



Safety and health at work

Achievements:

2022 continued to be influenced by the COVID-19 related measures and their effects on safety and health of ILO staff. In ILO offices, measures have shifted between mandatory telework; recommended telework; partial and full Return to Office (RTO) according to the epidemiological situation as well as to the changes in local COVID-19 measures, among other factors.

The Staff Union has participated in all HQ COSH meetings that exchanged information on the COVID-19 situation as well as RTO preparations and adaptations. Further, we continuously provided comments and inputs to guidance documents prepared by the Administration and made sure that concerns voiced by colleagues across the world were transmitted to the Administration.

The Staff Union actively participated in the bi-partite technical working group (TWG) mandated by COSH to review the IGDS 48, 286 and 385 on occupational safety and health at the Office. The TWG reviewed the IGDS in the light of the current practice of their implementation. As a result of the work, the proposed IGDS revisions as well as the accompanying recommendations on how to improve the internal OSH management system were endorsed by COSH and submitted by the COSH Chairperson to the DG mid-July for feedback from the DG on those proposals and on the way forward.

In terms of training, the Staff Union, collaborated with the Administration and the OSH Coordinator to build the capacity of local OSH committees in the African region. All members of the local OSH committees took part in the first discussion session on 25 May, to briefly introduce the OSH management and the roles of joint OSH committees. This training is the first to involve an entire region and will serve as a model to be duplicated in other regions, after an assessment of its implementation

The Staff Union also provided general as well as specific OSH information to staff representatives. We further responded to requests from staff representatives in country offices – both COVID-19 related and concerning general OSH issues – and facilitated communication and information exchange with the ILO OSH Coordinator and the ILO Medical Service.

Where possible, we organized virtual meetings with colleagues and staff representatives, to listen to their questions, concerns and needs to identify meaningful support measures. Furthermore, at HQ, the Staff Union continued communication with the building renovation project to bring staff concerns to their attention.

Challenges to come

Despite progress made on the OSH training in the African regions, many representatives from all regions have flagged OSH training needs as urgent. There is an urgent need to integrate OSH training at different levels of the Organization, including as part of the general training provided to staff.

The recognition of the importance of internal social dialogue and its effective implementation even during crisis response, i.e. the consultation of staff and their representatives, still needs enhancement in many offices. Further, the involvement of COSH in shaping OSH measures in the context of a COVID-19 response and RTO procedures has still to be strengthened in many offices.

We would like to reiterate that creating a culture of security, safety and health is a long-term challenge requiring the awareness and action of everyone in their day-to-day work as well as commitment to the active implementation of the ILO OSH policy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

