions and Recommendations. A more regular use of such a provision could in fact contribute to the improved identification of the obstacles to the implementation of Conventions and Recommendations and, when required, the need for technical assistance in order to overcome these obstacles.

232. Technical cooperation activities in the area of OSH have adhered to the general guidelines and procedures set by the Office and have delivered assistance through the three traditional approaches. The various donors' and ILO assessments made over the years indicate a slow but steady progress in streamlining technical cooperation action to serve as a more effective vehicle for the transmission of ILO values, expertise and capacity-building assistance to constituents. The survey responses reflect, in general, a significant degree of satisfaction with ILO technical cooperation action. It is important to note that it is the first time that member States have been requested to provide information relative to the impact of ILO technical cooperation action in the last ten years. In the development of an action plan the following elements could be taken into account: (1) the further development of coherent technical cooperation data management and analytical tools as a means to improve planning and coordination of overall actions; (2) the further development and application of methodology to assist countries in establishing and implementing national OSH programmes based on a coherent analysis of data provided by national OSH profiles with the possible more regular use of the article 19 mechanism; (3) consideration of the policy aspects of integrating the allocation of resources in the process of development of OSH standards for their promotion and application.

233. Overall, the ongoing ILO action toward improving the development, processing and dissemination of knowledge, particularly in the area of OSH, is not only significant but addresses most of the suggestions made by constituents in their responses to the survey. Within the Office

the production of databases on legislative information is the only area where there is a slight overlap. Work is under way to streamline the two processes to ensure better coverage of national legislative information. One area where future action could be considered is the development of “how to” methodology, guidelines and training materials on the various aspects of knowledge development, management and dissemination which could be of great value in helping constituents to build their technical capacities in the area of OSH information management. The capacity to further develop and increase outputs and technical assistance related to OSH information to constituents is seriously hampered by resource restrictions, both human and financial. In order to maximize its effectiveness as a reliable entry point in the OSH literature, the CIS is seeking to achieve a product mix that will better reflect both Office priorities and customer needs. Training needs coverage in the area of OSH is very much dependant on available technical cooperation funding and as such should be systematically provided for in technical cooperation programmes. Improved coordination with the Turin Centre in the area of resource mobilization should be considered. Consideration could also be given to the development of a long-term research strategy, including methodology and criteria for the selection of research subjects in the context of standards-related activities in the area of OSH with the aim of addressing the numerous areas for possible research identified in this report.

Conclusions

234. The purpose of the present discussion is to examine the impact, coherence and relevance of ILO standards and related activities in the area of occupational safety and health and to seek directions for increasing their impact. The emphasis on impact represents an effort to respond to the directions set in the Decent Work Agenda whereby the ILO needs to focus its attention on high-impact standards. Currently the ILO does not carry out an evaluation of impact of its OSH standards-related activities on a regular basis. A major part of the preparation for this report included requesting member States, through a survey, to provide additional information, not only on national law and practice but also on the impact and relevance of ILO standards and standards-related activities. The 103 responses¹ submitted by member States showed, in a large number of cases, a broad process of consultation with tripartite constituents. The responses were detailed and informative, and provide valuable information for possible directions for future ILO action in this area.

235. Concern for the safety, health and welfare of workers is a central part of the ILO's mission. International labour standards are the "backbone" of the ILO and, as they are developed in a tripartite context, they constitute the ILO's comparative advantage in international forums. The focus of the present discussion is thus on ILO standards and related means of action. Strictly speaking "standards-related activities" is a euphemism for all ILO activities, in the sense that the standards set the objectives to attain and that the purpose of all ILO OSH activities is the achievement of these objectives. One of the causes for the present inquiry is, however, that the proliferation of the range of ILO activities, including the introduction of technical cooperation, has been such that the link between standards and the activities in which the ILO is engaged is not always obvious. In addition to examining the relevant standards in this area, the focus has also been on other forms of instrument, such as codes of practice or guidelines, the promotion of standards, ILO activities related to technical cooperation and knowledge management, as well as the ILO's role in international and interagency cooperation.

236. A large number of the areas of action presented under the major ILO objectives include an OSH-related component (e.g. child labour, employment and the informal economy, poverty alleviation and SMEs, gender mainstreaming, older workers, labour statistics, labour inspection, sectoral activities related to the agriculture, mining, construction and chemical, maritime and transport sectors). These cross-cutting themes and areas of action, which are also the focus of the ILO's Employers' and Workers' Activities programmes, are considered to be the ones where OSH is, and must be, a major element of the actions directed at the sustained establishment of decent working conditions and environment and the building of strong safety cultures, and which therefore have to be taken into account in future ILO plans of action. Over the years, international cooperation has proven to be a very effective way of ensuring that ILO values and views are taken into account in

¹ See Introduction, footnote 12.

the activities undertaken by other international bodies and used as a basis for the development of technical standards and methodologies pertaining to OSH and the introduction of employers' and workers' views in a number of international forums. Greater visibility, and thus international and internal recognition of the collective results of international collaboration, could possibly be achieved through regular reporting to one of the committees of the Governing Body, which could also provide a basis for developing more effective OSH strategies. As a result, there is a strong need to maintain overall coherence of action in this area to ensure that the ILO's "occupational safety and health message" is consistent. In this context, effective approaches for the mainstreaming of OSH in relevant areas of action may need to be considered.

Global, national and workplace occupational safety and health concerns

237. The global, national and workplace OSH concerns that the ILO has to respond to are daunting. The magnitude of the global impact of occupational accidents and diseases, as well as major industrial disasters, in terms of human suffering, degradation of the environment and related economic costs, calls for the urgent need to raise occupational safety and health in national and enterprise priorities and to engage all social partners in globally integrated and harmonized action to achieve sound management of OSH through the appropriate establishment of networking and consultative mechanisms and alliances. Achieving and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace and environment in the light of a constantly changing world of work is a challenging task that calls on a multiplicity of skills and disciplines to anticipate, identify and control the numerous hazards and risks. As a result, this entails the application of holistic approaches involving the strong collaboration of competent authorities, employers and workers. Occupational safety and health is an intrinsic part of social relations and, as such, is affected by the same forces of change that prevail in national and global contexts. Increasing concerns for environmental issues seem to call for a better recognition of the relationship between the world of work and the environment. The effects of demographic factors and dynamics, employment shifts and work organization changes are examples of some issues that are contributing towards generating new patterns of exposure and increased risks of accidents and disease. Yet, in many cases also, risks have been reduced. The information revolution is creating opportunities for improving access to OSH information but there is also a need for skills in knowledge management and exchange systems as well as low-cost access to telecommunication systems and networks.

238. The strategic approaches to possible ways to improve working conditions in SMEs, informal economy undertakings and for temporary workers include strengthening the capacities of enforcement and inspection systems and providing technical advice and assistance in the area of OSH, particularly for small enterprises that do not have technical capacities in this area. Financial incentives, coupled with hands-on practical training material to integrate OSH requirements and systems at the enterprise level and specifically designed for SMEs, are recognized as important tools for improvement. Initiatives to strengthen linkages between primary health-care systems and occupational health are still considered as important strategic approaches. The introduction of hazard and risk concepts in school curricula and educational systems in general (prevention through education) is proposed as a means to build strong and sustained safety cultures on a continuous basis.

239. Recent regional and national strategies developed to address current concerns have focused on improving the different parts of their national OSH systems through a number of actions aimed at the different parts making up these systems. Emphasis is placed on increased and more effective communication and consultation between competent authorities, employers and workers, and the establishment of periodic review and benchmarking

systems for proper monitoring of progress towards the reduction of accidents and diseases. Although more pronounced and articulated in developed countries, this tendency is also visible in developing countries. There is a need to establish an adequate balance between formal regulatory systems and voluntary initiatives to create levels of flexibility to respond rapidly and adapt to change and address site-specific requirements. In this context, the visibility of voluntary initiatives has increased, but there seems to be a need to evaluate further the effectiveness of their complementary functions in the context of regulatory action. The economic impact of OSH at different levels has to be evaluated further and analysed in order to develop tools and incentives for a better integration of OSH requirements into the economic processes of business and to establish an equitable distribution of this impact between macro- and micro-levels of national economies.

240. In the domain of general regulatory action, strategies focus also on the promotion of systems approaches for the management of OSH at the enterprise level as an effective means to improve the application of regulatory requirements through better adaptability, to extend them to cover new risks and to rationalize the implementation of reporting requirements. The prevention of risks related to biological hazards and the improved prevention of social risks (e.g. stress, harassment, violence, drugs, alcohol, etc.) are identified by some as an emerging need and a subject for further research. Other areas include measures to enhance the prevention of occupational diseases with particular focus on asbestos, hearing loss and musculoskeletal problems. Strategies need to take account of the increased vulnerability of certain groups that is caused by demographic change, such as women, older and migrant workers, and in particular the mainstreaming of the gender dimension and protection of young workers.

241. In the world of work, the integration of OSH management systems approaches at all levels is increasingly perceived as an effective way of building strong and sustained enterprise safety cultures. Employers should make arrangements for workers to participate, where practicable, in the integration of such approaches in the enterprise. There is an increase in the creation of SMEs. This, coupled with the emergence of new forms of work, may pose challenges to the traditional responses to occupational safety and health. National competent authorities and employers' and workers' organizations should cooperate in their efforts to create new means and channels for OSH-related assistance and information to small enterprises, preferably in the form of training and improving skills.

Impact, coherence and relevance

242. What emerges from the examination of the impact of the current OSH standards is that the levels of ratification of OSH Conventions are on average low. The results of the survey indicate that there are prospects that the ratification levels – in particular for the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) – may increase in the future. Furthermore, the information collected through the survey also permits the conclusion that the actual impact of the OSH standards, and of Convention No. 155 in particular, appears to be greater than that the ratification levels indicate. Several member States indicate that not only Conventions, but also codes of practice, are used as guidance or as models in the shaping of national law and practice. Nevertheless, overall, the impact of current up-to-date standards does not seem to be at a level which reflects the importance of OSH from a human, national and global perspective.

243. With respect to the foregoing analysis concerning the coherence of the present standards, it seems to follow that current standards in this area represent a complex system of principles, rules and detailed prescriptive solutions to address OSH concerns. They lack

certain coherence in the sense that they reflect and illustrate a historical evolution of how to address existing and emerging hazards in the workplace. Although Convention No. 155 is an up-to-date instrument and contains several of the basic elements for setting out a framework for a national occupational safety and health system, it does not seem to have acquired the central function it was intended to fulfil. Against the background of proposals made in the survey, and with a view to improving the coherence of standards, consideration might be given to the development of a framework instrument for the sound management of occupational safety and health – to regulate the basic building blocks required for the management and operation of a national OSH system.

244. As regards the relevance of the current standards, it follows from the result of the survey, in particular the analysis of the relevant national law and practice, that overall, and subject to certain exceptions, the ILO constituents that have responded to the survey share the objectives expressed in the current OSH standards. This gives a clear indication that current ILO standards are, generally speaking, a relevant response to national concerns. On the basis of the work of the Working Party on Policy regarding the Revision of Standards, the proposals for standard setting previously considered by the Governing Body and the survey responses, possible directions for addressing proposed revisions of standards and lacunae that have emerged in the present analysis have been identified. Against this background it is proposed to take into consideration the directions suggested in Chapter IV of this report.

245. The overriding theme that emerges from this report and the survey is, however, the crucial importance of promoting ILO standards and other instruments such as codes of practice and guidelines, and that these promotional activities appear to have become fragmented and dispersed. Increasing the impact of ILO activities in this area will depend on efficient, targeted and focused action. The ILO disposes of a number of promotional tools, including technical cooperation and the dissemination of information, and it also has the possibility of developing formal tools on the basis of article 19 of the Constitution. The use of this provision allows for the collection of information on the state of national law and practice in member States with respect to non-ratified Conventions and Recommendations. A more regular use of such a provision could, in fact, contribute to improved identification of the obstacles to implementation of Conventions and Recommendations and, when required, the need for technical assistance in order to overcome these obstacles.

246. In the area of technical cooperation, slow but steady progress has been made in streamlining technical cooperation action to serve as a more effective vehicle for the transmission of ILO values, expertise and capacity-building assistance to constituents. The key role it plays in promoting and implementing ILO standards was confirmed by the majority of technical cooperation recipients in the survey. Enhanced focus on identifying country needs and matching them with priorities for developing efficient OSH systems needs to be considered. An increased focus on the development of country profiles, including a systematic collection of national needs and constraints in the light of ILO standards, is suggested for further consideration.

247. Both the review of ILO action in this area and the survey responses indicate that ILO information tools are fulfilling the needs of constituents. They also confirm the fundamental importance of the ability to access reliable information and master knowledge management tools for the proper collection and analysis of available data as a basis for any effective action, whether international, national or within the enterprise. In this context, the ILO's capacities and effectiveness in this area condition to a great extent the overall potential impact of all its means of action. Further improvements are still needed, particularly the development of related methodologies, increased OSH training capacity at the Interna-

tional Training Centre of the ILO, Turin, in the field and among constituents, and a more coherent strategy concerning research on OSH subjects.

248. These considerations, as well as the preliminary conclusions in this report, complement each other and are intended to contribute both to the present discussion and to the development of a plan of action for increasing the impact of future ILO standards-related activities in the area of OSH.

Selected points for discussion for a plan of action

249. As a background for the development of a plan of action for ILO standards-related activities in the area of OSH, and in the light of the considerations and proposals in the present report, the Conference may wish to discuss the following points:

- (a) In developing a plan of action for future ILO standards-related activities in the area of OSH, what are the major trends, developments and other elements that should be taken into account and the main objectives to be achieved?
- (b) Should such a plan of action for OSH include the development of standards and other instruments aimed at raising OSH in national priorities and programmes and responding to national concerns in specific OSH-related areas?
- (c) Would the development of methodology and criteria for the elaboration, updating and promotion of codes of practice and guidelines improve their impact and usefulness to the constituents of the ILO?
- (d) What special promotional activities and tools should the ILO develop as effective means for ensuring continuous awareness of the importance of occupational safety and health?
- (e) With the goal of helping constituents to improve their capacities to access and use globally available OSH information, should greater emphasis be placed on strengthening and developing national OSH information centres, ILO knowledge management and dissemination capacities and related methodologies?
- (f) How could the means and methodologies to assist member States in the context of the establishment and progressive implementation of national OSH programmes be further improved and promoted?
- (g) Would the regular review of international collaboration activities in the area of OSH improve overall ILO action in this area?
- (h) Would increased focus on the development of training methods and research in selected areas of OSH improve the ILO's effectiveness in responding to the needs of its constituents?

