



PRESS STATEMENT

BY

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MINISTER OF GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

ON

THE OCCASSION TO COMMEMORATE

THE WORLD DAY FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK

WEDNESDAY 27TH APRIL, 2022

AT

THE UGANDA MEDIA CENTER, KAMPALA

Fellow Countrymen and Women,

Members of the Press,

1. It is my pleasure to welcome you to this press briefing on the World Day for Safety and Health at work
2. Tomorrow, Thursday 28th April Uganda will once again join the rest of the world to commemorate this Day.
3. Commemoration of the World Day for Safety and Health started way back in 1996, when the labour movement observed it in honour of the memory of victims of occupational accidents and diseases. Since then, it has been marked as an annual international campaign to promote safe, healthy and decent work.
4. According to the International Labour Organisation, around 2.9 million workers die every year due to occupational accidents and diseases and at least 402 million people suffer from non-fatal occupational injuries. In addition, 317 million accidents occur on the job annually and many of these result in extended absences from work. These estimates indicate that 4% Gross Domestic Product (approximately USD One million for Uganda) is lost due to accidents and work-related diseases.
5. As we commemorate this day, the COVID 19 pandemic is still amongst us, continuing to affect a considerable number of people, mainly workers.

According to Ministry of Health, as of Monday April 25th 2022, Uganda had registered 164,069 Coronavirus Cases and 3,596 deaths.

6. The pandemic has had an intense effect on the jobs, livelihoods and well-being of workers and their families and on enterprises across the country, mostly the small businesses but also on some medium and large-scale enterprises.
7. This day therefore, is an opportunity to raise awareness and also focus national attention on the magnitude of the occupational safety and health challenges and on how to develop a positive safety and health culture. Despite the pandemic, workers should continue to enjoy their right to decent, healthy and safe working conditions, in the context of COVID-19.
8. During the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has posed many new challenges to OSH. All the actors in the world of work have been exposed to the risk of infection with the novel coronavirus, as well as to new and emerging risks correlated with the emergency and the newly adopted work practices and procedures. Consequently, this year's World Day for Safety and Health at Work is commemorated under the global theme "***ACT TOGETHER TO BUILD A POSITIVE SAFETY AND HEALTH CULTURE***".
9. The theme focuses on enhancing social dialogue towards a culture of safety and health. Social dialogue plays a vital role in addressing the complex

situation of the COVID-19 pandemic at all levels, from the national to the workplace level.

10. As you may note, Uganda's Vision of a "Transformed Ugandan Society from a Peasant to a Modern and Prosperous Country within 30 years" cannot be achieved without a healthy workforce or safe workplaces, which is why the third National Development Plan has the goal to 'Increase Average Household Incomes and Improve the Quality of Life of Ugandans'. In that same regard, the fourth strategic objective of the NDP III is to 'Enhance the productivity and social wellbeing of the population' which requires a positive safety and health culture across the nation and in all workplaces.
11. Government of Uganda is committed to building and maintaining a positive safety and health culture by ensuring that workers' health and safety are accorded high priority on the national agenda through provision of adequate resources required to increase a general awareness of OSH, knowledge of hazards and risks, and an understanding of their prevention and control.
12. Government has put in place the necessary policy, legal and regulatory framework to support employers and workers in ensuring workplace safety and health including the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 2006, and a number of Regulations and Guidelines developed under this Act. Efforts are now underway to put in place a Policy to guide Occupational Safety and

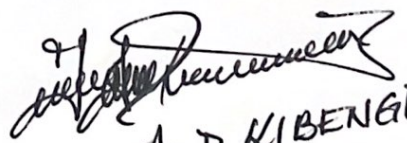
Health within the country. Similarly, an Occupational Safety and Health Management Information System (OSHMIS) is in the final stages of development and this should ease the delivery of OSH services to the stakeholders.

13. Government continues to perform its routine functions of workplace Registration, inspection and enforcement all in a bid to ensure safety and health within the workplaces.
14. Employers are required to take action at the workplace level to foster a positive safety and health culture, with clear management commitment and effective worker involvement. This presupposes compliance with OSH Act and regulations. The introduction of OSH management systems, together with a culture change should accelerate achievement of a positive safety and health culture.
15. There is also need for integration of OSH management systems into the business planning and general management structure as a means to promoting a positive and proactive approach to OSH, based on continuous improvements. Measures implemented with this approach contribute not only towards improving OSH performance but also other aspects that reflect the business production and productivity.

16. Workers too have a role to play in building a positive safety and health culture at the workplace. Workers must take responsibility of their own safety and that of others by responsibly utilising the resources availed by their employers and actively participating in improving the status of safety and health at their workplace.
17. A positive safety and health culture in the workplace will significantly contribute to reducing work-related accidents and diseases, as well as improve workers' well-being and morale. Healthier and happier workers will, in turn, contribute to improved business productivity, quality and profitability. This will inevitably lead to a stronger national economy, which is what we all desire to see at the end of the day.
18. We should, therefore, work towards building a positive safety and health culture in all Ugandan workplaces as the theme calls us all to **“Act together to build a Positive Safety and Health Culture”**.

I thank you very much.

For God and My Country


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27.04.2022