

IALI 2008 CONFERENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE FIRST IALI CONFERENCE
IN THE PACIFIC REGION

Adelaide • South Australia
12-14 March 2008

Towards Healthy, Safe & Decent Work through Alliances, Ethics & Influence

*Principles and strategies
to build the foundations
for strong and effective
labour inspection across the
world in partnership with
government and industry*



Government of South Australia
SafeWork SA



in cooperation with the



and OHS Authorities of Australia & New Zealand



Executive Summary

The International Association of Labour Inspection (IALI) held its first Pacific region conference in Adelaide, South Australia from 12–14 March 2008. The conference was significant as it brought together more than 200 labour inspection delegates from over 40 nations to discuss the opportunity to work together 'Towards Healthy, Safe and Decent Work through Alliances, Ethics and Influence'.

The main purpose of the conference was to provide a global forum to share information about best practice, address challenges and foster cooperative arrangements between labour inspection authorities. A key outcome of the conference was to facilitate agreement on a Code of Integrity for adoption by labour inspectorates worldwide.

The conference was preceded by three regional forums that aimed to build relationships and cooperative arrangements between labour inspectorates within the South East Asian and Pacific regions, including Australia and New Zealand.

Outcomes from the three forums and the conference are as follows:

Pacific Forum

The Pacific Forum focussed on the development of a technical cooperation programme between inspectorates in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific countries.

The agreed outcomes and actions from the forum in relation to the areas of technical cooperation included:

- Establishing and developing legislation and the development of tripartite structures;
- Provision of assistance to educate and train inspectorates on occupational health and safety (OHS) matters;
- Education to prevent or reduce workplace accidents and work related diseases;
- Strategies to deal with high risk industries, e.g. construction and mining, and small to micro business; and
- Appointment of programme coordinators for each country.

South East Asian Forum

The South East Asian Forum covered specific topics for progressing the development of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between inspectorates in Australia and South East Asian countries. In the workshop session, participating countries discussed and shared experience on the following:

- Compliance initiatives across trading partners involved in supply chains;
- Regional cooperation on cross-regional OHS issues; and
- Coordinated implementation of OHS strategic intervention programmes and strategies.

South East Asian countries will now work towards confirming specific topics for MOU development with their respective Australian/New Zealand partners.

Australia / New Zealand OHS Inspectors Forum

This forum brought together representatives from inspectorates in each Australian jurisdiction and New Zealand to discuss the following issues:

- Adoption of a international Code of Integrity for labour inspection;
- Professional development of OHS inspectors; and
- Improved cooperation and collaboration amongst Australian and New Zealand jurisdictions.

The forum proved a success with all Australian jurisdictions committing to adopt the new Code of Integrity with New Zealand confirming their support. There was also commitment to enhance the training and professional development framework for labour inspectors under the Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA) along with agreement to develop detailed plans for improving the effectiveness of harmonised OHS intervention campaigns across the Tasman.

The forum was appreciated by the delegate Inspectors in attendance who found the information sharing and networking opportunities valuable and were encouraged by the focus on ethical conduct and professional development issues

Further areas of cooperation amongst HWSA jurisdictions were explored and included:

- An annual OHS inspectors forum
- Professional exchanges
- Sharing of solutions and resources
- Cross border inspection initiatives

IALI Conference

The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Deputy Prime Minister of Australia in her opening ceremony address, laid down the following challenge to conference delegates:

"We need to work cooperatively to achieve reductions in work injury and improve safety through alliances on an international basis."

Werner Blink, Director of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Pacific region provided a supporting argument to this challenge in his statement:

"When we put together all our energy, we can produce synergies that produce change on the ground. This conference is about participation and establishes a platform upon which we can build technical cooperation."

The first session of the conference delivered *the case for strengthening and modernising labour inspection – Alliances, Ethics and Influence as key strategies for success* and set the scene for the three sessions that were to follow. A diverse range of speakers reinforced the message that to strengthen and modernise labour inspection, there must be defined relationships with key stakeholders, sharing of knowledge and expertise, adequate resourcing and an appropriate evidence base to support intervention activities that provide protection and opportunity to workers.

Labour inspection must consider maximising resources to address OHS issues by sharing the experiences of all nations and seeking to adopt best practice approaches suitable for their social, political and economic environment.

The second session of the conference on *Alliances: The role of regional cooperation and partnerships in labour inspection* provided a key message that through strategic alliances within regions and across the globe, labour inspectorates will be enabled to meet the challenges of both developed and developing countries to ensure fair and safe work. Further supporting this argument was the idea that labour inspectorates worldwide need to be willing to share and learn from one another and through cooperation and collaboration the challenges of the future can be met.

The third session of the conference on *Ethics: The need for a global code of integrity and developing the foundation for professional labour inspection* established the rationale and need for labour inspectorates to support common principles to underpin their governance and business frameworks. The key message arising from this session was that an international Code of Integrity will help build a consistent foundation for professional and ethical labour inspection across the world. This in turn will contribute to the growth and health of economies, enhance social justice and provide effective protection for workers.

During the conclusion of this session, agreement was reached by conference delegates to support the guiding principles of the Code. The Code will now be amended (based on comments and issues raised at the conference) and finalised in preparation for endorsement at the general IALI assembly in Geneva, in June 2008.

The fourth and final session of the conference addressed the topic of *Influence: Measuring and demonstrating the value of effective labour inspection*. The key message arising from this final session was that those IALI members that have adopted a scoreboard approach to assessing their performance can now benchmark with other IALI members. This in turn will facilitate the development of a global scorecard for labour inspection in collaboration with the ILO.

The central challenge for labour inspection arising from this session is that there is a vital need for labour inspectorates to develop a means of benchmarking their performance to ensure effectiveness, professionalism and continuous improvement.



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