ANNEXES

Annex I

Relevant ILO instruments – Ratifications and status

The following tables include a chronological list of Conventions, Recommendations and codes of practice, as well as the status of each Convention and Recommendation listed as decided by the Governing Body on the basis of the recommendations of the Working Party on Policy regarding the Revision of Standards of the Committee on Legal Issues and International Labour Standards (LILS/WP/PRS).

All up-to-date instruments are marked in bold; those that need to be revised are italicized. Instruments that have been classified as “other” appear in both bold and italics.

Conventions

Instrument	Ratifications (as at 01.01.03)	Status
<i>White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921 (No. 13)</i>	62	To be revised
<i>Underground Work (Women) Convention, 1935 (No. 45)</i>	84	Interim status
Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81)	128	Priority Convention; up-to-date instrument
Protocol of 1995 to the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (P. 81)	10	Related to a priority Convention; up-to-date instrument
Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 (No. 115)	47	Up-to-date instrument
<i>Guarding of Machinery Convention, 1963 (No. 119)</i>	49	To be revised, along with Recommendation No. 118
Hygiene (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1964 (No. 120)	49	Up-to-date instrument
<i>Maximum Weight Convention, 1967 (No. 127)</i>	25	To be revised, along with Recommendation No. 128
Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129)	40	Priority Convention; up-to-date instrument
<i>Benzene Convention, 1971 (No. 136)</i>	36	To be revised
Occupational Cancer Convention, 1974 (No. 139)	35	Up-to-date instrument
Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977 (No. 148)	41	Up-to-date instrument
Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)	38	Up-to-date instrument
Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161)	21	Adopted after 1985; up-to-date instrument
Asbestos Convention, 1986 (No. 162)	26	Adopted after 1985; up-to-date instrument
Safety and Health in Construction Convention, 1988 (No. 167)	16	Adopted after 1985; up-to-date instrument
Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170)	10	Adopted after 1985; up-to-date instrument
Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174)	7	Adopted after 1985; up-to-date instrument
Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176)	18	Adopted after 1985; up-to-date instrument
Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184)	2	Adopted after 1985; up-to-date instrument
Protocol of 2002 to the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (P. 155)	—	

Recommendations

Instrument	Status
<i>Anthrax Prevention Recommendation, 1919 (No. 3)</i>	To be revised
<i>Lead Poisoning (Women and Children) Recommendation, 1919 (No. 4)</i>	To be revised
<i>White Phosphorus Recommendation, 1919 (No. 6)</i>	To be revised
Prevention of Industrial Accidents Recommendation, 1929 (No. 31)	Interim status
Labour Inspection Recommendation, 1947 (No. 81)	Related to a priority Convention; up-to-date instrument
Labour Inspection (Mining and Transport) Recommendation, 1947 (No. 82)	Related to a priority Convention; up-to-date instrument
Protection of Workers' Health Recommendation, 1953 (No. 97)	Up-to-date instrument
Welfare Facilities Recommendation, 1956 (No. 102)	Up-to-date instrument
Radiation Protection Recommendation, 1960 (No. 114)	Up-to-date instrument
Workers' Housing Recommendation, 1961 (No. 115)	Up-to-date instrument
<i>Guarding of Machinery Recommendation, 1963 (No. 118)</i>	To be revised
Hygiene (Commerce and Offices) Recommendation, 1964 (No. 120)	Up-to-date instrument
<i>Maximum Weight Recommendation, 1967 (No. 128)</i>	To be revised
Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Recommendation, 1969 (No. 133)	Related to a priority Convention; up-to-date instrument
<i>Benzene Recommendation, 1971 (No. 144)</i>	To be revised
Occupational Cancer Recommendation, 1974 (No. 147)	Up-to-date instrument
Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Recommendation, 1977 (No. 156)	Up-to-date instrument
Occupational Safety and Health Recommendation, 1981 (No. 164)	Up-to-date instrument
Occupational Health Services Recommendation, 1985 (No. 171)	Adopted after 1985; up-to-date instrument
Asbestos Recommendation, 1986 (No. 172)	Adopted after 1985; up-to-date instrument
Safety and Health in Construction Recommendation, 1988 (No. 175)	Adopted after 1985; up-to-date instrument
Chemicals Recommendation, 1990 (No. 177)	Adopted after 1985; up-to-date instrument
Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Recommendation, 1993 (No. 181)	Adopted after 1985; up-to-date instrument
Safety and Health in Mines Recommendation, 1995 (No. 183)	Adopted after 1985; up-to-date instrument
Safety and Health in Agriculture Recommendation, 2001 (No. 192)	Adopted after 1985; up-to-date instrument
List of Occupational Diseases Recommendation, 2002 (No. 194)	Adopted in 2002

Codes of practice

- Occupational exposure to airborne substances harmful to health, 1980
- Safety in the use of asbestos, 1984
- Safety and health in coal mines, 1986
- Radiation protection of workers (ionizing radiation), 1987
- Safety, health and working conditions in the transfer of technology to developing countries, 1988
- Safety and health in opencast mines, 1991
- Prevention of major industrial accidents, 1991
- Safety and health in construction, 1992
- Technical and ethical guidelines for workers' health surveillance, 1992
- Safety in the use of chemicals at work, 1993
- Recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases, 1995
- Management of alcohol- and drug-related issues in the workplace, 1996
- Protection of workers' personal data, 1997
- Safety and health in forestry work, 1998
- Use of synthetic vitreous fibre insulation wools (glass wool, rock wool, slag wool), 2000
- Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems, 2001
- Ambient factors in the workplace, 2001
- Safety and health in the non-ferrous metals industries, 2001
- HIV/AIDS and the world of work, 2001

Annex II

Summary of replies to the survey

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Part I: National law and practice in the light of ILO standards-related activities

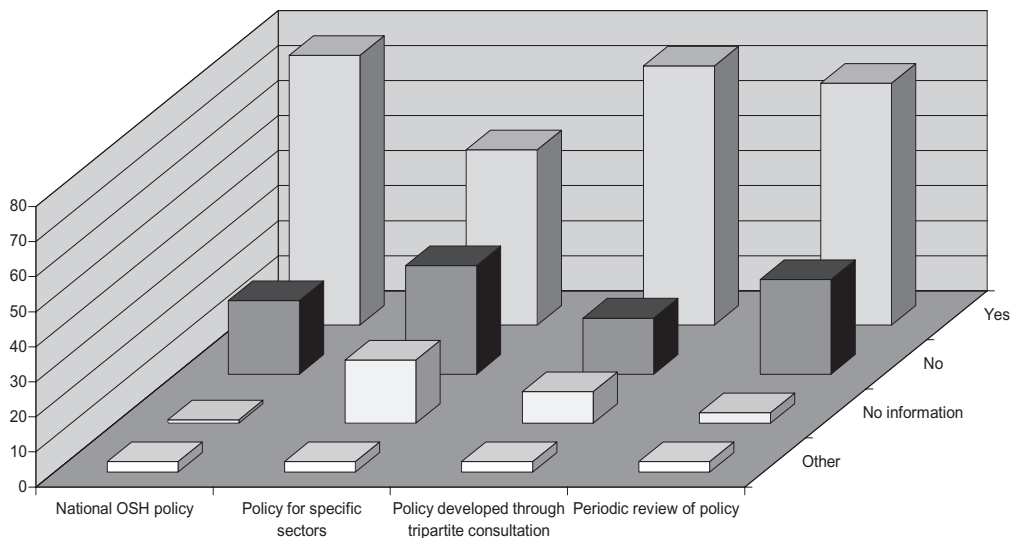
A. National law and practice and ILO instruments

National occupational safety and health policy

- ❑ **Question 1.** Are there provisions for the *formulation and implementation* of a **national policy** on OSH? **A.** If yes, does this national policy include policies addressing specific sectors of economic activity? Please specify, and, if possible, please provide the appropriate documentation; **B.** Has this national policy been developed *in consultation with the most representative organizations of employers and workers*?
- ❑ **Question 2.** Are there *mechanisms for the periodic review* of such a national policy, inter alia, in the light of technical progress as well as advances in scientific knowledge and relevant international standards?

National law and practice

Figure 1. Survey replies concerning a national occupational safety and health policy



1. Seventy-two member States responded that a national occupational safety and health (OSH) policy had been formulated and implemented in their country and a further eight that they were at various stages in the process of developing one. The Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), one of the main features of which is the formulation and implementation of a national OSH policy, had been ratified by 24 of the member States who responded to the survey. Three of these replied that they did not have a national policy: one was in the process of formulating a national policy; the second referred to relevant provisions in a national policy document concerning labour in general; and the third offered no further comments on this question. A national policy had not been adopted in 18 of the member States who responded to the survey.

Remarks

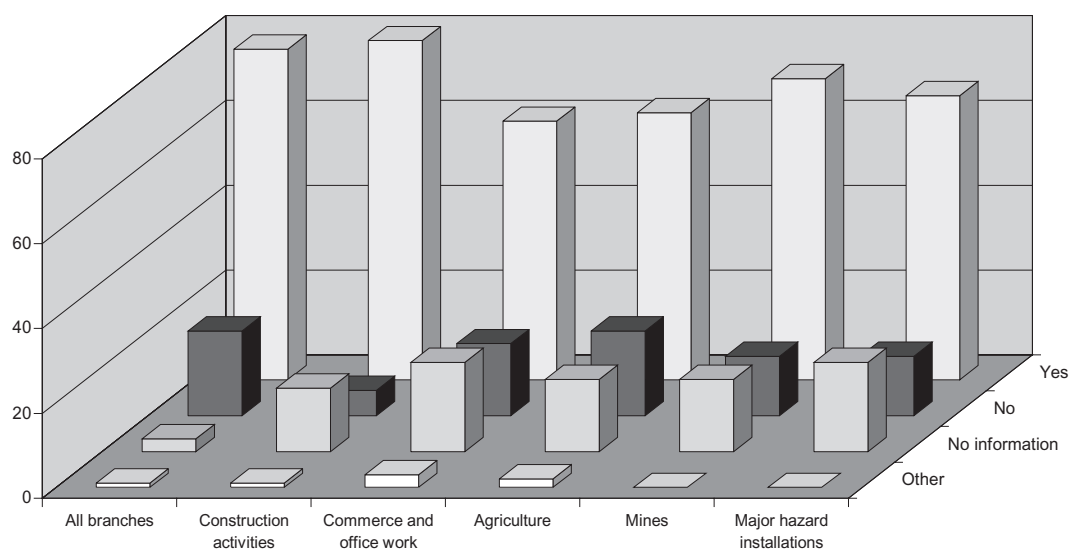
2. The practice of developing a national OSH policy appears to be fairly widespread. However, based on the copies of the policy documents received by the Office in the context of the survey replies, the contents and details of these policies vary greatly between countries. With very few exceptions, the national policy was stated to have been developed through tripartite consultation. Provisions for periodic review of the national policy were lacking in about one-fourth of the responding member States. Finally, sector-specific national policies appeared to be less prevalent than national policies

Scope of application

- **Question 3.** Are there OSH provisions applicable to the following **branches of economic activity**? Please specify any *exclusions, in whole or in part*, and the reasons for such exclusions: **A. all branches**; **B. construction activities**; **C. commerce and office work**; **D. agriculture**; **E. mines**; **F. major hazard installations**; **G. other branches of economic activity**? Please specify.

National law and practice

Figure 2. Survey replies concerning branches of economic activity covered by national occupational safety and health regulations



Branches of economic activity excluded from national occupational safety and health regulations

3. Thirteen respondents indicated that there were exclusions from national OSH legislation, concerning the public sector in whole or in part, or workers employed in that sector, such as the armed forces and the police. The agricultural and maritime sectors were also notably often excluded from coverage, as were mines, commerce and office work, domestic work, hospitals in whole or in part, and workplaces with fewer than three workers. Where details were given as to reasons for excluding these sectors, this was often owing to the fact that they fell outside the definitions provided for in the relevant national legislation or that the area was not covered due to the lack of any perceived risk, the unique characteristics of an industry or because of direction from the government concerned.

Branches of economic activity with specific national occupational safety and health regulations

4. Thirty-one member States reported having specific OSH regulations in the following branches of economic activity: general transport, including aviation, rail, road transport and public transport; the maritime sector, including fishing and fish farming, dock work, ports, shipbuilding and ship repair and maritime installations; the public sector, including civil service, armed forces, police and civil defence services; the service sector, including tourism, retail and wholesale trade; specific industries, including manufacturing (garment industry, steel works, metal foundries and copper production and processing), automotive repair and maintenance, chemical industry, petroleum and storage of gas; the agricultural sector, including forestry and logging, sugar production, woodworking, hunting, animal processing; mines; and utilities, including electricity supply, equipment and installations, water treatment and supply.

Remarks

5. Based on the replies to the survey, 78 member States have OSH legislation that covers all branches of economic activity. However, in another 23 member States, the scope of application was much narrower and coverage was limited to certain specific branches of economic activity. In addition, the replies showed that construction was most frequently covered by specific legislation while commerce and office work, along with agriculture, were the least well covered. Both of the latter branches were also mentioned as being excluded from the scope of the general OSH legislation by several of the member States. As regards the flexibility provisions in the ILO OSH Conventions, these exclusion clauses are rarely used, which is in line with flexibility clauses contained in other ILO Conventions.¹

Occupational hazards

- Question 4.** Are there provisions applicable to the following **occupational hazards**: **A.** air pollution; **B.** noise; **C.** vibration; **D.** ionizing radiations; **E.** chemicals (please indicate if individual chemicals or categories of chemicals as those listed in Question 4E through I are regulated separately or are covered by comprehensive legalization); **F.** carcinogenic substances and agents; **G.** asbestos; **H.** benzene and products of benzene; **I.** lead; **J.** machinery; **K.** manual lifting; **L.** any other occupational hazards? Please specify.

