



PRESS RELEASE

EFP observed International Health and Safety Day

Investment in resilient Occupational health and safety system is vital for enterprises to combat the unique challenges of health and safety created at the workplace by the COVID-19 crisis. This was stated by Mr. Zaki Ahmed Khan, Vice President EFP while addressing the Zoom Webinar celebrating International Health and Safety Day organized by the Employers' Federation of Pakistan on 28 April 2021.

Mr. Zaki Ahmed Khan said that EFP has been celebrating International Health and Safety Day on 28 April regularly and consistently for the last 15 consecutive years. Since it was not possible to hold the face to face meeting this year due to the worsening third wave of the pandemic, EFP felt it expedient to hold the meeting on zoom to remind our stakeholders that health and safety at the workplace is now a priority in the new normal following the COVID-19 crisis.

Dr. Tahir Baig Barlas, EFP OSH Senior Advisor, Trainer and Consultant, in his keynote presentation on the occasion highlighted the diverse amplification of the theme of this year's International Health and Safety Day and emphasized that companies have to anticipate, prepare and respond to the crisis and to invest in resilient occupational safety and health systems to ensure a workplace safe and sound enough to protect from all sorts of work and environmental hazards besides building enterprise capacity to combat with the dominant and adverse impact of COVID-19 on work-life and lifestyle.

He also highlighted the new techniques which enterprises could adopt to build their resilience. He also appreciated the initiatives especially taken by the EFP OSH Award-winning companies in being innovative in finding new ways of building safety precautions at their workplaces and showing their concern that the safety of employees was dearer and closer to them for the smooth and efficient performance of the enterprise.

Mr. Akhtar Quddus, EFP OSH Advisor and Consultant, made his keynote remarks on health and safety challenges to the members in the third wave of COVID-19. He highlighted special issues and challenges being faced by the enterprises in implementing SOPs at the workplace and called upon the enterprises to fully sensitize their workforce in adhering to the preventive measures necessary for combating the COVID-19 crisis. He shared his observation about the careless and callous behavior of some people responsible for implementing SOPs and other preventive measures and not taking them too seriously. He warned that such behaviors should be discouraged and SOPs should be implemented in letter and spirit and not half-heartedly so that it does not lose its impact.

Ms. Ingrid Christensen, Country Director ILO, in her remarks on the occasion congratulated EFP for maintaining its 15 years tradition of observing International Health and Safety Day for the 15th consecutive year, although this year on zoom due to pandemic situation. She urged upon the need to continue this journey with faster speed because the health and safety challenges now and in the future of work demand companies to build their resilience in making the workplace not only safe and secured but also to nurture a safety culture that can make safety measures sustainable in the larger interest of the enterprise and its workforce.



EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION OF PAKISTAN

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Mr. Majyd Aziz, Director EFP Board and Immediate Past President EFP, in his remarks on the occasion congratulated EFP on observing the International Health and Safety Day and reminded that enterprises need to multiply their efforts to improve their bar of compliance with the fast-changing national and international scenario concerning health and safety at the workplace particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 challenge.

Mr. Zahoor Awan, Chairman Steering Committee, Pakistan Workers Federation & Member ILO Governing Body, in his remarks on the occasion, congratulated EFP and ILO on continuously flying the health and safety flag high and shining on the International Health and Safety Day in particular for the last 15 years. He assured that the workers federation stood solidly behind the employers in their measures to make their workplace safe and healthy for the workforce. He said that workers were fully conscious of the new health and safety challenges posed by the pandemic and assured that their cooperation will always be forthcoming to the enterprises in raising their bar of compliance with national and international safety standards.

Mr. Ijaz Khokhar, Director EFP Board and former Chairman PRGMEA, in his remarks appreciated EFP's initiatives on health and safety and pointed towards the need for developing special SOPs for the diverse industrial sector which could prove helpful for various sectors to embrace preventive measures specific to their industries and sectors.

Mr. Fasihul Karim Siddiqi, Senior Advisor EFP, informed that the EFP has developed SOP guidelines with the cooperation of the Dutch Employers Cooperation Programme in six vulnerable sectors i.e.; construction, cement, textile & garment, pharmaceutical, food & beverages, restaurants and service sector. These SOP guidelines have been printed along with training materials and audit checklists which can be used by the enterprises in their relevant sectors. These publications are available with the EFP and efforts to develop similar SOP guidelines in other vulnerable sectors in the near future will continue. He stressed upon the need to develop an individual and collective mindset with the belief that health and safety is everybody's responsibility and not something that falls in the domain of only the government or employers.

The webinar which was moderated by Syed Nazar Ali, Secretary-General EFP was also addressed by Mr. Qurban Ali Zardari, Mr. Ashraf Ali Naqvi, and attended by a large number of EFP members and non-members.

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Syed Nazar Ali
Secretary General