

Cambodia's World Day for Safety and Health at Work marked with campaign

Cambodia will mark World Day for Safety and Health at Work on Monday April 28th with an event focusing on the theme "All Together to Reduce Accidents at Work"

Cambodia's chosen topic compliments the global theme for the 2008 day chosen by the organizer, the International Labour Organization (ILO); "My life, my work, my safe work - Managing risk in the work environment".

To mark the day the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT) will launch a Safety Flag Campaign at a ceremony at the Department of Occupational Health. Hundreds of specially-printed flags will be used to decorate tuk tuks and rickshaws, which will then form a parade. Dozens more banners will be hung over the main streets of Phnom Penh, to raise public awareness of the importance of occupational safety and health.

The day's events will be presided over by H.E. Prak Chantha, Secretary of State, who will also speak on behalf of the Minister of Labour and Vocational Training John Ritchotte, Chief Technical Advisor for the ILO's Labour Dispute Resolution Project, will speak on behalf of the Organization.

The event is also being supported by the ILO/Japan Programme and the ILO's Better Factory Cambodia Project (BFC), which is financing some of the posters.

"Occupational safety and health is one of our national economic development priorities" said Dr. Huy Han Song, Under-Secretary of State in charge of OSH, Social Security and Child Labour, MoLVT. "Our economy is growing and employment is flourishing, so now is the right time to ensure that both existing jobs and new jobs protect workers against accidents and diseases. Safe and healthy work places can enhance productivity and reduce poverty by boosting wages. But everyone needs to work together if the measures are to be effective."

"This is the third year that Cambodia is marking World Day which shows their continuing commitment to occupational safety and health," said Mr. Ritchotte. "The Cambodian and ILO themes both emphasise the importance of personal responsibility in occupational safety and health. This highlights the key fact that safety is everyone's business and is also a vital component of decent work. The events on April 28th will really help to get that message out and publicize the goal of Decent Work for All".

Some 300 people are expected to attend the event, representing government ministries dealing with industry, environment, agriculture, construction, health and transport. Others invited include employers' and workers' organizations, NGOs, and workers from both the formal and informal sectors.

It is estimated that more than 1,500 persons in Cambodia die each year as a result of work-related accidents, equivalent to four people a day ¹. An estimated 1.6 million serious workplace accidents take place annually. In one industry alone, the economically-important garment sector, about 365 workers in Phnom Penh factories were injured during 2006 ².

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¹ World Bank Report 2005, data collected in 2001

² MoLVT figure.

