

# OSH & Development

## No. 6, March 2005

Published in cooperation with the Swedish Association for Occupational and Environmental Health & Development (UFA), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the Scientific Committee on "Occupational Health and Development" of the International Commission of Occupational Health (ICOH), and the Swedish National Institute for Working Life (NIWL).  
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## This issue

OSH & Development, March 2005

Kaj Elgstrand

...opens with a section about dust. Inspired by Gideon Gerhadsson's article, "The end of silicosis in Sweden", (see "OSH & Development", no. 4), *Per Malmberg* has pondered about driving forces behind the elimination of this disease in Sweden. *Alireza Dehdashti* summarises a number of actions taken to reduce asbestos exposure in brake lining manufacturing in Iran. *Gunnar Rosén & Ing-Marie Andersson* introduce a visual training material on airborne dust control.

*Shyam Pingle* highlights the achievements of a project to improve conditions in a number of large workplaces in India. Actions taken during the project included the training of 'change agents', baseline surveys, "on the job" implementation and evaluation of results. Workers' exposure to noise, dust and heat stress have been reduced and as a spin-off, the enterprise has saved US\$ 400,000, an amount which vastly surpassed the investment required for the project.

*Lars Magnusson* tries to help the editor of "OSH & Development" understand the trade differences and relationship between Sweden, a small industrial country, and Brazil, a large developing country.

Two long-term development cooperation programmes on "Work & Health" are described by *Kaj Elgstrand & Nils Petersson*. SALTRA was launched in seven countries in Central America in 2004, (see "OSH & Development" no. 5) and this issue gives an update on the first 15 months of the programme. The article also includes information on WAHSA,

a programme launched in October 2004 in a number of countries in southern Africa.

*Ian Eddington* discusses the status of occupational health and safety in small island developing states. He also provides information about the "First Pacific Conference on Sustainable Development for Small Island Developing Nations", to be held in Papua New Guinea in October 2005.

The Swedish National Institute for Working Life has organised ten international training programmes for occupational safety and health experts from developing countries over the last ten years. (The articles by Alireza Dehdashti and Shyam Pingle, outlined above, originate from projects carried out as part of these training programmes.) The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida, sponsored the training programmes and in 2004 contracted an external evaluator to analyse their relevance and outcomes. The evaluation is summarised on pages 47-52. Some years ago it was decided that a textbook should be published containing the materials and pedagogical methods used in the training programmes. The textbook will be published in 2006. Its orientation and contents are summarised on page 53-54.

Finally, you will find an excerpt from a recent issue of the South China Morning Post concerning the ongoing tragedy in Chinese mining operations: "The world's most dangerous job?"

## Occupational health and safety in sustainable development: Small Island Developing States

OSH & Development, March 2005

Ian Eddington

Comment is made about the role of occupational health and safety in sustainable development in general, and about the status of occupational health and safety in the review of the Barbados Plan of action for the Sustainable development of Small Island Developing States. A conference initiative to promote the contribution that occupational health and safety can make to the sustainable development of small island developing states is discussed.

Recently, considerable energy has been invested in reviewing the Barbados Plan of Action (BPoA) for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (ref. 11). The review of the BPoA has been effected through forums like the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Commission for Sustainable Development in New York (ref. 8), and regional preparatory meetings in the Pacific, Caribbean and AIMS (Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, and the South China Seas) regions. These meetings culminated in the Mauritius Declaration, an outcome of a final review meeting in the series, held in Mauritius in January 2005 (ref. 11).

The Mauritius Declaration reaffirms the Principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (including its plan of action - Agenda 21) (ref.7), the Millennium Declaration (ref. 12), and the BPoA. The Rio Declaration (principles 1, 7, 10, 13, 14) recognizes the importance of health, and particularly

occupational health for sustainable development. Agenda 21 outlines specific implementation strategies and schedules for occupational health and safety (ref. 1). Item 20 and Goal 8 of the Millennium Declaration likewise acknowledge the importance of "decent and productive work". But what of the Mauritius Strategy (ref. 11) which resulted from the review of the BPoA itself: does it specifically acknowledge occupational health and safety as relevant to the development needs of Small Island Developing States?

Occupational health and safety is not specifically mentioned as a generic area of concern in the Mauritius Strategy. However, specific OH&S related topics are mentioned including HIV/Aids, disaster planning and management, transport of hazardous wastes, narcotics and small arms trafficking, and terrorism. These concerns have implications for the work of customs officers, armed and emergency service personnel, politicians, pilots, transport workers, sex workers, tourism workers and, through these, impact on the whole of society. The need for action in the fields of public health, health care services, and health education is also stressed. Above all, the strategy links health to economic and social development and recognises the key importance of the UNESCO Decade of Sustainable Development (ref. 13). The "UNESCO decade" recalls the key words of Principle 1 of the Rio Declaration: "Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development.

They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature."

