

Union Workplaces – Safer Workplaces

28 April, 2006

**The International Commemoration Day (ICD)
For Dead and Injured Workers**



*International
Commemoration
Day Symbol*

This document is available at

English: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpH_3e.EN.pdf

Français: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf//ohsewpH_3e.FR.pdf

Español: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf//ohsewpH_3e.SP.pdf

Annex 28 April Guide

Union Workplaces – Safer Workplaces 28 April, 2006

The International Commemoration Day (ICD) For Dead and Injured Workers¹

In this 'Backgrounder':

- Introduction to 28 April ICD
- SLOGAN for 28 April 2006
- Theme: ASBESTOS campaign
- Theme: HIV/AIDS
- Theme: ILO OHS Conventions & Instruments
- Cross-cutting issues for 28 April
- Reporting YOUR 28 April activities

A. Introduction to 28 April ICD

On 28 April, we remember over 2 million workers who die, the more than 1.2 million who are injured, and the more than 160 million who fall ill each year due to unsafe, unhealthy, or unsustainable work and workplaces².

The first 28 April candlelight ceremony was organised at the UN CSD in New York in 1996 to coincide with trade union activities throughout the world. Since then, the number of commemoration events has grown and take place in over 110 countries. These include a wide range of activities, from large rallies and sectoral mobilisations to educational & lobbying events, including basic information dissemination. In addition, many unions take the opportunity on 28 April to publicise the results of such actions as workplace assessments and surveys, as well as to announce initiatives they intend to pursue.

Our aim in 2006 is to build on last year's success. It is up to trade unions in each country or sector to decide what their focus and scope will be for this year's 28 April. In previous years, many unions chose to mark the day with a simple candle or incense-lighting ceremony, in conjunction with a short commemoration speech, and a moment of silence broken by a poem or some music. Thematically, ceremonies or events should reflect the overall orientation of 28

¹ **28 April was adopted as an official name** at the ICFTU 2004 World Congress when the world's trade unions agreed to "promote world-wide recognition of 28 April as the International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers, as a way of educating workers and the public about workplace hazards and to promote safe and sustainable workplaces, whilst retaining the specific character of 28 April as a day primarily led by trade unions."

² **2005 World injury & fatality statistics:** Each year, over two million women and men die as a result of 270 million occupational accidents and 160 million new cases of occupational disease each year, figures that are supplemented by ILO/WHO estimates that occupational diseases alone cause over 1.7 million deaths, and that at least 268 million non-fatal workplace accidents occur each year. It is furthermore estimated that over half of the 355,000 on-the-job fatalities occur in agriculture, the sector with half the world's workforce. Other high risk sectors are mining, construction and commercial fishing. Four percent of the world's gross domestic product (US \$1,251 billion) is lost through absence of work from injury, death and disease, sickness treatment, disability and survivor benefits. Illness results in a loss of four or more working days in at least 1/3 of all cases. The loss in GDP resulting from the cost of death and illness in the work force is 20 times greater than all official development assistance to developing countries. Each year, 12,000 children are killed on the job and hazardous substances kill 340,000 workers annually, while asbestos alone claims about 100,000 lives. See ILO death/injury statistics: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/actrav/new/april28/facts04.pdf>

April, and normally begin by commemorating the dead, sick and injured workers in some fashion, and end with a message of hope for life and the living.³

As a ‘Commemoration Day’, 28 April is more than a simple ‘memorial’ to remember the victims of the past. In highlighting those who are still alive but continue to suffer, the Day also serves to symbolically transform sentiments of mourning, loss and suffering into positive action for dialogue and change. For this reason, 28 April is forward-looking, a day for celebration and action, as well as for mourning.

Thirteen countries or territories have now formally recognised 28 April: Argentina, Belgium, Bermuda, Canada, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Luxembourg, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Taiwan. Anything you can do to encourage your country to join this list would contribute to our effort to have 28 April officially recognised by the United Nations.

B. The 28 April Slogan: *Union Workplaces - Safer Workplaces!*

“*Union Workplaces- Safer Workplaces*” was chosen as the slogan for 2006 to promote the idea that safe work and workplaces can only be ensured if workers are organised into trade unions, and if joint agreements between trade unions and employers provide meaningful occupational health and safety provisions as a guarantee of safe work and healthy workers. The three themes pick up issues of urgent concern to workers: asbestos, HIV-AIDS, and the use of ILO Conventions to promote safety, health and rights.

