

**WORLD HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION**



**ORGANISATION MONDIALE  
DE LA SANTÉ**

**REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC  
BUREAU RÉGIONAL DU PACIFIQUE OCCIDENTAL**

**REGIONAL COMMITTEE**

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**ANNOUNCEMENT  
OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS  
HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE  
FORTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE**

The subject for the Technical Discussions held in conjunction with the forty-sixth session of the Regional Committee is "Occupational health risks in the workplace". Participation is open to all those attending the session of the Regional Committee. The discussions will take place in the afternoon of Friday 15 September. Background documentation on the subject will be available to representatives at the session.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Occupational health is concerned with the total health of all persons at work. The working population comprises almost half of the total global population, who spend one-third of their life at work, contributing actively to the development and well-being of themselves and of society. Eight out of ten members of the global workforce will be from the developing world by the year 2000. Occupational health includes: (i) the general diseases of the community which may occur among workers, such as malaria or tuberculosis; (ii) work-related diseases, where work may contribute to or aggravate the condition, for example, cardiovascular diseases or cancers; (iii) occupational diseases, in which exposure at the workplace is an essential cause, for example, lead poisoning, silicosis, or noise-induced deafness. The provision of health care to the worker entails more than concern about occupational diseases: it requires a recognition of the two-way relationship between work and health. Work may have an adverse or beneficial effect on health, while the health status of the worker has an impact on work and performance. A healthy worker contributes positively to productivity, quality of products, work motivation, job satisfaction and thereby to the overall quality of life of individuals and society. Health at work is therefore an important policy goal in national development. To achieve this goal, WHO proposed a Global Strategy on Occupational Health for All in 1994 in which the ten priority objectives are:

1. Strengthening of international and national policies for health at work and developing the necessary policy tools;
2. Development of a healthy work environment;
3. Development of healthy work practices and promotion of health at work;
4. Strengthening of occupational health services;
5. Establishment of support services for occupational health;
6. Development of occupational health standards based on scientific risk assessment;
7. Development of human resources for occupational health;

8. Establishment of registration and data systems, development of information services for experts, effective transmission of data and raising of public awareness through public information;
9. Strengthening of research;
10. Development of collaboration in occupational health and with other activities and services.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Technical Discussions are as follows:

- To bring to the attention of Member States the range of occupational health issues, and alert them to the need for attention to these areas;
- To promote commitment to a national health care policy for the working population;
- To facilitate an exchange of views on suitable legislation for a safe and healthy work environment;
- To promote intersectoral collaboration for occupational health services.

## **3. REVIEW OF THE REGIONAL STATUS OF HEALTH RISKS AT THE WORKPLACE**

It is hoped that the Technical Discussions will act as a catalyst for follow-up action in the following areas:

- Identification, where possible, of the priority health needs of the working population;
- Identification of the major health risks at the workplace;

- Examination of the current legislation for health care services to the working population;
- Examination of the existing national occupational health services;
- Review of existing intersectoral collaboration.

#### **4. PARTICIPATION IN THE TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS**

- Participation in the Technical Discussions is open to all attending the session of the Regional Committee.
- The Technical Discussions will take place in the afternoon of Friday 15 September 1995.
- The moderator of the Technical Discussions will be nominated by the Chairman of the Regional Committee.
- A background paper will be prepared, and given to representatives at the session, outlining the principal areas of concern and suggesting directions for future action by Member States in their development of appropriate occupational health policy and practice.
- An audiovisual report will be presented by a technical expert, giving detailed examples of the types of problems and constraints perceived, solutions being tried in the Region, and the current status of activities among Member States.
- Broad participation in the discussions is encouraged, to make the dialogue as interactive as possible and to stimulate identification of future action by Member States and WHO.
- A report will be prepared at the end of the Discussions, for distribution to representatives.