

**73<sup>rd</sup> National Industrial Safety and Health Convention of Japan  
and  
50th Anniversary of Japan Industrial Safety and Health Association**



**Video message  
(Hiroshima, October 2014)**

**Mr. Guy Ryder  
Director-General  
International Labour Office, Geneva, Switzerland**

\*\*\*

Dear delegates, officials of the Japan Industrial Safety and Health Association, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to congratulate you all - workers, employers and occupational safety and health practitioners on the 50th anniversary of the Japan Industrial Safety and Health Association (JISHA), and on the occasion of the 73<sup>rd</sup> National Industrial Safety and Health Convention of Japan.

I also want to take a moment to convey our heartfelt sympathy to all of those who suffered in the landslide disaster that hit Hiroshima in August this year. We have seen time and again the resilience of your country in overcoming such disasters and going on not only to recover but to make great contributions to the development of the global economy, technology and democracy. And you have done so with great spirit. And I am confident that the people of Hiroshima will soon recover and in the same way come back even stronger.

Since its establishment JISHA has brought together the government and workers' and employers' organizations to promote systematic prevention activities in enterprises -- and it has trained large numbers of safety and health personnel. JISHA's active engagement of workers and employers is really highly commendable. Such collaboration is indispensable to nurturing a sustainable preventative culture. It is also at the heart of the ILO's Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) instruments.

For decades now, the ILO has been the world's leader in establishing and promoting international occupational safety and health standards – with no less than 40 Conventions on OSH. These conventions, aimed at protecting workers and preventing accidents and diseases at work, form the underpinning for the ILO's Decent Work agenda.

While progress has been made globally speaking, we still have a long way to go to insure that workplaces are safe and healthy for everybody. In August, occupational safety practitioners, policy makers, academics and scientists from 141 countries came together at the world's largest occupational safety event, the 20<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Safety and Health at Work, held in Frankfurt, in Germany. I recalled then that work claims more victims around the globe than does war. And every year, an estimated 2.3 million workers die from occupational injuries and occupational diseases.

That means that every 15 seconds, a worker dies from a work-related injury or disease and that every 15 seconds, 160 workers are harmed by a work-related accident.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are sobering statistics and they compel us all to redouble our efforts to make workplaces safe and healthy. The challenge is daunting but prevention is possible.

The consequences of inaction is not only the harm that results for workers and their families; it comes also at great cost to enterprises and economies. The ILO estimates that the direct and indirect costs of occupational illness and injuries at work are US\$2.8 trillion worldwide. That's four per cent of global production. And yet this stark fact tends to be largely unrecognized or forgotten. In this framework, the ILO is renewing its commitment to promote OSH as a priority integral to all parts of its work.

It is clear that investing in occupational safety and health makes for strong and healthy businesses as well as strong and healthy workers. Respecting the human right to safe and healthy workplaces is an obligation but it's also a condition for sustainable economic development.

And so the ILO appreciates and acknowledges JISHA's efforts to develop and widely apply its occupational safety and health management systems guidelines which are in conformity with the ILO's own guidelines on the subject. It is absolutely necessary to extend practical and systematic OSH measures to all workers, and that includes particularly those who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Providing enterprises with comprehensive OSH services, JISHA has supported employers particularly in the area of human resource development. The ILO has also been privileged to partner with JISHA in ILO technical cooperation activities. JISHA's work to disseminate the ILO OSH management systems guidelines and its development of its own management system certification service based on ILO standards has resulted from this partnership.

JISHA's work is encouraging and indeed, an inspiration to other parts of the world. We count on JISHA's continued leadership. Consistent with Japan's tradition of international solidarity – I hope and I trust that we can also work together to share your OSH experience with countries aspiring to raise their own standards.

And so I want to thank you all today for continuing your important daily work to prevent occupational injuries and diseases.

I have no doubt that today's event will allow you to share important knowledge and information as well as renew your collective commitment to work together towards our common goal, and that is Safe and Healthy Work for All.