

## **Workshop on Health, Safety and Labour in the Telecoms Sector, 7 October**

### **Keynote Speech delivered by U Kyaw Kyaw Htun, Deputy Director, Factories and General Labour Law Inspection Department on behalf of U Win Shein, Director-General**

Distinguished guests, Director Ms. Vicky Bowman from MCRB, representatives from key companies such as MPT, Telenor, Ooredoo from Telecommunication sector and representatives from Tower Companies, project owners, managers, employer and employee representatives, representatives from NGOs, CSOs “Mingalarbar”.

I am very pleased and honoured to have a chance to deliver key note speech on behalf of Director General of Factories and General Labour Law Inspection Department (FGLIID) of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (MOLIP).

Our department takes responsibility of overseeing workplace safety and health at factories and workplace. It is also a focal department regarding workplace safety and health sector at ASEAN level. We often participate in awareness-raising sessions on workplace health and safety. However, these awareness-raising sessions mainly target industry and construction; we rarely see such kind of activities in other sectors. That is why I appreciate and welcome today’s workshop on workplace health and safety in the telecommunications sector organized by MCRB. I would like to encourage you to continue today’s discussion and hold further awareness sessions on the workplace safety and health.

Today I would like to make two points. The first is regarding the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) system currently being practised in Myanmar. The second is the future OSH system after the new OSH law is issued. The current system is quite fragmented. Our department supervises only two laws: the 1951 Factories Act (amended 2016) and the 2016 Shops and Establishment Act. These do not cover construction, agriculture, mining and health sectors.

Even under the two above-mentioned laws, other departments and Ministries share responsibility. For instance the Electrical Inspection Department and Boiler Inspection Department of the Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection under the Ministry of Industry supervises electrical and boiler safety. The Fire Services Department has responsibility for fire safety and prevention.

Although international practice is a bipartite system where employers and employees take ownership to ensure OSH, in Myanmar the government takes on the duty of inspection activities. That’s why two key factors are needed for the success of the current system. No.1 is we need an adequate number of well trained and qualified inspectors in accordance with the ILO convention no.81 on Labour Inspection. Now we

have 100 labour inspectors and out of those 100, 70 are field inspectors. They are newly recruited and currently being trained to build up their capacity.

The second success factor of labour inspection is innovation in inspection strategies. For that, well qualified, experienced and thoughtful managers are needed at national, regional, state levels and also at district and township levels. Physical infrastructure and soft skills that will support these strategies are also needed.

As for the future OSH system after the new OSH law is enacted, this will be a bipartite system where employers and employees take ownership of OSH and the government will oversee this process. The draft law included three provisions for such system to be created.

First is the creation of a national Occupational Safety and Health Council to coordinate the parties with responsibility for OSH. This will facilitate tripartite discussions and adopt at a national level. The second is for workplace safety and health committees to be formed with equal numbers of employer and employee representatives. These can take responsibility at the workplace to implement national OSH policies. The third is that a workplace safety and health officer should be appointed to give technical support to the employer and employee representatives.

Currently the draft OSH law is with the Union Attorney-General's Office. After it is enacted by Parliament, the structure and system as mentioned above will be practiced.

I would like to encourage the audience to think ahead and prepare for the new system in accordance with their workplace situation. All over the world, 'falling from height' causes the greatest number of accidents. This risk can be seen in the telecommunications sector.

Since OSH involves management of humans, mere rules and regulations are not enough. It needs commitment to OSH and innovation to encourage the cooperation of workers in implementation of OSH policy and regulations. This factor is often forgotten.

It's now the time to change the vicious circle whereby workers are blamed for lack of coordination on rules and regulations and complaints are made about weakness in laws.

That's why I would like to conclude that we can learn from our peers who successfully manage workplace safety and health and also adopt effective measures in the areas such as resource management and occupational safety management.

Thank you all.