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Key issues on occupational accidents and diseases in Asia

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ABSTRACT

Occupational safety and health (OSH) has been noticeably drawn attention as a safeguard at work across Asian countries in that OSH condition is a prerequisite element to workers' life. This study was to take a look at key features of occupational accidents and diseases (OAD) in the world and to understand how to do prevention of OAD in Asia.

The study was prepared to make a presentation to participants who attended an international OSH workshop held in Incheon, Korea in 2013. The workshop was a fellowship meeting taken place annually as one of work items under ILO/Korea Partnership Program over years. The participants were 15 officials, one from each country in Asia and the Pacific, who were working on OSH or labor relations in their government agencies.

It was found in 2013 that there were globally 321,000 fatal accidents and 2.02 million fatal diseases every year. There were 317 million non-fatal accidents while 160 million diseases at work every year. Deaths and injuries took a particularly heavy toll in developing countries where a large part of the population is engaged in hazardous activities such as agriculture, construction, fishing and mining. For national OSH systems to deal effectively with the prevention of OAD, as steps for the prevention of OAD, it is necessary to: Establish the related legislative framework while to build capacity for recognition and reporting of OAD; Improve mechanisms for collection and analysis of OAD data; Improve collaboration of OSH and social institutes to strengthen employment compensation schemes; Integrate the prevention of OAD into OSH inspection programs; and Reinforce social dialogue among representatives of governments, employers and workers.

This study showed that fatal and non-fatal accidents and diseases were seriously occurred at work in the world. Such OAD would more hazardously affect the workers and their family members in the developing and low-income countries, indicating that it is critically important for each country to set up OAD prevention as a highest priority in OSH policies to reduce the OAD in Asia.