

NO MORE KILLINGS: FIGHT TOGETHER FOR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY, A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT

On the occasion of the International Workers Memorial Day, the ITUC-Asia Pacific, on behalf of its 60 million effective members from 34 countries and territories in Asia and the Pacific, remembers workers who have lost their lives, been injured or sick as a result of their work-related accidents and illnesses.

Occupational health and safety (OHS) is a fundamental right, and all industrial accidents and illnesses are preventable. Therefore, industrial accidents and diseases are against humanity and social justice. We should stop more killings on the job.

The 187 ILO member states – their governments, employers and workers, assure it at the 110th International Labour Conference in June 2022 by adopting the resolution to include a safe and healthy working environment in the ILO's framework of fundamental principles and right at work.

The United Nations also adopted the resolution (A/76/L.75) of the UN General Assembly to recognise the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environments as a human right in July 2022.

Despite these renewed international commitments, however, a safe and healthy working environment free from industrial accidents and diseases is far from reality. The pandemic-led global health and economy crisis, indisputable evidence of deficiency in OHS across the globe, has put more people into dangerous and poor working conditions as well as discrimination and harassments.

In this regard, as proven by many studies, the strong trade unionism can save lives. The most effective labour market institution to realise a safe and healthy working environment is to make all workers to join or form their trade unions to protect themselves from industrial accidents and diseases. Hence, the ITUC-Asia Pacific continues its struggles to build workers' power by organising.

Furthermore, considering the fact that among 36 ILO Member countries in Asia and the Pacific, only 9 countries and 8 countries ratified the ILO Fundamental Convention on Occupational Safety and Health (1981, No. 155), and on Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health (2006, No. 187) respectively, the ITUC-Asia Pacific strongly urge all the governments in the region to ratify and implement these Conventions without delay, starting from a national tripartite dialogue to discuss, formulate, implement, monitor and review a national OHS policy with adequate labour inspection as well as heavy punishment for industrial accidents and diseases to ensure a healthy and safe working environment at all levels.

The ITUC-Asia Pacific also solidly demands international organisations, including the inter-governmental organisations and the international as well as regional financial institutions, to work together for coordinated policies and actions to ensure OHS governance in their decisions and projects throughout global supply chains, as well as to improve national capacity on OHS with social dialogue being promoted. We must recognise that OHS is an integral part of sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery as well.

The ITUC-Asia Pacific, in strong solidarity with all its affiliates, reaffirms its relentless struggles on every frontline for OHS for all workers.

#WWD23