In this way, 28 April connects with the spirit of May Day, and you are encouraged to link your activities to May 1st themes wherever possible. The right of all workers to form trade unions and bargain collectively with employers is crucial to securing safe workplaces; yet these rights are under attack in many countries. In 2004 alone, 145 workers were killed because of trade union activity, according to last year’s ICFTU *Annual Survey of Trade Union Rights Violations*. In addition, the *Survey* documents over 700 violent attacks, and nearly 500 death threats, with trade unionists in many countries facing imprisonment, dismissal and discrimination, or encountering legal obstacles to union organising and collective bargaining. Millions of workers are denied their rights, and in the process, are denied health and safety on the job. The following country-by-country profiles⁴ provide information on trade union rights in your country, and all countries world-wide:

English: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpQ_10a.EN.pdf

Français: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpQ_10a.FR.pdf

Español: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpQ_10a.SP.pdf

³ **In 2005 more than 10,000 activities were organised** by the ICFTU and Global Unions in over 110 countries or regions across the world. See summary 2005 wrap-up at: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpH_1d.EN.pdf and country summary profiles http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpH_1a.EN.pdf

⁴ **Trade Union Country-by-Country Profiles** can help trade unions and other actors define their national, sector and workplace-level actions on given topics. Profiling refers to development of analysis based on specific groups of information entered in database maintained by the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) for all countries and selected regions, industrial sectors and specific companies. This data is broken down and made available in a variety of report forms to facilitate analysis on given topics. However, the production of Profiles has been standardised and some are available on an ongoing basis for specific topics: Sustainable Development, Energy and Climate Change, Occupational Health and Safety, Asbestos, HIV/AIDS, Trade Union Rights, and Corporate Accountability. A full glossary that describes the data and sources contained in the Profiles is located at:

English: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpS_1.EN.pdf

Français: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpS_1.FR.pdf

Español: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpS_1.SP.pdf

C. 2006 Theme: *Asbestos & the Global Union 'Ban Asbestos' Campaign*

This February, the ICFTU issued a circular to all affiliates concerning the Global Union 'Ban Asbestos' campaign, and its progress since it was kicked off in June 2005. You are highly encouraged to use this document and its URL links as a backgrounder for planning activities to highlight asbestos on 28 April. This document is available at:

English: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpL_7c.EN.pdf
 Français: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpL_7c.FR.pdf
 Español: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpL_7c.SP.pdf

With mounting evidence, our case on the dangers of asbestos is now considered irrefutable. A substantial body of literature documents deaths due to asbestos of more than 100,000 people, as well as the resulting costs to society. Some of this evidence can be found in several languages in the *ILO Encyclopaedia Of Occupational Health and Safety* at:

English: <http://www.ilo.org/encyclopaedia/?find=&bsearch=asbesto&whereSelectSW=1>
 Français: <http://www.ilo.org/public/french/protection/safework/cis/products/encyclo/pdf/index.htm>
 Español: <http://www.mtas.es/insht/EncOIT/tomo3.htm>

You are therefore invited to engage in 28 April activities that build support for a global ban on asbestos through awareness-raising political and educational activities, or through actions that target a particular problem or solution pertaining to our campaign. Your activities should build support for last December's ICFTU resolution on the asbestos ban, which you can find at:

English: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpL_7a.EN.pdf
 Français: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpL_7a.FR.pdf
 Español: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpL_7a.SP.pdf

In addition, it is highly recommended that your 28 April message focus on your country's record of ratifying and implementing the Conventions or Instruments of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) which pertain to eliminating asbestos use and related employment transition issues (see related 28 April theme below). Background information about your country's status with respect to asbestos uses and related compliance to Conventions and Instruments can be found in the most recently updated country-by-country profiles on asbestos at:

English: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpL_6.EN.pdf
 Français: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpL_6.FR.pdf
 Español: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpL_6.SP.pdf

An analysis of these of country-by-country asbestos profiles was produced to help identify our asbestos campaign priorities for each country and this can be found at:

English: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpL_7.EN.pdf
 Français: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpL_7.FR.pdf
 Español: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpL_7.SP.pdf

It is important that 28 April activities everywhere raise worker and public awareness about the problem of asbestos and the need for countries to cease production or trade of asbestos. In addition, we urge you to help us build our roster of Asbestos Campaign contact points (mentioned in the above ICFTU letter), as these are crucial to the success of our campaign.