Unfortunately, the Mauritius Strategy has not captured the full range of occupational health issues which impact on Small Island Developing Nations. Some of the worst forms of child labour (including child soldiers and child prostitution) exist in some of these nations. In many countries there is violence towards children and women. Because of law and order issues, aid workers, peace keepers, and politicians are also at risk. Work related, infectious disease is another issue not mentioned although it is especially relevant to some types of work, e.g. to prisoners and prison staff, in mining and forestry, fishing and tourism. Mining and forestry are known to be high-risk industries and bullying and piracy are associated with fishing. Some of the SIDS countries are failed states going through a rebuilding process while others have recently suffered the trauma of war and/or disaster. In particular, the tax base of a number of SIDS countries is too small to generate sufficient funds for the work of government itself, let alone for occupational health services. Most international aid funding is spent on other concerns.

Web addresses for UN pages providing a descriptive list of Small Island Developing States, and general information about these States and the BPoA, are provided in the bibliography (ref. 10, ref. 11). The particular focus of this paper is on the Pacific Ocean group of SIDS, some of which provided reports for the review of the BPoA. For example, Papua New Guinea identified health, law and order, poverty eradication, child mortality, and gender equality and empowerment of women, as key challenges. The need for integrative legislation, (rather than dispersed, stand alone, Department based legislation), was also mentioned. Considerable development work needs to be done

in respect to occupational and environmental health law.

Samoa also highlighted health care and health education as key issues of concern: HIV/Aids, SARS, management of toxic, hazardous and solid, wastes, contamination, health services, disaster planning and management, child mortality, and discrimination against women, were mentioned and all these issues have a work dimension. The Samoan report acknowledged the importance of NGOs for capacity building and the need for publications. Reports from Fiji, Palau, the Cook Islands, Tuvalu, the Marshall Islands, and Tonga are available (ref. 11) and reveal common concerns about many of the issues already mentioned.

In general, the reports reveal a piecemeal and insignificant acknowledgement of occupational health and safety. It is highly probable that further articulation of the role of occupational health and safety in sustainable development for SIDS could be beneficial. The benefits to civil society from the concept of "duty of care" are immense. Although occupational health and safety is central to sustainable development, articulation of its role is generally at an early stage. However, there are some initiatives. For example, the Danish Trade Unions have begun (ref. 4) to implement the ILO's sustainable workplace ideal. The Danish project (known as the TSW Project) links workplaces, educational institutions, researchers and trade unionists in efforts to create sustainable development processes for the workplace. Labour concerns have joined the environment, human rights, and anti corruption measures as the pillars of Kofi Annan's "Global Compact" (ref. 9). Other leading pioneers include the Swedish Association for Occupational and Environmental Health and Development, working with the ICOH Scientific Committee on Occupational Health and Development, the Swedish

International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), and the Swedish National Institute for Working Life.

The ICOH, as the peak international NGO for occupational health and safety, is well placed to take a lead by offering its expertise to assist the social and economic progress of the Small Island Developing States. An ICOH conference initiative offered in response to this challenge is discussed below.

The conference will be held in Madang, Papua New Guinea (PNG), on 18, 19 and 20 October 2005 as a joint initiative of the ICOH and the Papua New Guinea Occupational Health and Safety Association (SEFTI). A perusal of Table 1 reveals that two conferences are named. These conferences (the "First Pacific" and the "Annual SEFTI") will share the same technical programme at the event. Further, one common theme "The role of occupational health and safety in sustainable development" links both conferences. This common theme builds a bridge between the other general themes of the two conferences: "Capacity building for sustainable development" in the case of the "First Pacific" conference, and "Occupational health and safety for all" in the case of the "Annual SEFTI" conference. It is hoped that bridging two conference themes in this manner will help facilitate the discovery of insights and synergies.

The decision to organise a shared domain conference in Papua New Guinea was taken in full recognition of the possibility pointed out by Kuhn (ref. 5) and Oakeshott (ref. 6) that humans sometimes have communications difficulties in successfully crossing domain boundaries. Also the PNG audience, (like some audiences in industrial countries), falls into the "hard to reach" category. Such audiences are hall-marked in non pejorative language by fatalism, poor information processing skills, distrust of dominant institutions,

and lack of access to communication channels (ref. 3). Other relevant dimensions are low self esteem, an ethnicity dimension (PNG has diverse and rich ethnic groups), and low literacy. Organising the conference should prove to be interesting and demanding, even in beautiful Madang. As the conference web page indicates partners are most welcome.

The relatively high cost of air transport to Papua New Guinea is a factor which brings a more basic meaning to the notion of being hard to reach. Because of this, the conference organisers may decide at a later date to organise a "virtual conference" to complement the Madang event. This would involve publishing papers contributed by experts from all over the world which would help the conference achieve one of its goals, namely, the publication of a body of knowledge, publicly available for discussion and application in Small Island Developing States. Production expenses would need to be covered by a cost to researchers. If you wish to be informed about this possibility please contact the organisers [eddington@usq.edu.au](mailto:eddington@usq.edu.au). Other goals of the conference are extended networking, promotion of partnerships, capacity building for SIDS and promotion of occupational health in development.