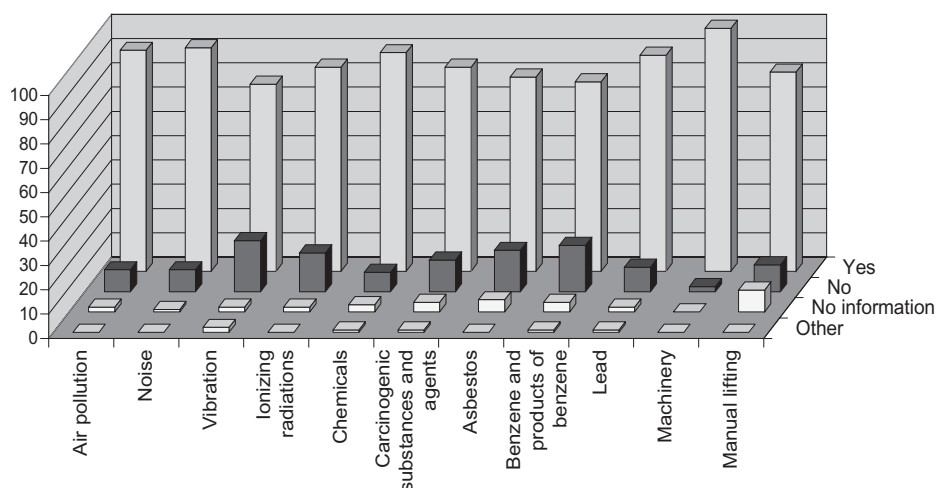
National law and practice

6. In response to a request for details of other hazards covered, 45 respondents gave details of a large number of other occupational hazards that were covered under national OSH legislation including the following: hazardous chemical substances and agents, including non-ionizing radiation, corrosive substances, substances that are hazardous to reproductive health (mutagens), pesticides, isocyanides, solvents, heavy metals, dust, gas (including compressed gas), smoking, diseases caused by inhalation of substances or gases, storage of flammable liquids, explosions and fire; biological hazards, including infectious materials and organisms; physical hazards, including electrical hazards, hazards related to computers (e.g. visual display units – VDUs), mechanical lifting, hazardous equipment, demolition, working at heights, diving, confined spaces, lasers, electromagnetic fields, visually demanding tasks, boilers and pressure vessels, construction of hydro-technical installations, collapses in gold mines, excavation and demolition works, scaf-

¹ See Governing Body docs. GB.283/LILS/5(Rev.), para. 54, and GB.244/SC/3/3.

folds, ladders, ventilation of underground mines, airborne contaminants, lighting, ventilation and temperature; ergonomics; and psychosocial hazards, including harassment, violence, mental and physical stress, fatigue and working alone.

Figure 3. Survey replies concerning occupational hazards

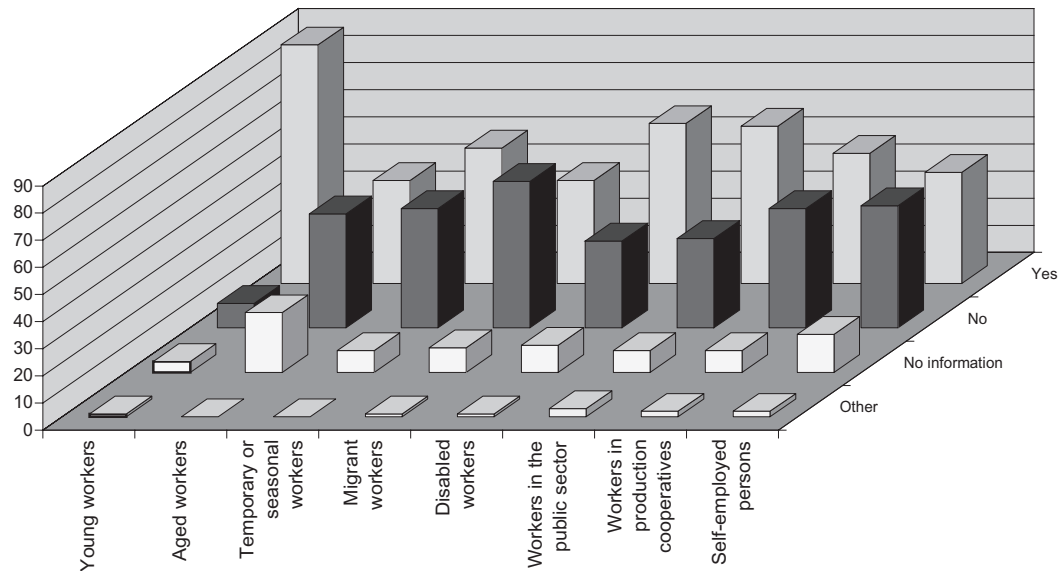


Remarks

7. Among the other hazards mentioned by respondents as being covered under national law and practice, the regulation of biological hazards, ergonomics and psychosocial hazards were referred to most often. Although the current standards touch on these issues, there are no standards that specifically address them. Various aspects of psychosocial hazards were also mentioned as well as – in a few cases – smoking. Furthermore, 12 member States responded that they covered only five or fewer of the ten hazards detailed in the survey.

Specific categories of workers

- **Question 5.** Are there provisions concerning the following **specific categories of workers**: **A.** young workers (if yes please specify age range); **B.** aged workers; **C.** temporary or seasonal workers; **D.** migrant workers; **E.** disabled workers; **F.** workers in the public sector; **G.** workers in production cooperatives; **H.** self-employed persons; **I.** any other categories of workers? Please specify; **J.** please specify any exclusions from the application of OSH provisions, in whole or in part, of specific categories of workers, and the reasons for such exclusions.

*National law and practice***Figure 4. Survey replies concerning specific categories of workers***Other categories where specific provisions on occupational safety and health exist*

8. Fourteen respondents gave details as to other categories of workers for which there were specific provisions in national OSH legislation. The majority referred to women workers in general or pregnant and breastfeeding women (see also responses to Question 6). Other types of workers mentioned were seafarers, workers in agriculture, forestry and shepherding, workers in temporary work agencies, contract workers in the public sector, uniformed staff and third parties on the worksite.

Categories of workers excluded from the application of national occupational safety and health provisions

9. Twenty-two respondents specified the categories of workers that were excluded from coverage under national OSH legislation. These included workers in the informal economy, household domestic workers, workers in small family-run enterprises, self-employed workers, workers on farms with fewer than ten employees, workers in the public sector, workers on board ships, hospital workers, medical assistants, workers in commerce and offices and institutions, workers in mines and transport workers.

Remarks

10. The most frequently regulated category of workers was young persons, with approximately 90 per cent of respondents having specific OSH provisions for this category. Depending on the category of worker, some 40-60 per cent of respondents had specific OSH provisions for the other categories of workers mentioned in the survey. In response to the request for details as to categories of workers excluded, the most frequently mentioned category of workers was self-employed workers. This is also reflected in the large number of respondents who answered "no" to the question in the survey on self-employed workers. Specific measures for migrant and older workers also appear to be less prolific than for other categories of workers. Information is limited concerning the extent to which national OSH legislation covers all workers to the few countries that specifically stated that

OSH legislation applied to all workers because the question did not ask whether all categories of workers were covered.

Gender

□ **Question 6.** Are there *gender-specific provisions related to OSH*? Please specify.

National law and practice

11. In 16 member States, national OSH legislation contained no gender-specific provisions and certain rules referred to expressly prohibited discrimination or prescribed equal treatment. In one member State, OSH standards were set at the lowest possible level to protect both male and female workers. In most cases (79 member States), however, national legislation contained gender-specific OSH provisions, which were based either on protection of the reproductive health and family responsibilities of women or on prohibitions and limitations on the employment of women in hazardous work. Seven member States responded that there were provisions for the protection of reproductive health but did not indicate whether these applied to women only or to both men and women. Two of these specified that national law prescribed lower exposure limits for women who were of child-bearing age. In addition, nine respondents reported that there were protective provisions for pregnant women, 20 for both pregnant and breastfeeding or nursing women and a further six for pregnant women and women with children under a certain age. In one member State, women also had a duty to inform the employer of their pregnancy.

12. Twenty-eight respondents stated that there were either prohibitions or limitations on the employment of women in certain types of arduous work, hazardous activities or industries such as underground work, mining and working with machinery. Other rules mentioned contained measures for the prohibition or limitation of exposure of women to certain types of substances and agents (e.g. radiation, lead, benzene or pesticides), the provision of lower limits for the manual lifting of weights by women and certain restrictions concerning night work, overtime or working time in general. In addition, certain member States specified that rules existed which regulated the working conditions of women in specific branches of activity and with regard to occupational hazards that affect women more than men (e.g. sexual harassment, musculoskeletal diseases, checkout work, care and assistance in private homes, pre-school and out-of-school centres, hairdressing, etc.). In a general comment, one respondent stated that there was “a need to review Conventions Nos. 127, 184, 13, etc., which contain provisions on women ... as they are incompatible with the principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination based on sex”.

Remarks

13. In the consultations held on the need for revision of the White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921 (No. 13), the Maximum Weight Convention, 1967 (No. 127), the Maximum Weight Recommendation, 1967 (No. 128), and the Benzene Convention, 1971 (No. 136), the gender-specific provisions they contain were cited by several member States as being discriminatory against women and invoked as a reason for revising these instruments. In terms of national law and practice on this issue, a rather varied picture emerges and seems to reflect different approaches. This is, in fact, also the case with respect to ILO standards. Provisions prohibiting women in general in certain types of employment or in certain types of activities are still frequent. A few countries report having replaced gender-specific provisions with provisions providing for individual risk assessment provisions. Most member States would have gender-specific provisions only with a view to protecting breast-feeding

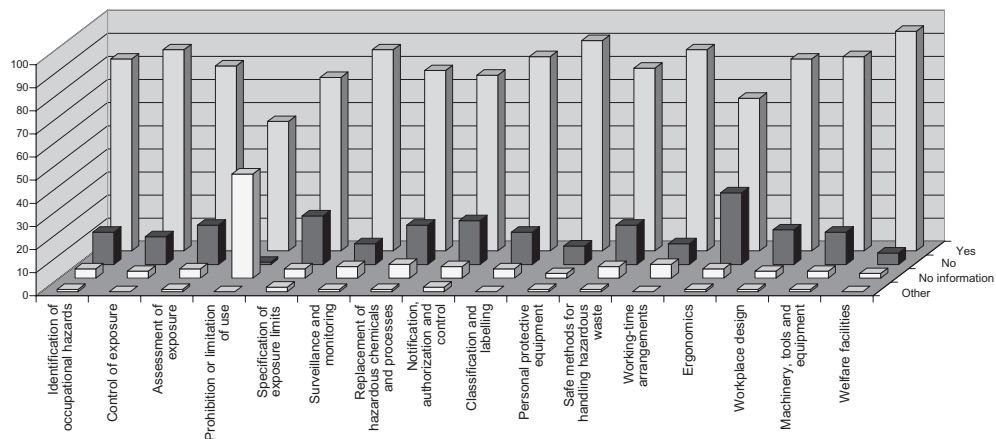
or pregnant women. In some cases, hazards that might affect reproductive functions applied to both sexes.

Preventive and protective measures

- **Question 7.** Are there **technical rules and measures** for the effective protection of workers against hazardous processes, machinery and equipment, and hazardous chemical, physical and biological agents, including in relation to: **A.** the *identification and determination* of occupational hazards; **B.** the *prohibition, limitation* or other means of control of *exposure*; **C.** the *assessment* of risks and levels of exposure; **D.** *prohibition or limitation of use* of hazardous processes, machinery and equipment and hazardous chemical, physical and biological agents. Please specify; **E.** the specification of *exposure limits and related criteria including periodic revision and updating of exposure limits*; **F.** the *surveillance and monitoring* of the working environment; **G.** the *replacement of hazardous chemicals and processes* by less hazardous ones; **H.** the *notification of hazardous work* and the related *authorization and control* requirements; **I.** the *classification and labelling* of hazardous chemicals and the provision of related data sheets; **J.** the provision and use of *personal protective equipment*; **K.** *safe methods for the handling, collection, recycling, and disposal* of hazardous waste; **L.** *working-time arrangements* (such as hours of work and rest periods, etc.); **M.** *adaptation of work installations, machinery, equipment and processes* to the physical and mental capacities of the workers, taking ergonomic factors into account; **N.** *design, construction, layout* and maintenance of workplaces and installations; **O.** *design, construction, layout, use, maintenance, testing and inspection* of machinery, tools and equipment; **P.** the provision of *adequate welfare facilities* (such as drinking water and sanitary eating and changing facilities)?

National law and practice

Figure 5. Survey replies concerning preventive and protective measures



14. In response to the request for the respondents to specify the hazardous processes, machinery and equipment and hazardous chemical, physical and biological agents, the use of which was prohibited or limited, 35 respondents provided the following details.² Hazardous processes included the storage of explosives/detonators, the installation of oil, propane and natural-gas-burning appliances/equipment, the operation of internal combustion engines in underground mines, the use and maintenance of cranes, manual handling, confined spaces and work in workplaces that do not conform to OSH standards. Hazardous machinery and equipment included hazardous machinery/equipment and materials, fire

² The large number of replies where no information was received for this question was due to a technical error in the survey.

and explosives, noise, VDUs, scaffolding/portable ladders, powered/elevating and rolling/self-propelled platforms, rollover protection for vehicles, protective clothing/respirators, safety belts/lanyards/nets, containers for gasoline and pressure containers for boilers. Hazardous chemical, physical and biological agents included, in general and in particular, highly hazardous and carcinogenic substances, substances and agents that are harmful to reproductive health, biological agents, blood-borne pathogens, hazardous wastes, asbestos, benzene, benzidine, dichlorobenzidine, lead, ionizing radiation, N-hexane, pesticides, vinyl chloride monomer, yellow phosphorus matches, polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), liquid nitrogen and arsenic.