D. 2006 Theme: *HIV/AIDS - Workplace occurrence and solutions*

HIV/AIDS is a workplace issue for three main reasons: it impacts on the health, jobs and security of workers generally; it is an occupational risk for workers in health and security services; and the workplace is well adapted to contribute positively to prevention and care. ILO statistics show how the epidemic is concentrated among people in their working years, with direct implications for the labour force, their families and communities, enterprise productivity,

and human resource development⁵. This 28 April offers the opportunity to demonstrate the strengths and the flexibility of occupational safety and health structures at national and workplace levels by mainstreaming HIV/AIDS within the occupational health and safety activities of trade unions. In December 2004, the ICFTU World Congress adopted a resolution on HIV/AIDS which is available at:

English: <http://congress.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991220325&Language=EN>
 Français: <http://congress.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991220370&Language=FR>
 Español: <http://congress.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991220421&Language=ES>
 German: <http://congress.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991220343&Language=DE>

Trade union campaigns and programmes on HIV/AIDS have emphasised the need to establish or strengthen joint health & safety committees as a precondition for meeting this pandemic head-on through sympathetic and effective workplace education, counselling and treatment. Recognition of HIV/AIDS as a workplace issue allows us to invoke the full weight of ILO Convention 155 for Occupational Safety and Health to support advocacy efforts.

Access to public health services, affordable treatment and care, and the right to compensation are issues that workers with HIV/AIDS and their families have in common with all those remembered on 28 April. By including HIV/AIDS as a 28 April theme, trade unions will influence governments as employers and policy makers to provide services for its prevention, detection and treatment. Trade union country-by-country profiles on HIV/AIDS are available at:

English: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpT_4a.EN.pdf
 Français: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpT_4a.FR.pdf
 Español: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpT_4a.SP.pdf

28 April focus on G8 Countries The Global Union Programme on HIV/AIDS is asking as many unions as possible to use 28 April HIV/AIDS activities to build support for our demand that the G8 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, U.S. and the U.K.) establish a permanent working party on HIV/AIDS at their next Summit in Russia, July 2006. Last July, G8 leaders called for a mechanism to ensure progress on development issues from one Summit to the next, including universal access to HIV treatment through strengthening health care capacity and reducing the price of drugs and testing. Therefore, the role of a permanent working group would be to monitor and evaluate progress on commitments made by the G8.

The Global Unions Programme wants G8 countries to honour commitments to deal with the damage they admit HIV/AIDS have caused to health and education sectors, and to provide for a considerable increase in resources for health care workers and health services as a whole. Our country profiles for HIV/AIDS (above) were produced with the assistance of UNAIDS with the purpose, among others, to facilitate monitoring of the anticipated G8 committee by Global Unions.

As 28 April gets closer, you will receive updates about the G8 HIV/Campaign through our HIV/AIDS electronic forum. If your union is not yet represented on this forum, please contact us. Other valuable sources of information on aspects of HIV/AIDS that you may decide as a focus for your 28 April activities can be found at:

<http://www.global-unions.org/hiv-aids> Global Unions Programme on HIV-AIDS
<http://www.ilo.org/aids> : ILO Programme on HIV-AIDS
<http://www.unaids.org/en/default.asp>: UNAIDS

⁵ **Nearly 36.5 million people** around the world involved in productive work (a wider definition than 'labour force') are HIV-positive – see *HIV/AIDS and work: global estimates, impact and response*, ILO, 2004. The vast majority, over 70%, live in Africa, with several African countries reporting over 1 million economically-active workers who are HIV-positive; e.g., Kenya (1 million), Mozambique (1.1 million), Ethiopia & Zimbabwe (1.3 million each), Tanzania (1.4 million), Nigeria (2.4 million), and South Africa (3.7 million). See statistics for each country in *Country Profiles for HIV/AIDS* (next page).

