



**MINISTRY OF LABOUR
OFFICE OF THE CABINET SECRETARY**

REMARKS BY

MR. SIMON K. CHELUGUI, E.G.H.,

DURING THE COMMEMORATION OF THE 2022

WORLD DAY FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK

ON 28TH APRIL 2022

AT KPA MBARAKI SPORTS GROUNDS,

MOMBASA

Jackson Kalla, Chief Administrative Secretary

Eng Peter Tum Principal Secretary,

Mr Kanguchu, Chairman, DOSH

Dr. Musa Nyandusi, Secretary DOSH

Staff in My Ministry,

The Fourth Estate

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning

It gives me great pleasure to join you as we commemorate the annual World Day for Safety and Health at Work, a day when the whole world comes together to promote the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases globally.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Kenya subscribes to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) No.8 which lays emphasis on promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all. This goal particularly targets promotion of safe and secure working environments for all workers.

According to the International Labour Organization, every year over **2.3 million** people die at work from an occupational injury or disease, out of which 350,000 deaths are due to fatal accidents at work. In our country approximately **4500** people are reported to suffer from an occupational injury or disease annually, out of which **150** are reported to die due to fatal

accidents at work place. These National statistics however might not represent the accurate position on the ground because of misreporting, failure to report and sometimes under reporting by most organization.

Statistics from the directorate of occupational safety and health in my Ministry, shows that last year a total of **133** occupational deaths were reported while **3,215** workers sustained injuries, some maimed for life and others incapacitated for a period of time, while another **626** workers were reported to have sustained an occupational disease.

These are not just statistics; these are real people with real families who depend on them, and **in honour of the 133 workers who lost their life in course of work last year, I invite all of us to rise up and observe a moment of silence in their memory.**

No life should be lost out of a preventable cause, and as we commemorate this day, on behalf of my Ministry, I wish to encourage employers to invest in occupational safety and health because it has long term benefits not only to individuals, but also to employers and the government at large.

By investing in occupational safety and health valuable resources that would have been used in avoidable injuries and illnesses is saved, which leads to reduction in both direct and indirect costs to an organization,

ultimately affecting organization's performance and productivity. By investing in occupational safety and health, organization will see reduction in absence due sickness; healthcare cost; and reduced costs to train replacement employees. It therefore pays to invest in occupational safety and health.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Having proper and accurate statistics is important for the government to plan its programmes. I therefore encourage all employees and employers alike to report cases of occupational accidents and diseases to the nearest **Directorate of occupational safety and health office within one week and fill up a document called DOSH one (I) form**, because

having accurate and disaggregated data on occupational injuries and diseases will help in identifying sectors and occupations that are prone to occupational diseases and accidents, and hence come up with proper strategies and programmes to address the causes of these occupational accidents and diseases, at enterprise, County and National level.

While not all occupational diseases are easy to diagnose, of late we have noticed that the nature of occupational diseases is changing. In particular, cases of mental health disorders are increasing in most organization. I therefore call upon all employers to give more attention to cases of mental health in our work places.

The Ministry of Labour also recognizes the complication and difficulty of proofing an occupational disease, for this reason, the Ministry has prioritized the setting up of an occupational disease fund, which will be a revolving fund, that will be used to compensate cases of occupational accidents and diseases. Once in place , we will call upon all employers and employees to embrace it, so that we can move our country forward.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I note that we are celebrating this day at a time when the world is recovering from the devastating effects of covid-19, when most organizations have reopened and are getting back to a near normal work environment, even with this, employees and employers need to continue taking extra care and ensure that occupational safety and health

guidelines are still complied with, until such a time when the world will be declared free of Covid-19.

Coming from the Covid -19 background, this year's international safety and health day themed ***“Let's Act Together to Build a Positive Safety and Health Culture”*** presents an opportunity for policy makers and practitioner to sensitize the public on the magnitude of the problem associated with occupational diseases and accidents and the need for urgent action. It is the reason why we are gathered here in Mombasa, to raise our voice on the importance of occupational safety and health.

As part of building this safety and health culture, the Ministry of Labour appreciate the decision by ILO's Governing Body to consider possible inclusion of occupational safety and health as a fundamental principle and right at work. If adopted, this will align well with the Constitution of Kenya's Article 41(2)(b) that recognizes every worker's right to reasonable working conditions as a Fundamental Rights and Freedoms.

The government of Kenya with our social partners will therefore be attending the 110th International Labour conference next month to participate in the deliberations towards inclusion of Occupational safety and health as a fundamental principal and right at work.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As I conclude, allow me to mention that in our country, promotion of safety and health in workplaces is provided for in various legal instruments namely; the National Policy on Occupational safety and Health; the Occupational safety and Health Act, 2007; and Work Injury Benefits Act, 2007 with their enabling subsidiary legislations.

These legal instrument aims at ensuring there is safety and health at work places. However, to ensure that this becomes a reality, it is incumbent upon employers to establish safety committees to foresee the building of a positive safety and health culture as espoused by our theme for this year's cerebation.

We have enough laws to ensure safety and health at work places, however we must all know that ‘safety starts with me’ I therefore call on all employees to play their role effectively, even as I call on employers to invest in occupational safety and health.

Finally, as we celebrate this day set aside by the International Labour Organization, Kenya and African celebrates the election Hon. Gilbert F. Hounbo the first African to head the International Labour organization as its Director General. This is an honor to our continent, and an affirmation that we have the capacity to manage and bring change in the world.

With these remarks, thank you and God **bless you All**