Remarks

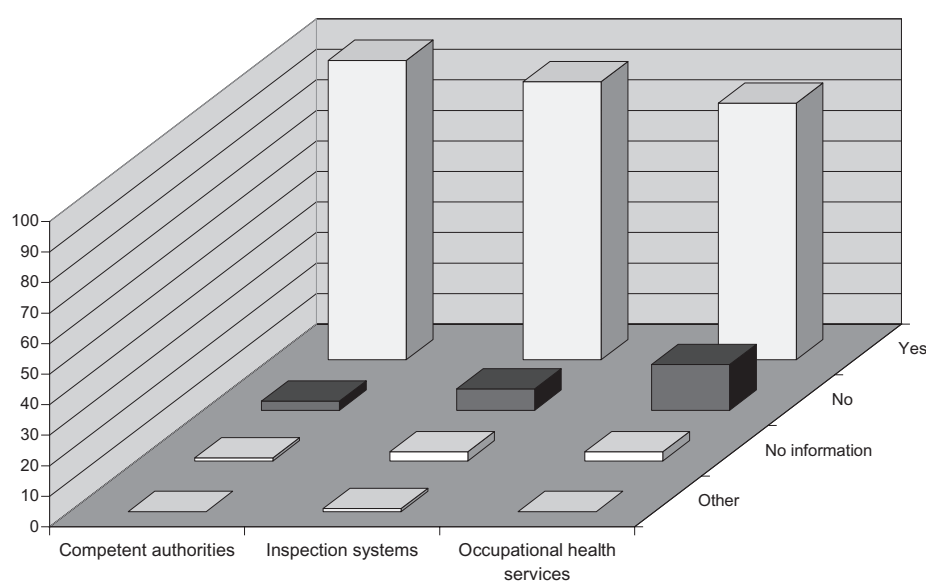
15. In terms of preventive and protective measures, there seemed to be a fairly good level of correspondence between national law and practice and ILO OSH instruments. However, some preventive measures were less well covered, such as those concerning ergonomics (where approximately one-third of the respondents did not have preventive and protective measures), exposure limits and notification, authorization and control. In addition, it appeared that 14 of the respondents had particularly limited preventive and protective measures as they responded that they had provisions for fewer than seven of the 16 measures mentioned in the survey. The most significant difference appeared to be the question concerning ergonomics.

Organizational frameworks

- **Question 8.** Are there **infrastructures**, including: **A. competent authorities** responsible for OSH; **B. inspection systems** covering OSH with appropriate powers, independence and resources; **C. occupational health services**?

National law and practice

Figure 6. Survey replies concerning organizational frameworks



Remarks

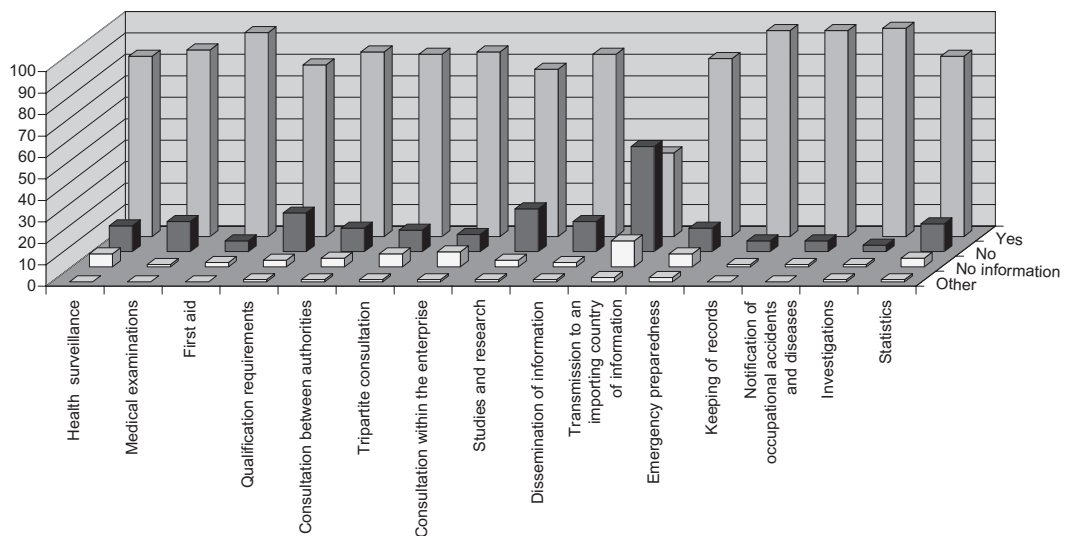
16. As regards organizational frameworks, national law and practice seemed to correspond well with the prescriptions in the relevant standards in regard to competent authorities and inspection systems. This was slightly less so with respect to occupational health services (15 negative answers and three responses that provided no information). Only one respondent answered that they did not have any of the organizational frameworks mentioned in the survey. However, in certain comments made in response to this question, it was added that, despite the establishment of these infrastructures, there were insufficient resources available to make them effective in practice.

Organizational mechanisms and measures

□ **Question 9.** Are there **mechanisms and measures**, including: **A.** health surveillance mechanisms; **B.** the provision of regular *medical examinations*; **C.** the provision of *first aid and emergency treatment*; **D.** the determination of the *qualification requirements* and the *training* of the staff of the competent authorities; **E.** measures to ensure *consultation, cooperation and coordination* on OSH between: **(a)** the various competent authorities and services; **(b)** the competent authorities and employers' and workers' organizations; **(c)** the employers and workers and their representatives within the enterprise; **F.** the undertaking of *studies and research* into OSH matters by the competent authorities; **G.** the establishment of measures for the *dissemination and provision of information, training and technical advice* on OSH matters by the competent authorities to the employers and workers; **H.** the *transmission to an importing country of information* on any prohibitions or restrictions in force in the exporting State concerning the use of the technologies, processes or hazardous chemicals in question; **I.** *emergency preparedness and rescue*; **J.** measures for the *recording and notification* of occupational accidents and diseases including: **(a)** the establishment and *keeping of records* of occupational accidents and diseases; **(b)** *notification of occupational accidents and diseases* to the competent authorities; **(c)** *investigation* into occupational accidents and diseases; **(d)** *compilation and periodic publication of statistics* on occupational accidents and diseases?

National law and practice

Figure 7. Survey replies concerning organizational mechanisms and measures



Remarks

17. Overall, there appeared to be a fairly good level of correspondence between ILO standards and national law and practice in these areas with one significant exception. Over half of the respondents either stated that there were no provisions for, or offered no information regarding, the transmission of information by an exporting State to an importing State (Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170), and Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174)). This question is addressed in detail in the question concerning obstacles to ratification (see Question 19A). Furthermore, approximately 20 per cent of member States replied that there were no provisions for studies and research into OSH issues or qualification and training requirements for competent authority staff.

Implementation of national occupational safety and health requirements

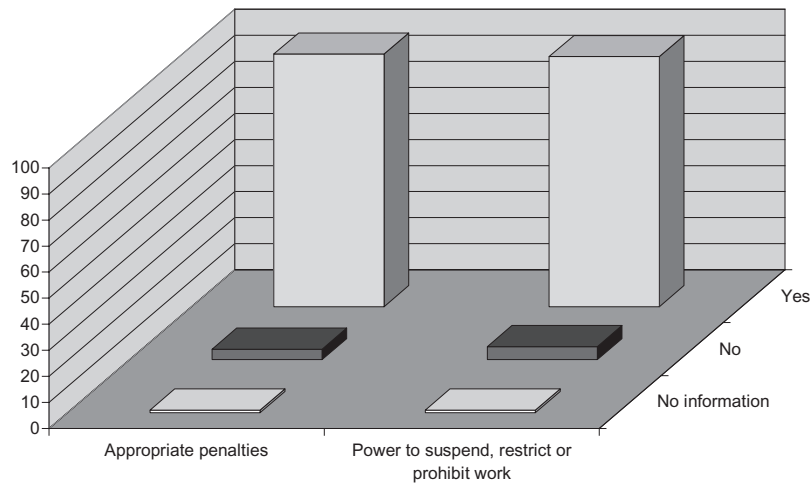
- **Question 10.** *Are national OSH requirements implemented by methods other than the enactment of laws and regulations (such as by collective agreements)? Please specify.*

National law and practice

18. Thirty-seven respondents answered that OSH requirements were also implemented through collective agreements. Other methods used to implement OSH requirements included other types of agreements (e.g. branch, industry, enterprise, bipartite, etc.), social dialogue, voluntary standards, branch and enterprise rules and standards, codes of conduct, accident insurers' rules, enforcement mechanisms (e.g. inspection, surveillance and follow-up, etc.), awareness raising (e.g. mass media and provision of information to, and tax breaks for, enterprises that can demonstrate, through an independent audit, a good OSH record), employer-run training programmes, forums, debates, brochures, posters and seminars and information dissemination (e.g. through a Web-based OSH alert system, workshops, seminars, etc.). There were numerous comments that even where alternative means of implementation were available, law and regulations remained the primary means of implementation. In cases where collective agreements were used, they often covered only certain OSH measures, such as working time, and in some cases were not applied correctly.

Powers, responsibilities and rights

- **Question 11.** Are there **enforcement** mechanisms and measures including: **A.** *the imposition of appropriate penalties* in cases of infringement of laws and regulations; **B.** *power of the competent authorities to suspend, restrict or prohibit work* where there is a serious threat to the health and safety of workers, until appropriate corrective measures have been implemented?

*National law and practice***Figure 8. Survey replies concerning enforcement mechanisms and measures***Remarks*

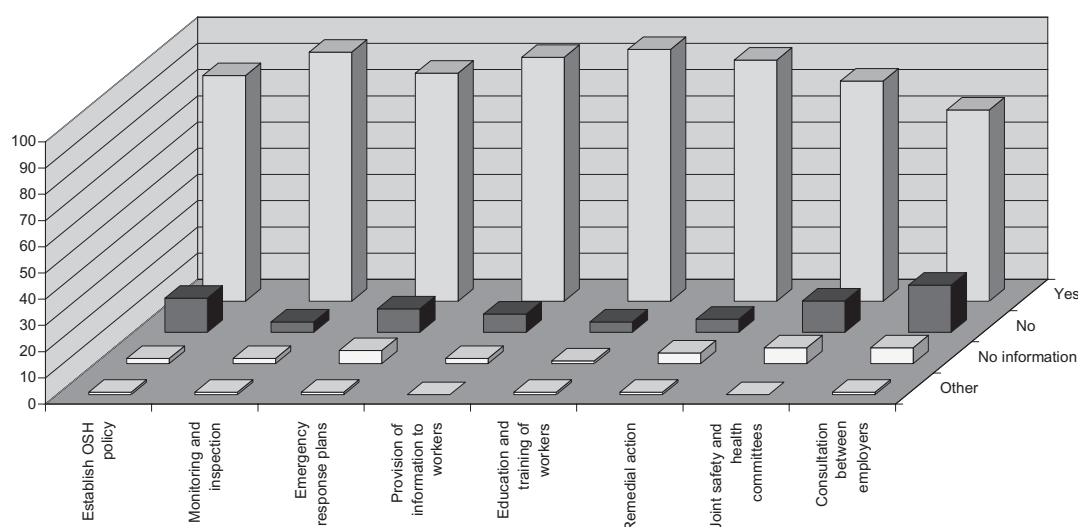
19. Approximately 95 per cent of respondents answered “yes” to national law and practice providing for penalties and the power to suspend, restrict or prohibit work in the case of a serious threat to the safety and health of workers. However, the use of enforcement mechanisms is subject to the effectiveness of the inspection services, which in some cases were mentioned as not having access to adequate resources to do their job effectively.

Employers’ responsibilities

- **Question 12.** Do **employer responsibilities** include: **A.** the *establishment of OSH policies and procedures* to implement the preventive and protective measures prescribed by national law and practice; **B.** the *monitoring and inspection* of the workplace, processes, machinery, tools, equipment and other material elements of work; **C.** the establishment of *emergency response plans and procedures*; **D.** the *provision of information to workers and their representatives* concerning occupational hazards; **E.** the *education and training* of workers; **F.** the taking of appropriate *remedial action* after any accident; **G.** the *establishment of joint safety and health committees*. Please detail your answer and specify whether this responsibility results from national law or practice; **H.** the establishment of a mechanism for *consultation and cooperation* on OSH matters between employers where there is more than one employer in a workplace or worksite?

National law and practice

Figure 9. Survey replies concerning employers' responsibilities



20. Eighty-four member States responded that there were provisions for joint safety and health committees (JSHCs). Forty-two of these replied that they were obligatory under law and one provided for them as an option in national legislation. Four member States said that they were provided for in practice (New Zealand was introducing a bill into Parliament that would make OSH committees optional under law and Morocco responded that there was a project under way to introduce this concept into the Labour Code). Three member States replied that it was both law and practice to have JSHCs. Eighteen respondents gave further details as to the requirements of the establishment of a JSHC. In 13 cases, this requirement applies to enterprises where 50 or more workers are employed; in two cases it applies where 20 or more workers are employed; in one case, it applies where ten or more workers are employed; in another case, it applies where 100 or more workers are employed; and in a third case, it applies in most jurisdictions but the minimum number of workers depends on which jurisdiction the enterprise is in (either ten or 20 workers).

Remarks

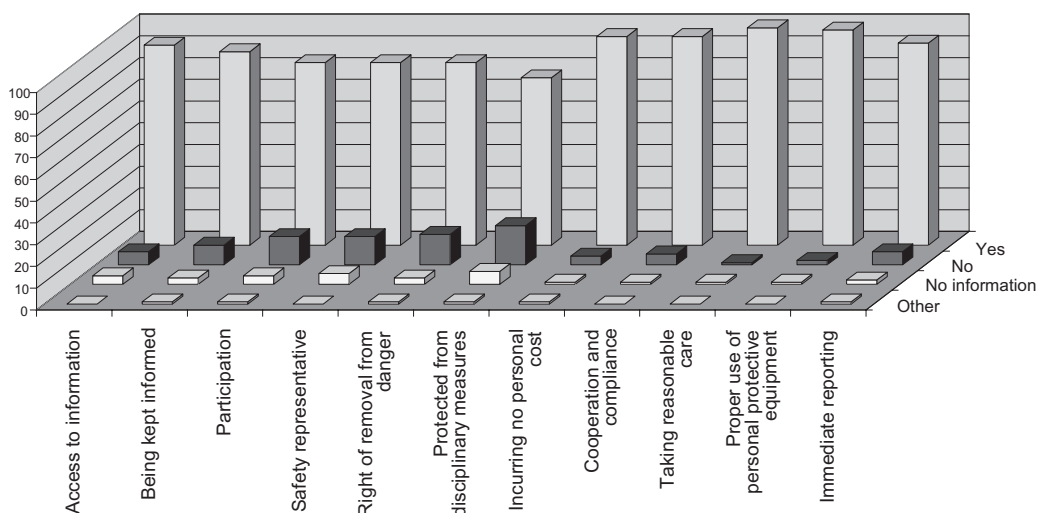
21. The survey results show that employers, in approximately 15 per cent of member States, are not obliged under law and practice to establish a workplace OSH policy. Furthermore, in around 20 per cent of member States, there are no legal provisions for consultation and cooperation between employers working at the same worksite.