More details about the conference and its aims are available at <http://www.usq.edu.au/seftiicohconf/registration.htm> The conference is a not-for-profit event and will be the first of a short series of such conferences planned for Small Island Developing States in the Pacific.

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Table 1. Information about the conferences

### First Pacific Conference on Sustainable Development for Small Island Developing Nations

#### General Themes

- Capacity building for sustainable development
- The role of occupational and environmental health in sustainable development

#### Specific Areas of Interest

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Climate change  | • Education for sustainable development                                    |
| • Natural and environmental disasters                             | • Peace studies, civil society and social justice                          |
| • Waste management  | • Business responsibility for sustainable development                      |
| • Coastal, marine and freshwater management                       | • Culture and sustainable development                                      |
| • Land resource   | • Sustainable production and consumption                                   |
| • Sustainable tourism   | • National enabling environments   |
| • Biodiversity  | • Knowledge management   |
| • Transport and communication                                     | • Art, literature, music and sustainable development                       |
| • Science and technology  | • Special sustainable development needs of small island developing nations |
| • Government, industry, labor and NGOs in sustainable development | • Literacy for sustainable development                                     |
| • HIV/AIDS  | • Policing, peacekeeping and corrective services                           |
| • Trade and trade issues  |  |
| • The role of aid in sustainable development                      |  |

### The Annual Conference of the Papua New Guinea Occupational Health and Safety Association

#### General Themes

- The role of occupational health and safety in sustainable development
- Occupational health and safety for all

#### Specific Areas of Interest

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • Education and training for OH&S   | • OH&S services                                     |
| • Tools and techniques for OH&S   | • OH&S legislation and law                          |
| • Alcohol and drugs in the workplace  | • Accident investigation and prevention             |
| • Workplace bullying  | • Terrorism and work                                |
| • HIV/AIDS: OH&S and communicable disease   | • History of occupational and environmental disease |
| • Promotion of OH&S   | • OH&S in small industry and the informal sector    |
| • Work for the disabled   | • OH&S nursing                                      |
| • OH&S in industry: agriculture, mining, forestry, fishing, manufacturing, construction, tourism, and diving                                    | • Child labour                                      |
| • OH&S of shift-work, thermal factors, toxicology of metals, noise and vibration, unemployment and health, and the psychosocial factors of work | • Literacy for OH&S                                 |
| • OH&S for developing countries   | • Gender Issues and sexual harassment               |
|   | • OH&S of policing, peacekeeping and corrective     |
|   | • Services fix this sentence                        |
|   | • OH&S and traditional justice systems              |

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## Evaluation of international training

OSH & Development, March 2005

The Swedish National Institute for Working Life (NIWL) has organised ten international training programmes since 1993. The programmes have been financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). In March 2004 Sida contracted Mr. Nils Öström at the Stockholm Group for Development Studies AB, to evaluate the training programmes. This article is a summary of the evaluation.

### *The training programmes*

The training programmes evaluated included six, one-year programmes, "Occupational Safety and Health in Practice", for participants from Africa, Latin America, Asia and Eastern and Central Europe. In addition, four, two-year programmes, "Occupational Safety, Health & Development", for participants from Latin America, Middle East, Southern and Northern Africa and Asia were also evaluated.

The basic training programmes are based on the belief that efficient occupational safety and health work also benefits production and productivity. Cooperation is required between OSH researchers, experts and professionals as well as production staff. Cooperation is also required between employers, employees and government authorities. For this reason, the course participants are selected to represent a mix of expertise to facilitate an exchange of information and experiences within the group of participants and between Sweden and cooperating countries. All courses are designed to

present and expose theories and practices to the participants, including the implementation of an action for change in the participants' own working environment.

The short-term objectives, to be achieved by the participants at the end of the training, are to:

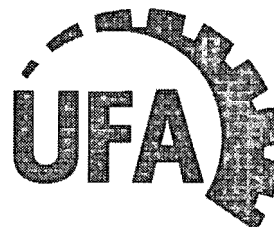
- plan, carry out, follow-up, report and evaluate an action for change;
- cope with problems and possibilities related to improvement of occupational safety and health;
- support and manage development of work organisation and working conditions, making use of workers' involvement.

The primary objective directly relates to the action oriented project implemented by each of the participants in their home country while the other objectives complement the implementation of the project.

Since 1998, each course has run over two years and includes three main study periods with a follow-up activity between the first two periods. There are approximately 24 participants in each course with a group of 6 Swedish tutors involved in all periods of the course. The group of tutors is called the "course faculty" and includes the course leader. Other lecturers, in addition to the Course Faculty, are engaged in the course, mainly during the first period in Sweden.

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