Improving OSH in mining

Martin Georg Hahn
International Labour Office
Introduction

- International Labour Organization
  - UN specialised agency
    - Seeks the promotion of social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights
    - “Decent work”
  - Unique tripartite structure
    - Workers
    - Employers
    - Governments
ILO - main areas of work

- International Labour Standards
  - International standards
- Employment
- Social protection
  - Occupational safety and health
- Social dialogue
  - Sectoral social dialogue
ILO and mining

- International Labour Conferences
  - Minimum Age (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No.5)
  - Hours of Work (Coal Mines) Convention, 1931 (No.31)

- Industrial committees
  - 1944 decision to establish seven industrial committees
    - Textiles; Coalmining; Inland transport; Iron and steel production; Metal trades; Petroleum production and refining; Building, civil engineering and public works

- Tripartite sectoral meetings
  - Tripartite Meeting on Social and Labour Issues in Small-scale Mines, 1999
  - Meeting of Experts on Safety and Health in Coalmines, 2006
ILO tools and means of action

In order to assist its constituents in improving working conditions, the ILO uses a number of different instruments or means of action

- International Labour Standards
  - Conventions
  - Recommendations
- Guidance/reference materials
- Technical assistance
International Labour Standards

- **Conventions**
  - International treaties, subject to ratification by ILO member States
  - Create binding obligations under International Law
  - Might require Member States to amend their national legislation

- **Recommendations**
  - Set out guidelines which can orient national policy and action
  - Often complement Conventions
Specific ILS for mining

- Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No.176) and its accompanying Recommendation No.183

- Others:
  - Medical examination of Young Persons (Underground Work) Convention, 1965 (No.124)
  - Minimum Age (Underground Work) Convention, 1965 (No.123)
Other instruments

- Codes of practice
- Guidelines
  - HIV/AIDS guidelines for the mining sector (in development)
- Manuals
- Other reference materials
  - ILO's International Classification of Radiographs of Pneumoconioses
  - ILO Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety
Convention No.176

☐ Adopted in 1995
☐ In force since 1998
☐ 25 ratifications
  ■ (including Brazil, many EU countries, Peru, South Africa and United States)

☐ Recommendation No.183
  ■ Complements C.176
  ■ Provides more detailed guidance (not binding)
C.176 - main features

- Based on Plan - Do - Check - Act methodology
  - To create a virtuous circle of continuous improvement

- Basis for a coherent OSH policy in mines
  - To be periodically revised
  - After consultations with industry and trade unions
C.176 - main features

- Contains provisions to ensure effective implementation
  - Designation of “competent authority”
  - Reporting and investigating procedures
  - National record of accidents and incidents
  - Suspension or restriction of work on OSH grounds through competent authority

- Builds on risk assessment and provides for a hierarchy of measures:
  - Elimination of hazard / minimization of risk
  - Provide PPE (only as a last resort)
Clearly defines employers and workers’ roles, duties and rights
- Including in relation to subcontracting

Worker participation and consultation
- Including right to information

Right of workers to remove themselves from any location at the mine when circumstances arise which appear, with reasonable justification, to pose a serious danger to their safety or health

Duty of workers and employers to cooperate
- for example in the form of Safety and Health Committees
C.176

☐ Provides a floor

- Outlines minimum requirements for a legislative framework that is conducive to improving safety and health in mining

☐ Links in with the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No.155)

- Ratified by 57 Member States

☐ Practical application matters
How can ILO help?

- Committee of Experts
  - Impartial evaluation of the state of application of international labour standards

- Technical assistance (eg. by building capacity)
  - Regional workshops on mine safety and health

- Technical cooperation projects
  - Possibly in the form of Public-Private-Partnerships

- Tools!
Tools?

- Codes of practice
- Guidelines
- Manuals
- Training tools
Codes of practice

- Voluntary, practical guidance
- Contain general principles and specific guidance
- Provide a basis for prevention and protective measures
- ILO technical standards in occupational safety and health
- Not designed to replace national laws or regulations or accepted standards
Codes of practice - examples

- Safety and health in opencast mines, 1991
- Safety and health in underground coalmines, 2008
- Ambient factors in the workplace, 2001
- HIV/AIDS and the world of work, 2001
- OSH management systems, 2001
- Recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases, 1996
- Protection of workers’ personal data, 1997
Meeting of experts on safety and health in underground coalmines

- Geneva, 8-13 May 2006
- 23 Government, Employer and Worker experts
- Revised and adopted new code of practice on safety and health in underground coalmines

The code provides important practical guidance in support of the provisions of C.176 R.183.

- Translated into Chinese, English, French, Hindi, Polish, Russian, and Spanish
Structure of the code

Part I
National framework

Part II
Methodology for identifying risks and addressing hazards

Part III
Provisions for safe underground coalmining operations

General provisions, Glossary

Bibliography, Annexes
Other ILO work

- Mining-specific guidelines on HIV/AIDS
  - To be validated

- International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

- Projects on small-scale mining
  - For example in Mongolia
Thank you

For further information

hahn@ilo.org
www.ilo.org/sector