Workers' rights and responsibilities

□ **Question 13.** Do workers *rights and responsibilities* include: **A.** *access to information* relevant to OSH held by the competent authorities and the employer; **B.** being kept *informed* on workplace hazards and consulted on related OSH measures; **C.** *participation in inspection and monitoring* activities and the review of OSH measures; **D.** *selection of a worker safety representative*; **E.** *removing themselves from danger* in case of imminent and serious risk to their health; **F.** being *protected from disciplinary measures* due to actions taken in accordance with OSH requirements; **G.** *incurring no personal cost* for the implementation of OSH measures including training and the provision of *personal protective equipment*; **H.** *cooperation with the employer and compliance* with OSH measures; **I.** *taking reasonable care* of their personal safety and that of others in the workplace; **J.** making proper use of *personal protective equipment*; **K.** *immediate reporting to the supervisor* of any situation presenting a threat to safety?

National law and practice

Figure 10. Survey replies concerning workers' rights and responsibilities



Remarks

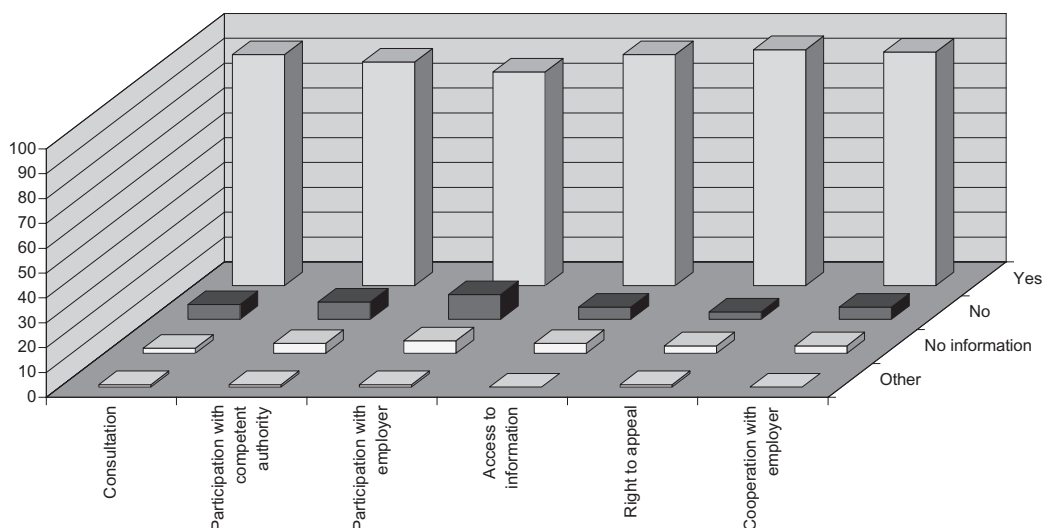
22. Approximately 90-95 per cent of respondents had provisions concerning workers' duties to cooperate with the employer, to take reasonable care, to use personal protective equipment properly and to report serious danger to a supervisor. However, in approximately 15 per cent of member States, there were no provisions for the rights of workers to participate, to elect safety representatives or to remove themselves from danger. Furthermore, in approximately 20 per cent of member States who responded, workers were not protected from disciplinary measures in cases where action was taken in accordance with OSH measures. As regards the question of the participation of workers in measures and activities in the area of OSH, seven of the employers' and workers' organizations that sent in separate responses to the survey disagreed with their governments' positive responses.

Rights and responsibilities of workers' representatives

- **Question 14.** Do the **rights and responsibilities of workers' representatives** include: **A. consultation on OSH matters** with the employer; **B. participation in inspections, monitoring and investigations related to OSH;** (a) with the representatives of the competent authorities; (b) with employer representatives; **C. access to information** on OSH matters held by the competent authorities and the employer; **D. the right to appeal** to the competent authorities on OSH matters; **E. cooperation** with the employer on OSH matters?

National law and practice

Figure 11. Survey replies concerning rights and responsibilities of workers' representatives



Remarks

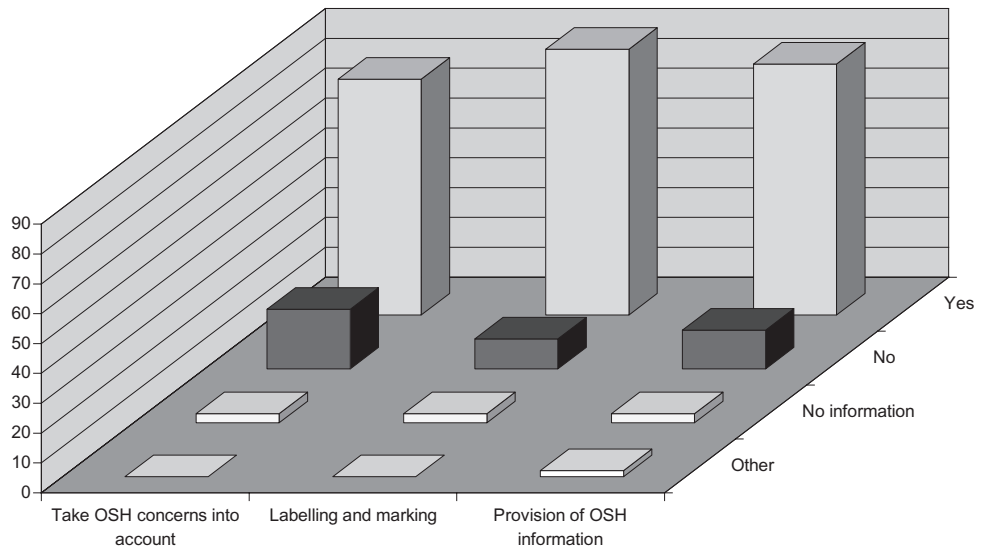
23. As with workers' rights and responsibilities, there was some disagreement between government responses and the employers' and workers' organizations (four responses) that sent in separate responses concerning the participation of workers' representatives with the employer.

Responsibilities of designers, producers, importers and suppliers

- **Question 15.** Do the **responsibilities of designers, producers, importers and suppliers** include: **A. the taking into account of safety and health requirements and concerns in the design, production, importation, supply and disposal processes;** **B. the adequate labelling and marking** of products; **C. the making available to the user of adequate safety and health information** on their products?

National law and practice

Figure 12. Survey replies concerning responsibilities of designers, producers, importers and suppliers



Remarks

24. Despite the overall correspondence between ILO OSH provisions and national law and practice, around 20 per cent of member States who responded did not have provisions for the designer, producer, importer or supplier to take OSH concerns into account in the design, production, importation, supply and disposal processes.

B. Additional questions

Promotion

Question 16. Given the importance of OSH standards in achieving decent conditions of work and thus the need to place OSH higher on national agendas, please indicate whether and to what extent this could be achieved by developing promotional means designed to raise awareness and foster a higher commitment at the national and enterprise levels to the application of the requirements in ILO OSH instruments.

Survey response

25. The responses to this question included numerous and varying suggestions that could be taken not only by the ILO but also at national and enterprise levels to raise awareness of OSH. Suggested **ILO standards-specific action** included the promotion and implementation of ILO OSH standards, the review of current standards before implementing a promotional plan or adopting new standards, the adoption of a framework Convention, the production of flexible codes of practice and standards, and the classification of all ILO OSH standards as priority standards. There were also suggestions that ILO technical cooperation could be used as a promotional tool as well as a tool to assess the needs of each member State in how to raise awareness of OSH, to assist in capacity building, to provide

information and education, to provide technical seminars and workshops on OSH for employers, workers and inspection personnel, among others, and to promote tripartite participation in OSH at the national level. The ILO should also highlight the benefits and importance of implementing OSH standards and raise the awareness of governments concerning the priorities to give to the allocation of resources for OSH. Other responses highlighted the need to develop awareness-raising materials based on ILO documents and guidelines and, in this respect, the increased translation of ILO standards, guidelines and publications (an issue that is frequently brought up in the replies to the following questions) so that they can be more widely used.

26. Promotional **activities at the national (state) level** included the establishment of infrastructures such as a competent authority or OSH institutions, increasing personnel in the inspection services, and the education and training of personnel working in the area of OSH as well as employers and workers. It was also put forward that OSH be included in the curricula of educational and training institutes. Many of the replies noted that the improvement of the national legislative framework (e.g. through the drafting, updating and implementation of OSH laws and the adoption of a national OSH policy), would be a good way to raise awareness. Ratification of ILO standards and implementation of other international or regional standards in this area that meet the requirements of the ILO standards were also recommended. Tripartite consultations and participation in the implementation of OSH programmes was also mentioned, as was the undertaking of awareness-raising campaigns at the national level. The dissemination of information and awareness-raising materials (e.g. through mass media, seminars, lectures, etc.) and the establishment of an annual national OSH day, were mentioned by a number of respondents. There was also a suggestion that tools for evaluating the impact of these campaigns should be introduced. Financial incentives or awards as well as increased enforcement were mentioned as possible tools to promote OSH.

27. **Workplace measures** included suggestions that employers play a bigger role in formulating and implementing laws and regulations, raising awareness and providing training and instruction for workers. The introduction of an OSH management systems approach and the development of a safety culture among workers were also mentioned as possible promotional tools, as was the establishment of joint occupational safety and health committees.

Remarks

28. The replies to this question included a large number of differing responses. However, three suggestions were mentioned by nine or more respondents. These were the promotion and implementation of ILO standards, the undertaking of awareness-raising campaigns at the national and enterprise levels, and the dissemination of information and awareness-raising materials.

Conventions and Recommendations used as guidance

- **Question 17.** With respect to up-to-date OSH Conventions or Recommendations you have not ratified, please indicate: **A.** whether you have used such instruments as guidance or as models in shaping your national law and practice or in any other way; **B.** whether you intend to use such instruments as guidance or as models in shaping your national law and practice or in any other way? If yes to either of the questions above, please specify, with examples if possible, the extent of such impact/usage and if it has been, or may be, particularly significant in any specific area of your national law and practice on OSH. If no, please specify the main reasons.

Survey response

29. In the replies, 81 respondents indicated that they had used ILO standards as guidance or as models. Of these, 40 gave details of the Conventions and Recommendations used, which included three of the OSH instruments to be revised and two of the labour inspection instruments. In addition, 41 respondents replied that the standards had been used but did not give further details as to which ones; however, 11 identified the national laws and regulations that had been inspired by the ILO instrument.

30. Five member States had not yet used the standards as guidance but intended to do so in the future. Four member States responded “no” to this question and specified the reasons why in their response. These included non-conformity with national law and the fact that the process for the adoption of legislation did not permit using non-ratified Conventions as guidance. One member State responded that, while ILO Conventions and Recommendations had not “from a strictly formal point of view” been used as guidance, national legislation as well as the circulars and implementation guides were in fact similar to the ILO instruments and also regularly went beyond the requirements in these instruments.

31. The importance and influence of EU regulations in the area was brought up by six (European) member States. In three member States, national regulations were inspired both by EU and by ILO regulations, while three other member States considered the EU influence stronger than the ILO influence. One member State offered a detailed analysis of its view of the relationship between EU and ILO regulation in this area and replied that while ILO Conventions had not been ratified – due to institutional preliminary legal requirements – this by no means hindered their actual implementation and that ILO standards were in fact implemented.

32. The standards most frequently mentioned as having been, or intended to be, used as guidance by a number of respondents were the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) (13 respondents); the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170) (12 respondents); the Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977 (No. 148) (11 respondents); the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161) (nine respondents); the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174), and the Asbestos Convention, 1986 (No. 162) (eight respondents each); the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), the Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 (No. 115), the Maximum Weight Convention, 1967 (No. 127), the Safety and Health in Construction Convention, 1988 (No. 167), and the Chemicals Recommendation, 1990 (No. 177) (three respondents each); and the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129), and the Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176) (two respondents each). In addition, the White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921 (No. 13), the Underground Work (Women) Convention, 1935 (No. 45), the Guarding of Machinery Convention, 1963 (No. 119), the Hygiene (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1964 (No. 120), the Occupational Cancer Convention, 1974 (No. 139), the Benzene Convention, 1971 (No. 136), the Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184), the Lead Poisoning (Women and Children) Recommendation, 1919 (No. 4), the Protection of Workers’ Health Recommendation, 1953 (No. 97), the Welfare Facilities Recommendation, 1956 (No. 102), the Workers’ Housing Recommendation, 1961 (No. 115), the Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Recommendation, 1977 (No. 156), the Occupational Safety and Health Recommendation, 1981 (No. 164), and the Occupational Health Services Recommendation, 1985 (No. 171), were each mentioned by one member State.

Remarks

33. Overwhelmingly, references made to standards used as guidance or as models in shaping national law were to the Conventions. Very few references were made to the Recommendations.

Intention to ratify

- **Question 18.** With respect to Conventions you have not ratified, could you please indicate if you have initiated or intend to initiate ratification procedures with respect to any or all of the up-to-date Conventions listed in Annex I.

Survey response

34. Sixteen member States answered that they intended to ratify OSH Conventions but did not indicate which ones were being considered. The question of ratification of 18 of the relevant instruments was being considered, at different levels, in 95 cases (see table 1, which includes the views of one workers' organization and two employers' organizations) by a total of 45 different countries. In 20 cases, ratification procedures had been initiated (six of which concerned the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)), and in another 19 cases, member States declared that they intended to initiate ratification procedures (six of which concerned Convention No. 155). Fourteen member States declared that they had no intention to ratify the Conventions at issue.

Remarks

35. These declarations of intent to ratify are significant when compared to the annual rates of ratification of these instruments. There seems to be a clear interest in these instruments and, should these ratifications be achieved, there would be a significant increase in ratification numbers.

