



Declaration on Workers Health

Approved at the Seventh Meeting of the
WHO Collaborating Centres for Occupational Health
Stresa, Italy, 8-9 June 2006

Preamble

1. We, representatives of 45 WHO Collaborating Centres in Occupational Health from 32 countries, gathered at the Seventh Meeting of our Global Network in Stresa, Italy, 8-9 June 2006, organized by the International Centre for Pesticides and Health Risk Prevention and the World Health Organization, with the participation of the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Commission on Occupational Health and the International Occupational Hygiene Association. We discussed the follow up of the WHO Global Strategy for Occupational Health, proposed by the Second Meeting of our Network in Beijing, China, 1994 and subsequently adopted by Resolution 49.12 of the World Health Assembly in 1996.
2. We note with satisfaction the progress made in implementing the WHO Global Strategy on Occupational Health for All. We have contributed to achieving the objectives of this Strategy through our Workplan 2001-2005. We commend the work carried out by our 15 task forces under this plan to develop international tools and good practices for improving many aspects of working conditions. We appreciate the technical leadership and the secretariat provided by WHO. The lessons learned in this process demonstrate the added value of international networking and partnerships in improving the health of workers.
3. Workers represent half of the global population and contribute greatly to the economic and social value of contemporary society. A substantial part of the general morbidity of the working population is related to work. We are aware that our ultimate goal of ensuring that all workers in the world enjoy full physical and mental health is still far from being achieved. We are concerned that despite the availability of effective interventions for occupational health, too many workers are still exposed to unacceptable levels of occupational risks and fall victim to occupational diseases and work accidents, lose their working capacity and income potential, and still too few have access to occupational health services.

The changing world of work

4. Currently, the world is being reshaped under the influence of globalization. New materials, new rules, new actors, changing technology and improved communication tools have led to many positive developments. However, new employment patterns and rapidly changing working conditions present a challenge to the protection and promotion of the health and safety of workers. New global health threats pose an increased risk of epidemic and pandemic diseases.
5. There is growing recognition about the linkages between working conditions, health, and productivity. Modern legislation and its enforcement, engineering control, education and services for occupational health and safety provide good opportunities for improving the health of workers and promote a culture of health and safety at work.
6. However, we are witnessing growing inequities between countries, industries and social groups as regards the exposure of workers to occupational hazards, their health status and access to health services. This is also an ethical and moral problem. Weak legislation and its enforcement and lack of primary prevention in some countries in relation to the international transfer of hazardous technologies and products endanger additionally the health of workers.
7. International migration of workers, persistent poverty, growing informal economy, and discrimination at the workplace are also increasingly associated with unhealthy, unsafe and unfair working conditions. These trends deserve special attention as well as new and creative methods of surveillance and intervention.
8. The workplace provides ample opportunities for primary prevention of diseases, injuries, disability, and premature death. Practical experience indicates that primary prevention of diseases and injuries is cost effective and saves a substantial number of deaths, disabilities, human suffering and loss of income potential.
9. There is increasing evidence that workers health is determined not only by the traditional and newly emerging occupational risks, but also by social inequalities, such as employment status, income, gender, and race, as well as by health-related behaviour and access to health services. Therefore, further improvement of the health of workers requires a holistic approach, combining occupational health and safety, with diseases prevention, health promotion and tackling social determinants of health and reaching out to workers families and communities.
10. We are aware that many solutions to health problems at work lie beyond the scope and the capacities of the health sector. There is potential to prevent and solve many problems through incorporating workers health into the policies on employment, social and economic development, trade and environmental protection.

The way forward

11. We strongly support that a WHO Global Plan of Action on Workers Health be presented to the next World Health Assembly. It will scale up and stimulate the implementation of measures towards achieving the objectives of the WHO Global Strategy on Occupational Health for All. We believe that this plan of action should:
 - provide a framework for concerted action by all relevant stakeholders for protecting and promoting the health of workers,
 - establish a new political momentum for primary prevention and management of risks for occupational and work-related diseases and injuries and strengthen political will for action at workplace, country and international level,
 - ensure coherence in planning, delivery and evaluation of essential health interventions at the workplace, and stimulate the development of occupational health services for all workers,
 - empower the health sector to advocate for addressing workers health problems through policies on employment, social and economic development, trade and environmental protection.
12. We unanimously commit ourselves to provide full support to WHO in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Global Plan of Action on Workers Health. We are determined to advocate for and provide our input to strengthening health governance, inter-sectoral collaboration and partnerships in our countries for improving workers health.
13. We pledge our initial contribution to the WHO global agenda on workers health through our next Workplan 2006-2010 in the following activity areas:
 - global situation analysis,
 - evidence for action, and national policies and action plans,
 - practical approaches to identify and reduce occupational health risks,
 - education, training, and technical materials,
 - development and expansion of occupational health services
 - communication and networking.
14. We commend WHO's emphasis on providing international support to countries for improving the health of workers, as the global health leader. Strong WHO presence and solid technical capacity in occupational health at the regional and national levels is indispensable for the successful implementation of our Workplan 2006-2010.
15. We appreciate the continuing collaboration between WHO and the relevant UN agencies, such as ILO and UNEP, the international professional associations, such as ICOH, IOHA, IEA, as well as the global trade unions and employer organizations for improving the health of workers throughout the world. We look

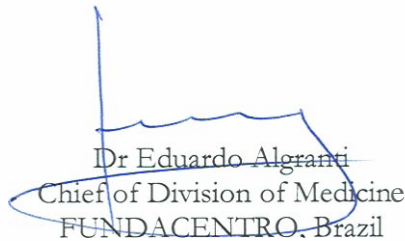
forward to expanding these collaborative efforts to other relevant international stakeholders.

16. We, hereby, authorize the Chair of this meeting, and the Advisory Committee of the Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centres for Occupational Health to sign this declaration on our behalf.

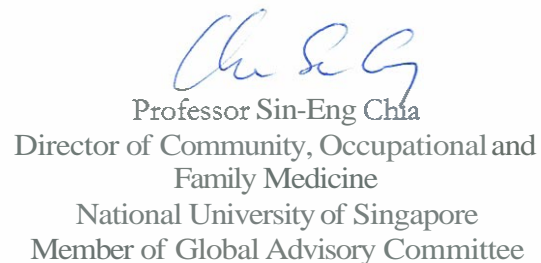


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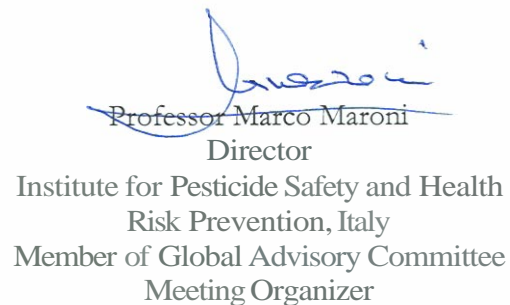
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