http://www.who.int/topics/hiv_infections/en/: WHO

<http://www.worldaidscampaign.info/index.php/wac/wac/>: World AIDS Campaign:

Because 28 April will also focus on support for ILO instruments, trade unions are encouraged to make more people aware of the availability and uses for the following:

- ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/trav/aids/code/codemain.htm>
- ILO/WHO Guidelines on health services and HIV/AIDS
<http://www.who.int/3by5/news44/en/>

E. 2006 Theme: *ILO OHS Conventions & Instruments*

The focus of 28 April activities in support of ILO Conventions and Instruments should be guided by last December's ICFTU World Congress Resolution on Occupational Health and Safety, available at:

English: <http://congress.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991220328&Language=EN>

Français: <http://congress.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991220382&Language=FR>

Español: <http://congress.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991220432&Language=ES>

German: <http://congress.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991220366&Language=DE>

Information you may require on your country's performance, including its ratification of ILO Conventions and instruments is available on recently-updated country-by-country profiles on Occupational Health and Safety, which are available at:

English: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpG_1a.EN.pdf

Français: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpG_1a.FR.pdf

Español: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpG_1a.SP.pdf

As much as possible, your focus in promoting support for ILO OHS instruments should be on ILO Convention 155, along with a few other Conventions that relate to the first two themes. These can be linked to the issue of employment displacement due to changes in the nature of production and work. The following are most applicable to our 2006 themes:

1. **ILO C155 Occupational Health and Safety Convention** General workplace health and safety provisions are summed up in this Convention. Although its main concern is for the health and safety of workers, it provides a framework for participation of workers in a host of issues, including community environmental issues. Its central precepts are: i) co-operation at the workplace between workers and employers as jointly responsible for the work environment, e.g., through joint health and safety committees; ii) the right of workers to refuse unsafe and unhealthy work (also to be found in a recent ILO Convention on the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents); iii) the right to information and training; and iv) specific government provision for the regulation of health and safety through provision of adequate resources and an inspectorate. See: <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp1.htm>
2. **ILO C162 Use of Asbestos at Work Convention** Together with Resolution 172, this is the main Instrument providing for the handling and uses of asbestos; for its provisions see: <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp1.htm>.
3. **ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work**; see <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/trav/aids/code/codemain.htm>
4. **Joint ILO/WHO Guidelines on Health Services and HIV/AIDS**; see <http://www.who.int/3by5/news44/en/>,
5. **ILO C122, Employment Policy Convention**. Through its accompanying recommendation R122, this Convention provides for measures that countries should adopt for consulting workers affected by job displacement and for dealing with structural change and the financial or other hardships that arise from employment impacts. It also provides for the

means to deal with re-employment, training, financial programmes and government planning. See:

<http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp1.htm>

28 April Lead-up to the June 2006 International Labour Conference. In June 2005, employer, government and trade union representatives began to negotiate a new promotional instrument for Safety and Health at Work to be completed for the June 2006 ILO Conference in Geneva.

Currently the draft instrument focuses mainly on processes and not sufficiently on rights issues and basic OSH principles as defined in Convention 155. The instrument needs to be more strongly linked to the workplace and to promote the ratification and implementation of some key ILO conventions on occupational and health (conventions 155, 161, 81, 167, 170, 176 and 184), considered critical by the Workers' Group last June (see OHS profiles).

Wherever possible, in drawing attention to ILO OSH instruments, your 28 April activities should show support for the position adopted by the Workers' Group in June 2005 that a new ILO instrument establishing a promotional framework for occupational safety and health needs to promote existing OSH instruments. The absence of such a link would undermine existing ILO OSH instruments and their implementation at the national level (listed in our country profiles).

F. Cross-Cutting Issues for 28 April

1. Occupational & Public Health 28 April provides us with an opportunity to draw attention to the close linkage between occupational health and public health policy and practice. Proper prevention, detection and treatment related to both asbestos and HIV/AIDS require access to public health services and drugs, as well as social support and compensation. Increased awareness of environmental contamination has drawn attention to the role of such basic services as water and sanitation, and the realisation that industrial threats to public health can be best addressed by trained joint workplace committees working with community members to identify problems and implement work-based and community solutions. It also speaks to the obligation of governments to support vital public services, and as such is another opportunity to partner with community, research groups and environmentalists to promote awareness and expose fallacies associated with the privatisation and downgrading of services, and to lobby governments to retain public ownership and improve services.