Table 1. Replies to Question 18 concerning intention to ratify, listed in order of frequency

Convention	Have started ratification procedures	Intend to start ratification procedures	Under examination by the competent authorities	To be examined by the competent authorities	Other
C.155	Argentina, Central African Republic, Estonia, Ghana, Mauritius, Thailand	Australia, China, Kenya, Malawi, United Republic of Tanzania, Ukraine, Zambia	Ecuador, Namibia, Tunisia, Turkey	Lebanon, Lithuania	Canada, New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (NZCTU), Business South Africa
C.170	Ghana, Republic of Korea	Benin, Poland, Zambia	Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, Namibia, Netherlands, Tunisia	Cuba, Germany, Lebanon	United States Council for International Business

ILO standards-related activities in the area of OSH

Convention	Have started ratification procedures	Intend to start ratification procedures	Under examination by the competent authorities	To be examined by the competent authorities	Other
C.184	Argentina, Finland		Azerbaijan, Belarus, Barbados, Cyprus, Denmark, Honduras, Portugal, Netherlands, Syrian Arab Republic		Austria
C.161	Ghana, Republic of Korea	Costa Rica, Kenya, Poland, Zambia	Norway, Tunisia, Turkey	Lithuania	
C.174			Cyprus, Egypt, Finland, India, Namibia, Tunisia	Lebanon	United States Council for International Business
C.148		Republic of Korea, Poland	Lebanon, Netherlands	Nigeria	
C.81	Estonia, Slovakia	Indonesia			
C.167			Lebanon, Philippines	Cuba	
C.129	Estonia, Slovakia				Austria
C.115				Cuba	Lithuania
P.81	Slovakia	Austria			
C.119				Cuba, Republic of Moldova	
C.176	Ghana	Costa Rica			
C.13	Republic of Korea				
C.120					Netherlands
C.127				India	
C.139					Netherlands
C.162	Republic of Korea				

Obstacles to ratification

- Question 19.** With respect to up-to-date Conventions you have not ratified, please indicate: **A.** whether any specific articles in the relevant instruments represent an obstacle to ratification for your country; **B.** whether there are other types of obstacles that prevent ratification of any of these instruments; **C.** what measures you propose should be taken to overcome or remove these obstacles to ratification?

Survey response

Specific Articles that represented an obstacle

36. Twenty-one respondents stated that there were no specific Articles that represented obstacles to ratification; 22 respondents answered “yes”, 16 of whom specified the Articles or areas that represented obstacles to ratification. In all cases, these obstacles were apparently of a substantial nature as the Conventions at issue had not been ratified. With two exceptions, all the problems encountered concerned the up-to-date OSH instruments and not the labour inspection instruments. While specific Articles in each of the instruments were referred to, reference was most frequently made (eight cases) to provisions in the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155). In one case, it was also specified that the Articles concerning “a coherent policy” were open to various interpretations, which constituted obstacles to the ratification of the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170), and the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174).

Other types of obstacles

37. In terms of more general obstacles, the respondents referred to the detailed and technical nature of the standards, the reporting obligations that ratification entailed, the rigid interpretation of Conventions and the limited number of languages into which the ILO instruments were translated. In other cases, reference was made to a lack of correspondence between the standards and national law and that the complexity of national legislation made it complicated to work through these in relation to ILO standards. On the political level, reference was made to a lack of national consensus. The federal national structure was also mentioned as was the lack of national infrastructure (because of economic difficulties, insufficient resources and capacity and lack of competent authorities, inspection services, etc.).

Measures to remove obstacles

38. In order to overcome these obstacles only three respondents proposed, in general terms, a revision of the instruments at issue. One employers’ organization advocated a review of the denunciation procedure of Conventions and that more use should be made of non-binding instruments. Other member States highlighted the need for technical and financial assistance from the ILO for the reform of legislation and capacity building. The main thrust of the proposals was, however, directed at actions at the national level in the form of national legislative review and reform (with ILO assistance) and a need for national capacity building (e.g. training of personnel and recruitment of trained personnel for inspection services and competent authority) and the implementation of national awareness-raising campaigns.

Remarks

39. The relatively small number of member States that specified Articles that posed a problem to ratification were, for the most part, developed countries where equally specific national legislation already existed. This appears to be the reason behind non-ratification of the instruments as none of these countries have ratified the instruments mentioned. It should also be noted that the information provided in response to the questions concerning national law and practice gave some indications as to possible obstacles to the ratification of certain Conventions. For example, in 20 cases, member States indicated that national law and practice did not cover all branches of economic activity. This represents an obstacle to the ratification of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161). The provision that

appeared to pose the biggest obstacle to the ratification of the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170), and the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174), was the duty of an exporting State to provide information on hazards to any importing State. This was specified by two member States as posing an obstacle and by over half of the respondents' replies to Question 9H of the survey. The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure For Certain Hazardous Chemicals And Pesticides in International Trade, 1998 (the Rotterdam Convention), which, as of December 2002 had been signed by 73 countries and ratified by 36,³ is based on the principle found in this provision. Thirty-six of the respondents who answered "no" to this question, or who gave no information, had signed or ratified this Convention. The Rotterdam Convention refers to the "obligations of an exporting Party" and that they are to "take appropriate legislative or administrative measures to ensure that exporters within its jurisdiction comply" with laws and regulations. The possible reason for the problems encountered with this provision is the wording of the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170), and the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174), which places the obligation to transmit information directly on the exporting State rather than the exporter.

Suggestions for standard setting and codes of practice

- Question 20.** Please indicate whether there are any OSH concerns that you consider should be the object of further standard-setting action by the ILO. Please specify such concerns by order of priority.
- Question 22.** Please indicate whether there are any OSH concerns that you consider should be the object of new codes of practice.

Survey response

40. Because of the large number of subjects that were mentioned for either standard setting or a code of practice, these two questions have been grouped together and are detailed in table 2. Sixteen respondents expressly noted that there was no need for new ILO standard-setting action on OSH at present, and 13 respondents felt that there was no need for new codes of practice at present.

³ Information on the Rotterdam Convention and the status of signatures and ratifications can be found at <http://www.pic.int>

Table 2. Suggested subjects for standard setting

Subject	C/R	CoP	Respondent
OSH management and general issues			
OSH in the informal economy	X	X	Argentina, Côte d'Ivoire, CC.OO (Spain), Niger
Small and medium-sized enterprises and OSH	X	X	Côte d'Ivoire, CC.OO (Spain), Republic of Korea
OSHMS (safety management) in the enterprise	X	E	Cuba, Republic of Korea, Venezuela
Corporate social responsibility	–	X	Norway
Behaviour-based safety	–	X	Indonesia, Ukraine
Guidelines for identical definitions to ensure comparability of statistics	E	E	Norway, Slovakia
Method of quantified risk assessment	–	X	Indonesia, Venezuela
Common occupational health and safety services and workplace safety services and teams (including working conditions and rules of health service personnel)	X	X	Turkey
Classification of hazardous and physically challenging occupations that require a number of years of experience	–	X	Syrian Arab Republic
Sector-specific issues			
Hospitals	–	X	Côte d'Ivoire
Textile manufacturing industries, other types of manufacturing industries such as plastics, metals, rubber and foam	X	X	Honduras, Thailand
Transport	X	X	Côte d'Ivoire
Restaurants and food-processing industry	X	–	India, Lebanon, Thailand
Amusement parks including circuses	X	–	India
Airports (excluding civil aviation safety)	X	–	India
Railway stations (excluding railway track safety)	X	–	India
Ship-breaking and recycling	X ¹	–	India
Woodworking	–	X	Danish Federation of Building, Construction and Woodworkers' Unions (Denmark)
Tobacco industry	–	X	Republic of Moldova
Fishing	–	X	United Republic of Tanzania, Tunisia
Mines	–	E	Ukraine
Agriculture	E	X	Bulgaria, Côte d'Ivoire, Slovakia, United Republic of Tanzania
Telecommunications	X	–	Tunisia
Occupational hazards			
Ergonomics and musculoskeletal disorders	X	X	Barbados, Canada, Canadian Business Council, India, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)
Mental health and stress	X	X	Australia (NSW), Cyprus, Finland, Gabon, Lebanon, Malaysia, Norway, Ukraine
Violence at work (including harassment)	–	X	Australia (NSW), Finland, Malaysia, Norway

ILO standards-related activities in the area of OSH

Subject	C/R	CoP	Respondent
Working time (building on Art. 20 of C.184)	X	–	IUF
Prevention of biological hazards and hazards related to genetic manipulation	X	–	CC.OO (Spain), Finland
Use of hazardous substances (revision of C.13 and C.136)	E	–	Finland
Transportation of hazardous substances	–	E	India
Handling of dangerous wastes and materials	–	X	Egypt, Lebanon
Classification and labelling of hazardous chemicals	–	E	Republic of Korea
Petrochemicals	–	X	Egypt
OSH for workers exposed to rice dust at milling operations (Rice Dust Syndrome)	–	X	Indonesia
Ionizing radiation	–	X	Gabon
Vibration	E	–	Cyprus
Safety in the use of transport equipment	–	X	India
Machinery (revision of C.119)	E	–	Finland, Kenya
Boilers and pressure vessels	X	–	Thailand
Manual lifting (revision of C.127)	E	X	Croatia, Cyprus, Finland, India
Tandem lifting (revision of C.27)	E	X	Finland, India
Visual display units (VDUs)	–	E	Bahrain, Croatia, Cyprus, Gabon
Hazards related to information and communications technology	X	–	Belarus
Electromagnetic hazards	X	–	Bahrain
Underwater works	–	X	India
Substance abuse at the workplace	X	E	Malaysia
HIV/AIDS and work	X	–	Burundi, Ecuador
Manual reaping of sugar cane and bananas	X	X	Jamaica
Specific categories of workers			
OSH and ageing workers	X	X	Brazil, Ireland
OSH and young workers	X	–	Brazil
OSH and disabled workers	X	–	Brazil
Rehabilitation and reintegration of workers	X	X	Ireland
Protection for precarious and irregular workers	X	–	CC.OO (Spain), Republic of Korea
Gender-related OSH issues	X	X	Malaysia
¹ In préparation Key to table C Convention R Recommendation CoP Code of practice E Already exists as an ILO standard or code of practice – No proposals			

41. Suggestions were also made as to possible approaches to standard setting that could be taken in the context of the integrated approach in this area. These included:

- review of the out-of-date Conventions and the Conventions which make reference to women;
- consolidation of standards concerning hazardous substances;
- streamlining or rationalization of the various current standards and standards-related activities rather than the definition of new standards;
- incorporation of key elements or principles into a single over-arching “head” or “framework” Convention that sets appropriate minimum standards for OSH generally. The form of other more detailed and sector-specific safety and health standards should be considered against this Convention;
- incorporation of a mechanism whereby updated scientific knowledge can easily be integrated into relevant instruments.

Remarks

42. Of the proposals for standard-setting action, 12 were already covered either in a Convention and Recommendation or in a code of practice. Psychosocial and ergonomic hazards stand out as the two topics most often mentioned.

Codes of practice used as guidance

- Question 21.** Guidelines such as ILO codes of practice serve as additional guidance for the implementation of national law and practice on OSH. Please indicate whether you have used or intend to use any or all of the relevant codes of practice (Annex I) for such purposes. Please detail your answer, if possible with practical examples from national, sectoral and enterprise levels.

Survey response

43. In relation to codes of practice, a number of general comments were made. Several respondents considered that the codes of practice were not being used to their full extent because of lack of translation into different regional languages. Codes of practice were also seen to be important, flexible tools adapted to the implementation of detailed technical issues while standards were important to set principles. Furthermore, one respondent commented that it would be useful to develop a system to update codes of practice in accordance with the evolution of science and technology. Sixty-five respondents indicated that codes of practice had been, or were to be, used as guidance. Thirty-four of these specified one or more codes of practice that had been used as guidance (see table 3, listed in order of frequency).

44. Given that the code of practice on guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems was only adopted in 2001, the number of times it was mentioned as being used for guidance is fairly significant. It should be noted that both the Conventions and the codes of practice concerning major accidents and chemicals were often referred to by the respondents as being used for guidance or as models.

Table 3. Codes of practice used as guidance

Code of practice	Publication	Total
Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems	2001	13
Prevention of major industrial accidents	1991	10
Safety in the use of chemicals at work	1993	9
Recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases	1995	9
Safety and health in construction	1992	8
HIV/AIDS and the world of work	2001	6
Management of alcohol- and drug-related issues in the workplace	1996	4
Safety and health in forestry work	1998	3
Ambient factors in the workplace	2001	3
Occupational exposure to airborne substances harmful to health	1980	2
Safety in the use of asbestos	1984	2
Safety and health in coal mines	1986	2
Safety and health in opencast mines	1991	2
Technical and ethical guidelines for workers' health surveillance	1992	2
Protection of workers' personal data	1997	1
Use of synthetic vitreous fibre insulation wools (glass wool, rock wool, slag wool)	2000	1
Safety and health in the non-ferrous metals industries	2001	1

Technical cooperation received and target areas

- **Question 23.** If, in the past ten years, you have received assistance or advice from the ILO targeted to address OSH concerns, please indicate to what extent and in which of the following areas this assistance has proven to be useful: **A.** development of OSH policy and implementation strategy; **B.** legal reform; **C.** awareness raising and advocacy; **D.** development of national infrastructures; **E.** strengthening inspection systems; **F.** strengthening OSH information management and dissemination systems; **G.** improving mechanisms for the collection and processing of data relevant to OSH (such as statistics on accidents and diseases, and registers of major hazard installations); **H.** building the capacities of employers' and workers' organizations for action in the area of OSH; **I.** Development of linkages and networking between national agencies, bodies and organizations involved in the different aspects of OSH; **J.** promotion of health and well-being at the workplace; **K.** gender-specific issues related to OSH; **L.** other areas. Please detail your answer with practical examples to the extent possible.

Survey response

45. Sixty-eight respondents stated that they had received useful assistance, cooperation or advice from the ILO. Table 4 provides details of the number of respondents who mentioned that they had received cooperation in a specific area.

