

Committee: World Health Organization (WHO)

Topic A: Regulating the safety in companies in order to keep the workers healthy

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The World Health Organization (WHO), established in 1948, is an international specialized agency of the United Nations which is devoted to improving world public health and aims to provide each person access to fundamental and vital healthcare. WHO main work areas are health systems; health through the life-course; non communicable and communicable diseases; preparation, supervision and response; and support services.

The name of the World Health Organization was given until 1948. Before, it was called the International Sanitary Conference. This committee was originally held on June 23, 1851 lasting a total of 13 conferences focusing on combating diseases such as cholera and yellow fever. The successes of all these conferences resulted in the Pan-American Sanitary Bureau and the Office international d'Hygiène Publique. After World War II, the League of Nations established the World Health Organization of the League of Nations. After that, the UN absorbed all of the other committees along with this one to form what we now know as WHO.

WHO is devoted to ensure worker's mental and physical health, safety, well-being, and a healthy workplace which are vital concerns to hundreds of millions of working people worldwide since it helps improve the productivity, competitiveness and sustainability of enterprises, communities, and to national and regional economies.

Half of the world's population is economically active and spends at least one third of

their time at the workplace. Fair employment and adequate work are very important social determinants of health, and healthy workers are a vital requirement for productivity and economic development. However, only a small percentage of workers worldwide has access to work related health services for primary prevention and management of work-related diseases and injuries.

Certain world health issues, such as noncommunicable diseases, result in increasing rates of long-term illness and absence from work. These issues challenge health systems' ability to preserve and restore the capacity of workers to maintain themselves being economically active

WHO estimated more than 2.78 million people dying each year worldwide for work related issues. The majority of deaths are caused by work-related diseases or illnesses, accounting for 2 million deaths, while the rest are caused due to occupational injuries. Vehicle accidents and collisions, violence, fatal falls, slips or trips, and being struck by objects or equipment are the most common leading causes of workers death:

Transportation incidents – 40%

Falls, slips, trips – 17%

Violence and other injuries (includes homicide and suicide) – 16%

Contact with objects and equipment – 14%

Exposure to harmful substances or environments – 10%

Fires and explosions – 2%

These data, collected by the International Labour Organization and the World Health Organization, only reflect the injuries and illnesses that occur in formally registered workplaces.

There are workplaces such as industries and factories in many countries where work-related injuries or illnesses are not recorded and most of the workers are employed informally.

In order to face the numerous problems of occupational health and safety and looking at the new developments and trends in the global working life, WHO established the Workers Health Global Plan of Action based on the Global Strategy on Occupational Health for All in 1996.

Global action plan:

- 1) To devise and implement policy instruments on workers' health;
- 2) To safeguard and promote health at the workplace;
- 3) To develop the performance of, and access to occupational health services;
- 4) To give and communicate proof for action and practice;
- 5) To incorporate workers' health into other policies.

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