2. Chemical & Toxic Substances and the threat they pose to occupational and public health can be clearly highlighted in the case of *asbestos*, as well as *persistent organic pollutants (POPS)*, including its three chemicals groups - pesticides (aldrine, DDT, dieldrine, endrine, heptachlor, chlordane, mirex and toxaphen), industrial compounds (PCB's) and by-products (PCB variations, PCDD, PCDF, and dioxins). Trade unions have taken an active part in a process for countries to establish global harmonisation in chemical classifications and labelling, and a new Globally Harmonised System (GHS) has now been adopted to be overseen by the UN Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC). 28 April provides a prime opportunity to encourage individual countries to adopt this new instrument, as none have yet done so.

3. Promotion of sustainable patterns of production and consumption is a growing concern for trade unions, especially as it entails the linking of occupational health to the social and community environment dimensions of work and workers. This matter was the subject of considerable discussion at a recent UNEP/Trade Union Assembly on Labour and the Environment, where delegates unanimously endorsed a resolution calling for action in this area. You are invited to support this sustainable development priority as it relates to the themes for this year's 28 April. For guidance, see the Assembly resolution at:

English: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_6d.EN.pdf
 Français: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_6d.FR.pdf
 Español: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_6d.SP.pdf

In addition, you are encouraged to access Sustainable Development Country-by-Country profiles prepared for the upcoming UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) at:

English: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_1e.EN.pdf
 French: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_1e.FR.pdf
 Spanish: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_1e.SP.pdf

4. Prevention through employer accountability The health and safety issues for private enterprises that you choose to emphasise on 28 April will depend on your national, regional or sectoral priorities. You are invited, however, to identify issues that reflect current trade union campaigns on asbestos or HIV/AIDS, and to cooperate in coalitions which have been formed to address problems. 28 April may also serve to highlight the role of social dialogue and good industrial relations, based on the full respect of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, as effective occupational, health and safety programmes are dependent on such a context. Also to be highlighted is the role of workers and trade unions in implementing solutions through active participation in workplace decision-making with employers, especially so with respect to health, safety and environment issues.

The December 2004 ICFTU resolution, *The Social Responsibilities of Business in a Global Economy*, points to the need to promote awareness-raising and dialogue with employers, generally. However, in this era of globalisation, you might focus specifically on the practices of Multinational Enterprises within your national boundaries or sectors, as well as other issues that are contained in the resolution which can be found at:

English: <http://congress.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991220321&Language=EN>
 Français: <http://congress.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991220374&Language=FR>
 Español: <http://congress.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991220424&Language=ES>
 German: <http://congress.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991220349&Language=DE>

At the same time as we focus on private-sector employers, we must draw attention to the responsibilities of governments, as they are not only employers of workers involved in detection, prevention and treatment of asbestos and infected or affected by HIV/AIDS; their purview extends to the general protection of occupational and public health (together with WHO). They are responsible for ratifying and implementing ILO Conventions and Instruments, and are the guardians of national frameworks governing employers in the private sector, where they play an essential role, using ILO Conventions and instruments (regulations, inspections, reporting) to ensure the accountability of all employers on all questions relating to occupational health, safety, environment, and sustainable development.

G. Reporting Your 28 April activities

The success and continued growth of 28 April as International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers is totally dependent on reporting by trade unionists such as you. Please communicate directly with Lucien Royer at royer@tuac.org regarding the report of your activities or for any other information about 28 April.

Information from each country or sector will then be periodically summarised and posted in a special country profile for 28 April 2006, which will be made available at:

English Version: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpH_3c.EN.pdf

We look forward to working with you to make this year's 28 April the most successful yet.
Please send all information and reports to:

Lucien Royer
International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)
Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC)
15, Rue Laperouse - 75016 Paris, France
Tel (331) 5537 3737 Fax 4754 9828
royer@tuac.org