

THE DECLARATION OF BRUSSELS

25th november 2009



issa

INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY ASSOCIATION

Section on *Prevention in the Construction Industry*



XXIXTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF THE ISSA CONSTRUCTION SECTION ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM 23-25 NOVEMBER 2009

WHEREAS the International Social Security Association (ISSA) was established to perfect and develop public social protection based on the solidarity of all citizens through international cooperation;

WHEREAS the ISSA Bureau established the Construction Section to carry out actions to prevent occupational accidents and diseases in the construction industry;

WHEREAS one of the main activities of the Construction Section has been to convene the International Symposium of the ISSA Construction Section on Occupational Safety and Health in the Construction Industry to identify and address important safety and health demands through research, innovation and good practice;

WHEREAS life expectancy has increased significantly in most nations during the last 20 years, whether they are developed or emerging economies, and will most likely continue to do so, thereby placing greater pressure on the Social Security arrangements that have been created;

WHEREAS progress has been made in safety and health, the construction industry is still a high risk sector with respect to accidents and occupational diseases, often resulting in premature death or disability retirement; and

WHEREAS globalization has provided economic opportunities for many parties involved, it has also affected the Social Security arrangements that have been created worldwide and has challenged the progress that has been made in safety and health performance in the construction industry. This is in particular due to the use of workers from low-wage countries as those workers are often employed under the worst working conditions.

THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED that based on the overwhelming evidence presented during the XXIXth International Symposium convened in Brussels, Belgium on 23-25 November 2009 to address the needs imposed by the ageing of the population of construction workers and the rapidly emerging globalization of many aspects of the construction industry, all nations should :

Take into account that the construction industry is still a high risk sector, with respect to accidents and occupational diseases. Massive action must be taken by responsible parties to ensure safe and healthy working conditions for the workers of the sector. The main focus should be risk prevention, as well as the rehabilitation and proper compensation of injured workers.

Recognize the importance of and implement the necessary measures to improve working conditions of the construction workers to continue until normal retirement age without damaging effects on their health, consistent with the principle of workability, in which occupational health services, workers and employers strive to create work tasks suitable to the functional capacity of the workers. However, workers incapable of continuing their work until normal retirement age need to have access to work that is adequate to their capacities. If this is not possible, early retirement schemes should be available;

Reaffirm their commitments to Social Security arrangements and to the prevention of accidents and illnesses in the construction industry by ensuring that construction is conducted according to the highest labor standard.

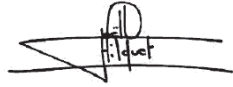
IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, that in order to address these challenges, the signatories of this Declaration encourage all the interested parties to promote the implementation of the following actions for the continual improvement of occupational safety and health (OSH) in the construction sector:

1. OSH policies (conventions, recommendations, codes of practice) throughout the world should be kept up to date with leading international levels of best practices, defined within the framework of international cooperation globally or regionally such as the ILO.
2. OSH strategies to implement the policies should take into account the particularities of the construction industry, with the active participation and consultation of the public authorities and the social partners.
3. Social security agencies and preventive bodies play a key role in defining and promoting safety and health in the construction industry, including a general culture that values safety and health prevention, amongst others by integrating safety and health into information materials and education and training programs.
4. While employers have the main responsibilities for ensuring health and safety at the worksite, other construction parties, such as clients/owners, designers, coordinators and workers, must also face their responsibilities in order to achieve real progress. Government/public clients should check that the levels of OSH performance requested in tenders for public financed projects are actually respected in practice in order to prevent occupational accidents and diseases.
5. OSH programs at company level should be performance-based, and include the participation of workers and their representatives in continuous risk assessment/audit activities and where appropriate, in the organization of work-site OSH committees. Such programs should address all risks to workers, including those that cause traumatic injuries, musculoskeletal disorders and chronic illnesses. Particular attention should be paid to banning the use of asbestos in construction, and to initiate safe removal of existing asbestos in buildings.
6. Performance-based OSH programs require (a) the adoption of adequate instruments aimed at measuring the efforts made and the progress achieved by all participants in the work process at all levels, based on proactive monitoring and not only reactive monitoring, (b) full and transparent reporting of findings, and (c) updating of OSH policies, strategies and programs based on these findings. Programs may be initiated by the global or regional bodies such as the ILO.
7. Strengthening the labor inspectorates with the appropriate resources (including labor inspectors specific for the construction sector) to ensure the respect of OSH laws and regulations related to the construction projects, by means of checks based on enforcement instruments (including dissuasive and proportionate penalties); a common practice on the application of these enforcement instruments should be developed with the participation of the labor inspectorates at regional, national and international levels.
8. Public clients must check the respect of OSH regulation in order to prevent accidents and to get the best out of public money. The ISSA Construction Section will report on the progress of implementing this Declaration during the XXXth symposium, in 2012.

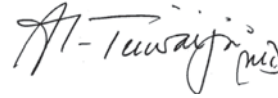
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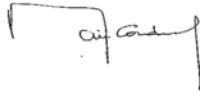
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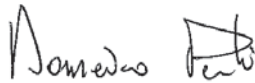
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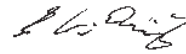
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