Table 4. Areas where member States have received technical cooperation and found it useful

Question 23	Area	Number of respondents
A	Development of OSH policy and implementation strategy	32
B	Legal reform	29
C	Awareness raising and advocacy	29
D	Development of national infrastructures	18
E	Strengthening inspection systems	27
F	Strengthening OSH information management and dissemination systems	26
G	Improving mechanisms for the collection and processing of data relevant to OSH (such as statistics on accidents and diseases, and registers of major hazard installations)	21
H	Building the capacities of employers' and workers' organizations for action in the area of OSH	21
I	Development of linkages and networking between national agencies, bodies and organizations involved in the different aspects of OSH	12
J	Promotion of health and well-being at the workplace	19
K	Gender-specific issues related to OSH	8
L	Other areas	20

Technical cooperation – Suggestions for improvement

- Question 24.** Please indicate how you consider the ILO could improve its activities concerning technical cooperation in this area.

Survey response

46. In general, respondents asked for more technical cooperation in all areas listed in the survey. In particular, a number of the responses called for more action to be undertaken through the ILO regional offices and the setting up of national or regional specific programmes. It was suggested that a more targeted approach, using a limited number of standards, be used. In order to increase the impact of technical cooperation, it was proposed that member States have more responsibility for the follow-up of projects and that a follow-up framework should be established. The ILO could also provide information on projects being undertaken with the intention of using these results in other countries. Furthermore, in order to have a clear understanding of the obligations contained in Conventions, a proposal was made to establish a formal procedure for the interpretation of Conventions. The proposal to receive the most responses concerned strengthening tripartite participation and increased direct contact with employers' and workers' organizations. Capacity building (such as the development of national OSH policies and legislation, the establishment of infrastructures, financial assistance and the training of OSH specialists, personnel and employers and workers) was also frequently mentioned, as was the increased and effective provision of information on OSH and the establishment of international occupational safety and health information centres (CIS). Translation of publications and guidelines into national languages was also frequently proposed.

Remarks

47. Survey responses by member States to the question on how the ILO could improve its activities concerning technical cooperation in the area of OSH covered a wide range of

subjects, which, after close analysis, revealed a very coherent and relevant set of suggestions for achieving an improved technical cooperation implementation framework. Most of the suggestions made are in phase with current ILO efforts to improve and streamline technical cooperation delivery structures, methodology and activities, but they also show that past ILO technical cooperation has already addressed those same issues regularly.

ILO information management – Suggestions for improvements

- **Question 25.** Please indicate how you consider the ILO could improve its activities concerning the collection, processing, maintenance, dissemination and public access to OSH-related information.

Survey response

48. The vast majority of responses called for the increased use, provision and installation of the Internet and email. This was coupled with the need to ensure that countries who do not have Internet or email access are able to get the information through other means (e.g. through paper documentation, CD-ROMs, etc.). The cost of ILO publications was noted as being too high for some countries. In order to facilitate access to ILO publications, in particular the ILO *Encyclopaedia of occupational health and safety*, prices should be lowered or publications should be put on the Internet for free access. As already mentioned, the translation of the ILO web site and publications into the national language was proposed by many of the respondents. The replies also mentioned the need for increased communication between the ILO, national authorities and the social partners, as well as between member States. Technical cooperation for capacity building, in particular through the establishment and support of CIS, national infrastructures and training programmes, was another suggestion brought up in the replies. It was important to strengthen the ILO regional offices and increase cooperation between them and international and regional organizations dealing with OSH. One respondent also suggested that a forum be set up, based on the model of the Global Employment Forum, in order to promote the priority character of the OSH standards and ratification of these, and to ensure decent work in the context of globalization.

Remarks

49. Many of the suggestions for improvements to information management were also mentioned in the context of possible improvements to technical cooperation. Furthermore, translation of ILO publications into national languages was a proposal that repeatedly came up in the answers to this part of the survey, in particular with respect to promotion, technical cooperation and information management and this was noted as being an obstacle to the use of OSH Conventions, Recommendations and codes of practice.

Part II: Completion of the survey – Consultations held

- ❑ **Question 26.** Regarding the completion of this survey: **A.** were the most representative employers' organizations consulted in its preparation; **B.** were the most representative workers' organizations consulted in its preparation; **C.** was there consultation with any governmental authorities outside the ministry responsible for labour? If yes to any of the above, please describe the consultation process(es).
- ❑ **Question 27.** Regarding comments received on this survey: **A.** did employers' organizations make any comments on the survey; **B.** did workers' organizations make any comments on the survey; **C.** have the comments received been taken into account in the response submitted to this survey?

Survey response

50. Eighty-one respondents stated that they had consulted with the most representative employers' and workers' organizations. Of these, comments were received from employers' and workers' organizations by 53 member States (30 received comments from both employers' and workers' organizations', ten from employers' organizations only and 13 from workers' organizations only). In all but one case, comments made were incorporated into the governments' responses and 47 separate responses to the survey from employers' and workers' organizations were also sent in to the Office. Most of the member States' replies to the survey mentioned that the government had transmitted the survey to the most representative organizations of employers and workers in order to receive comments on their response. Other methods of consultation included the organization of tripartite workshops and social dialogue. Ten respondents indicated that they had not consulted with the employers' or workers' organizations. Twelve respondents did not reply to the questions concerning consultations; however, four of these provided a list of employers' and workers' organizations.

Remarks

51. Despite the fact that the vast majority of member States replied that they had consulted with the representative employers' and workers' organizations in the completion of the survey, just over half actually received comments.

Annex III

Survey responses from employers' and workers' organizations

Country	Organization	Acronym
Argentina	Argentine Industrial Union	UIA
	Argentina, workers' organization	–
Australia	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry	ACCI
	Australian Council of Trade Unions	ACTU
Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan Trade Union Confederation	AHIK
Bahrain	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Kingdom of Bahrain	–
Belgium	Confederation of Christian Trade Unions	CSC
Canada	Canadian Employers Council	CEC
Chile	Confederation of Production and Trade	CPC
Costa Rica	Central Workers' Movement of Costa Rica	CMTC
Croatia	Croatian Association of Employers	HUP
	Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Croatia	KNSH
	Croatian Trade Union Association	–
Cyprus	Cyprus Workers' Confederation	SEK
Denmark	Danish Employers' Confederation	DA
	Danish Confederation of Trade Unions	LO
	Danish Federation of Building, Construction and Woodworkers' Unions	BAT-Cartel
Egypt	Federation of Egyptian Industries	FEI
	Egyptian Trade Union Federation	ETUF
Germany	Confederation of German Employers' Associations	BDA
	German Confederation of Trade Unions	DGB
Greece	General Confederation of Greek Workers	GSEE
India	All India Manufacturers' Organization	KSB
Japan	Japan Business Federation (Nippon Keidanren)	–
	Japanese Trade Union Confederation	JTUC-RENGO
Lebanon	Confederation of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in Lebanon	CCCIA
Malaysia	Malaysian Employers' Federation	MEF
	Malaysian Trades Union Congress	MTUC

Country	Organization	Acronym
Netherlands	Netherlands Confederation of Trade Unions	FNV
New Zealand	Business NZ	–
	New Zealand Council of Trade Unions	NZCTU
Niger	Democratic Confederation of the Workers of Niger	CDTN
	Confederation of Workers' Trade Unions of Niger	USTN
	General Union of Workers of Niger	UGTN
Pakistan	All Pakistan Federation of Trade Unions	APFTU
Poland	All-Poland Trade Union Alliance	OPZZ
Portugal	Confederation of Portuguese Industry	CIP
	Portuguese Confederation of Commerce	CCP
	General Confederation of Portuguese Workers	CGTP-IN
South Africa	Business South Africa	BSA
Spain	Trade Union Confederation of Workers' Committees	CC.OO
Switzerland	Confederation of Swiss Employers	UPS
United Republic of Tanzania	Association of Tanzania Employers	ATE
	Trade Union Congress of Tanzania	TUCTA
Uganda	Federation of Uganda Employers	FUE
United States	United States Council for International Business	USCIB
International	International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations	IUF

Annex IV

Relevant ILO instruments – Statistics

Figure 1. Number of ratifications of ILO fundamental, occupational safety and health and labour inspection Conventions as at 1 January 2003

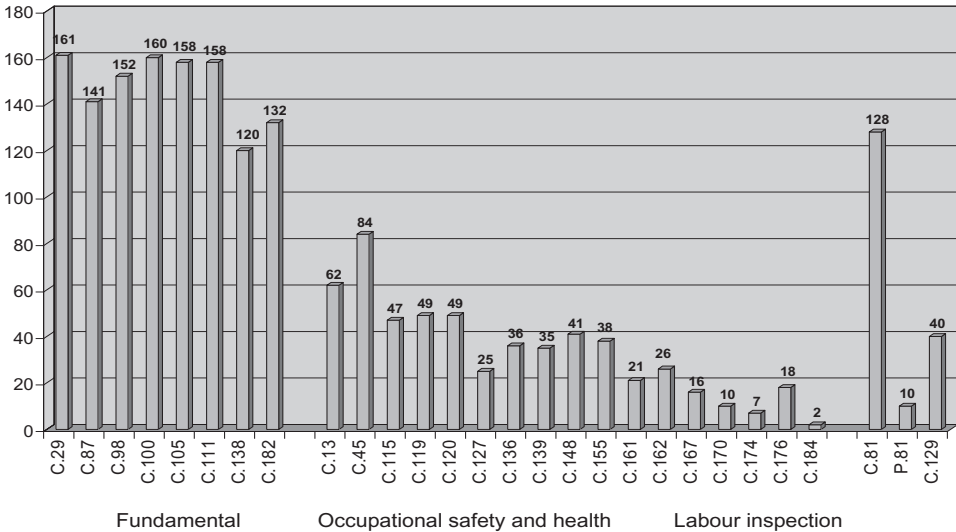


Figure 2. Growth in the number of ratifications of ILO fundamental, occupational safety and health and labour inspection Conventions, 1993-2002

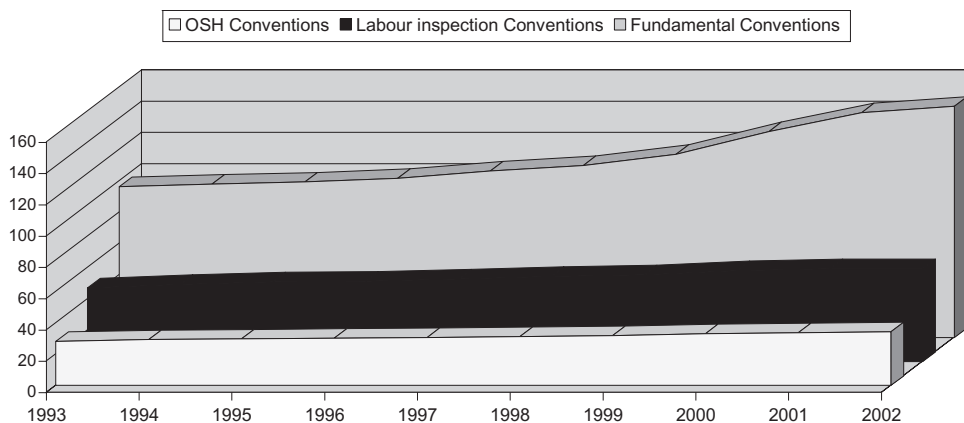
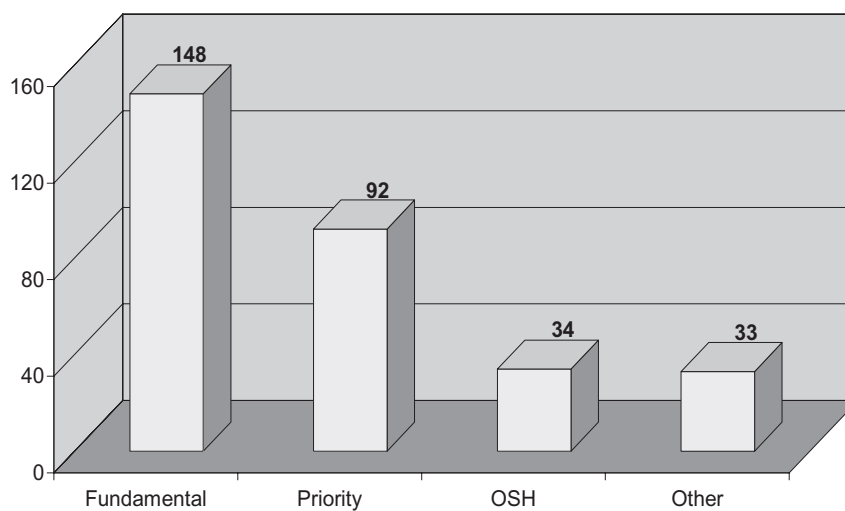


Figure 3. Average number of ratifications of ILO Conventions, by group



Annex V

ILO global network of multidisciplinary advisory teams

The following table shows availability of OSH and standards experts as of December 2002. Contacts for multidisciplinary advisory teams (MDTs) are available on the ILO web site at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/support/lib/contact/index.htm>

Region	Location of MDT	OSH expert	Standards expert
Central Africa	Yaoundé	No	Yes
West Africa (French-speaking)	Abidjan and Dakar	Yes	No
East Africa	Addis Ababa	Yes	Yes
North Africa	Cairo	Yes	No
Southern Africa	Harare	Yes	Yes
East Asia	Bangkok	Yes	Yes
Arab States	Beirut	Yes	Yes
Central and Eastern Europe	Budapest	Yes	No
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	Moscow	Yes	Yes
Andean	Lima	Yes	Yes
South-East Asia and the Pacific	Manila	No	Yes
South Asia	New Delhi	Yes	Yes
Caribbean	Port-of-Spain	No	Yes
Central America	San José	Yes	Yes
Southern Americas	Santiago	Covered by Lima	Yes

Annex VI

Key ILO knowledge bases on occupational safety and health

Knowledge base	Available formats
ILO codes of practice on OSH ILO codes of practice contain practical recommendations intended for all those with responsibility for occupational safety and health in both the public and private sectors. These codes of practice are submitted to the Governing Body for approval for publication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The most recent are available on the Internet (free)■ Priced publications
Database of OSH institutions and CIS centres Provides names, addresses, contact points and information on the scope of activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Internet (free)
The CIS bibliographic database (CISDOC/CISILO) The CIS bibliographic database exists in English and French and contains about 45,000 citations of documents that deal with occupational accidents and diseases as well as ways of preventing them. Every record contains a detailed bibliographic description, a full abstract and indexing descriptors drawn from the CIS Thesaurus. Every year, at least 2,100 new records are added.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Internet (subscription)■ CD-ROM (priced)■ Commercial distribution through the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS)■ SilverPlatter
Safety and health at work – ILO/CIS Bulletin The printed version of the CISDOC/CISILO database is published six times a year in English and French. A Spanish version of this publication is produced by the CIS National Centre for Spain under the title <i>Boletín bibliográfico de la prevención</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Publication (subscription; at a special reduced price for developing countries)
Encyclopaedia of occupational health and safety The new fourth edition, in Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish, contains over 100 chapters comprising more than 1,000 separate articles covering all aspects of OSH. It is recognized internationally as an authoritative reference for OSH programming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Internet (subscription)■ CD-ROM (subscription)■ Priced publication
Legislative texts on OSH (LEGOSH) The Database of Legislative Texts on Occupational Safety and Health (LEGOSH) consists of references to more than 3,500 (as of 2001) laws, regulations and international legal instruments dealing with OSH. These are classified according to jurisdiction type and subject category.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Internet (free)■ CD-ROM (free)
CIS Thesaurus on occupational safety and health The CIS Thesaurus is the trilingual (English, French, Spanish) source of terms used to index the CIS bulletin and database. It can also supply “meta” tags for indexing web pages, and it has been used to organize several national OSH libraries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Print (1999 most recent edition)■ Diskette■ CD-ROM (under development)■ Priced publication
Occupational safety and health series This series includes 72 publications on various aspects of occupational safety and health. It is printed, in general, in English only.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Priced publication■ English

Knowledge base	Available formats
<p>International Chemical Safety Cards (ICSCs)</p> <p>ICSCs summarize essential health and safety information on chemical substances for their use at the “shop floor” level by workers and employers in factories, agriculture, construction and other workplaces. ICSC information is verified and peer reviewed by internationally recognized experts, as well as by employers’ and workers’ organizations. Derived products include the <i>Compiler’s Guide</i> and a list of standard phrases.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Internet (free; in Chinese, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese)
<p>International hazard datasheets on occupations</p> <p>Each data sheet, in English, Russian and Spanish, identifies the key hazards for a specific job, and provides the related preventive and protective measures needed to avoid exposure or injury. Relevant CISDOC and other ILO OSH references are also included.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ CD-ROM (free) ■ Internet (free)

Annex VII

International collaboration

Name	Partners/status aims/activities/output	ILO input and achievements
Intergovernmental organizations		
International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Partners include ILO, UNEP, WHO ■ Covered by MOU since 1980 ■ Promotes and supports internationally peer-reviewed risk assessments on chemicals; assessment of chemicals in food; poison control centres; WHO recommended classification of pesticides by hazard; harmonized methodologies for chemical risk assessment; knowledge bases and training manuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Manages and oversees production and translation of ICSCs ■ Ensures participation of employers and workers ■ Manages jointly the IPCS ■ 1,300 ICSCs available on the Internet in 14 languages ■ Around 2 million single ICSC downloads per year
Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Partners include FAO, ILO, OECD, UNEP, UNIDO, UNITAR, WHO ■ Created in 1995 to coordinate and foster joint planning of chemical safety activities of member organizations ■ Managed by the Inter-Organization Coordinating Committee with a secretariat and trust fund administered by WHO ■ Coordinates implementation of UNCED recommendations on environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals related to risk assessment of chemicals; harmonization of classification and labelling; information exchange; risk reduction; capacity building; prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous substances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides technical and policy input in all areas of action ■ Promotes ILO chemical safety standards ■ Ensures participation of employers and workers in activities under the umbrella of the IOMC ■ Production of the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) ■ Joint management of ILO/UNITAR programme on chemical hazard communication
Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Established by the 1994 International Conference on Chemical Safety in Stockholm ■ Managed by Forum Standing Committee, which includes employers and workers ■ Secretariat and trust fund administered by WHO ■ Sets priorities for action to implement UNCED recommendations on environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals ■ Meets every three years and reports to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) on priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contributes to overall IOMC input in IFCS activities ■ Promotes ILO chemical safety standards ■ Ensures participation of employers and workers ■ IFCS priorities for action include calls for ratification of Conventions Nos. 170 and 174 and the implementation of the GHS

ILO standards-related activities in the area of OSH

Name	Partners/status aims/activities/output	ILO input and achievements
Joint ILO/WHO Committee on Occupational Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Governed by general ILO/WHO agreement since 1950 ■ Elaborates periodically recommendations on inter-agency collaboration, policy and priorities for action in occupational health ■ Includes ILO employer and worker membership ■ Joint work on the global burden of diseases statistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Close collaboration with WHO collaborating centres network ■ Joint ILO/WHO action on OSH in Africa ■ Joint International Programme on Global Elimination of Silicosis led by ILO ■ Key recent ILO contribution is the revised <i>International classification of radiographs of pneumoconioses</i> (2000) ■ Promotion of ILO standards (Conventions Nos. 155, 161, 162, 176) and relevant codes of practice
Joint ILO/WHO Committee on the Health of Seafarers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ World Health Assembly and ILO Governing Body are formally informed of activities and approve publication of outputs ■ Good internal collaboration between SafeWork and the Maritime Industries Branch (MARIT) ■ Elaboration of international harmonized standards concerning the medical examination of seafarers ■ Key publication is <i>Guidelines for conducting pre-sea and periodic medical fitness examinations for seafarers</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides technical input in the development of harmonized guidelines ■ Promotes ILO OSH standards (Convention No. 161, Recommendation No. 171) ■ Output based on ILO standards on occupational health
Interagency Committee on Radiation Safety (IACRS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Includes European Commission, FAO, IAEA, ILO, OECD/NEA, PAHO, UNSCEAR, WHO; ICRP, ICRU, IRPA and ISO have observer status ■ Secretariat administered by IAEA ■ Inter-agency consultation and collaboration in radiation safety matters ■ Elaboration and publication of radiation safety standards and methodology ■ International conferences and meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides input on policy and technical matters ■ Ensures participation of employers and workers ■ Promotes ILO standards related to ionizing radiation safety ■ Key publication for the ILO is the <i>International basic safety standards for protection against ionizing radiation and for the safety of radiation sources</i>

Name	Partners/status aims/activities/output	ILO input and achievements
United Nations Drug Control Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ IGOs involved in drug control activities include ICAO, IMO, WHO. In addition, several international NGOs participate in global activities related to the subject ■ Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction, which was unanimously endorsed in June 1998 by the Twentieth Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides input into all United Nations and international bodies involved in the subject and promotes the ILO code of practice on the management of alcohol- and drug-related issues in the workplace through policy and guidelines for governments and employers' and workers' organizations; orientation, promotion and training seminars for social partners and representatives of enterprises and unions; links to community-based programmes and services ■ The ILO has a lead role in areas related to the working environment
Safety and Health in Ship Breaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Includes International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), ILO, International Metalworkers Federation (IMF), IMO, International Transport Federation (ITF), UNEP (Secretariat of the Basel Convention), World Bank ■ Development of the Global Programme and strategies (ongoing) ■ Development of ILO technical guidelines (ongoing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The ILO has a lead role and provides the secretariat for this activity ■ Follow-up to November 2000 Governing Body endorsement of conclusions of the Tripartite Meeting on the Social and Labour Impact of Globalization in the Manufacture of Transport Equipment ■ A tripartite meeting of experts will be held in 2003
Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ PAHO serves as the WHO Regional Office for the Americas and as the health organization of the Inter-American System ■ Joint activity with ILO Lima Office to establish and support a regional OSH virtual network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ILO provides funds for sharing with PAHO the cost of administering the network ■ The network now has 800 members from 40 countries
Andean Community of Nations (CAN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regional intergovernmental organization created in 1997 ■ Aims are to enhance economic and social integration of the countries that belong to the Andean region and to promote a systematic improvement of the well-being and quality of life of their citizens ■ Implements the directives of the Cartagena Agreement of May 1999 on labour aspects, including working conditions and OSH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The ILO Multidisciplinary Advisory Team for Andean developed the draft of an Andean standard on working conditions and OSH ■ Joint organization of high-level tripartite technical workshops for adopting the Andean OSH standard

Name	Partners/status aims/activities/output	ILO input and achievements
Regional organizations		
European Commission (EC)	<p>ILO links to the EC related to OSH include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs ■ European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions ■ European Agency for Safety and Health at Work <p>Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conferences, seminars ■ Recommendations relating to both EU and ILO principles on OSH ■ Extension of European Union surveys in accession countries (in relation to national OSH profiles) ■ Current joint development with ILO CIS of an Internet "OSH Portal" to access OSH information on the Web and to form a worldwide network to access reliable OSH information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Common aims in promoting OSH, particularly as they apply to the enlargement process and strengthening capacity of candidate countries to achieve the Community <i>acquis</i> ■ Coordination of action plans and implementation of projects on employment and social protection ■ Organization of seminars and promotion of ILO instruments ■ The ILO is recognized as the lead agency in social protection and employment fields, both of which have strong links with OSH issues ■ The EC provides regular funding for the IPCS ICSC project and ILO CIS activities ■ Current establishment of joint ILO/European Union consultations on social protection, including OSH
Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Partners are the Council of Europe, ILO, Office of the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact, WHO ■ The Social Cohesion Initiative, under Working Table II: Economic Reconstruction, Development and Cooperation, was set up to ensure that social issues were not left behind in the progress of reconstruction. Development of action plans in several priority fields: health, housing, social protection, including OSH, social dialogue, vocational training and employment policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Coordination of action plans and implementation of projects on employment and social protection ■ The ILO is the lead institution in social protection and employment (OSH falls into both categories)
Nongovernmental organizations		
International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Represents 20 national associations with an overall membership of 20,000 OSH professionals and has consultative status with WHO and ILO ■ Aims are to promote and develop occupational hygiene throughout the world ■ Convenes the International Scientific Conference of IOHA every two years ■ Has provided significant input into the elaboration and promotion of the ILO code of practice on guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems and in the elaboration of a chemical hazard control tool kit intended for SMEs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Co-sponsors the IOHA International Scientific Conference ■ Participation of the ILO at IOHA management board meetings ■ OSH professionals recognize ILO as leading IGO in the area of OSH ■ Increased awareness of ILO OSH standards by OSH professions ■ Effective network for the promotion of ILO OSH standards

Name	Partners/status aims/activities/output	ILO input and achievements
International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Professional society founded in 1906 with the aim to foster the scientific progress, knowledge and development of occupational health and safety in all its aspects ■ The ICOH has a membership of 2,000 professionals from 93 countries ■ The ICOH has consultative status with the ILO, ISSA, UNEP, United Nations and WHO ■ Triennial World Congress on Occupational Health ■ 35 permanent scientific committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Membership in the Task Group on Code of Ethics ■ Provides input into the preparation of the World Congress ■ Key ILO role in the elaboration of the ICOH International Code of Ethics for Occupational Health Professionals ■ Joint training activities ■ Input into work in ICOH committees on respiratory diseases, OSH services and developing countries
International Association of Labour Inspection (IALI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Partners include governments and (in particular) labour inspectorates of the IALI member countries and the ILO ■ Aims are to provide a professional forum for the exchange of information and experience in labour inspection work and to promote closer cooperation between related authorities and institutions and professional understanding of all aspects of labour inspection; to provide opportunities for the exchange of experience in, and views about, labour inspection and the implementation of occupational health and safety and other employment legislation; to disseminate information about all such matters, through its congress, technical conferences, symposia, workshops, international inquiries, reports and other publications in order to increase the professionalism, the impact and the efficiency of labour inspection throughout the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides mutual ILO/IALI support in the organization of events and meetings related to labour inspection issues ■ Strengthening of labour inspection worldwide, by providing knowledge and resources for policy reform, training needs and data analysis ■ Collaboration, awareness raising and network building with national labour inspection experts in order to promote decent work and the ratification of Conventions Nos. 81, 129 and 184
International Social Security Association (ISSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ International organization created in 1927 that brings together national institutions and administrative bodies dealing with one or more aspects of social security, namely all forms of compulsory social protection that form an integral part of the social security system of these countries ■ Key mechanism for the ILO is the ISSA Special Commission on Prevention, composed of 12 ISSA international sections on prevention of occupational risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Joint organization and co-sponsorship of the triennial World Congress on Occupational Safety and Health ■ Long-standing ILO/ISSA partnership in organizing the World Congress 16 times since 1954 ■ Good forum for publicizing ILO action in the area of OSH ■ Access to national occupational accident and disease mechanisms and data

Name	Partners/status aims/activities/output	ILO input and achievements
International Ergonomics Association (IEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aims are to advance the science and practice of ergonomics at an international level and to enhance the contribution of the ergonomics discipline to society ■ Has 21 technical committees on different aspects of ergonomics, including OSH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participation and input into the triennial IEA Congress ■ Development of the ILO publication <i>Ergonomic checkpoints</i> ■ Ongoing preparation of a publication on ergonomic checkpoints for agriculture
Asia Pacific Occupational Safety and Health Organization (AOSHO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The objective of AOSHO is to promote mutual understanding and cooperation among the communities in the Asia-Pacific region as well as to contribute to the enhancement of occupational safety and health in these communities through the exchange of information and views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participation in the annual AOSHO Conference ■ Collaboration on information gathering and dissemination ■ Promotion of ILO OSH standards in the Asia-Pacific region
Major international scientific congresses, conferences and symposia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Partners include IGOs, NGOs such as ICOH, IOHA and ISSA, UNEP and WHO, as well as several national specialized institutions in the host countries ■ ILO/ISSA World Congress on OSH (triennial) ■ International Conference on Occupational Respiratory Diseases (quinquennial) ■ ICOH World Congress on Occupational Health (triennial) ■ IOHA International Scientific Conference on OSH (biennial) ■ World Congress of the IEA (triennial) ■ AOSHO Conference (regional; annual) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The ILO is involved in preparing the meetings, and providing input for the themes and agenda, and resources for the participation of developing countries ■ An effective way of promoting ILO standards and values ■ Demands for ILO participation are increasing significantly, reflecting recognition of the ILO as a leading international organization in the area of OSH by both IGOs and NGOs