

**Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, DG
World Health Organization
Geneva, Switzerland
and Delegates to the 79th World Health Assembly,**

March 31, 2026

Dear Dr. Tedros and Delegates:

As senior leaders of global and national occupational health and safety organisations, we call on you to make concrete commitments towards occupational safety and health. We recognize the resource limitations that face WHO, but it is critical that the WHO lend its voice to making workplace health a global priority. We urge WHO and all delegates to the World Health Assembly (WHA) to ensure that worker health is enshrined in WHO's future strategy and plans.

There are an estimated 2.9 million deaths annually due to work-related causes, with a nearly 12% increase in work-related mortality since 2000. Over 395 million workers sustain non-fatal occupational injuries annually, with around 160 million new cases of work-related diseases occurring each year. The global cost of poor occupational safety and health is 3.94%- 5.8% of the world's GDP, equivalent to USD \$2.8- \$3 trillion annually.

International and professional principles and standards, from ILO Conventions and the ILO Global Strategy on OSH¹, to the WHO Fourteenth General Programme of Work (GPW 14)², underscore the importance of workplace health. There are specific parts of the WHO Programme of Work which commit WHO to action on occupational and workplace health, yet these are not reflected in the six strategic priorities of the Programme. As well, the Global Plan of Action on Physical Activity³ references workplaces as a key setting for physical activity and reduction of sedentary behaviour, as factors that will contribute to increased productivity and reduction in injuries and absenteeism.

To ensure that workplace health gets the attention it warrants, we call for:

1. A Continuation of the Health in the World of Work Network

In 2021, WHO launched the Health in the World of Work Network, which brought together key stakeholders for the purposes of strengthening collaboration and knowledge sharing to build healthy, safe and resilient workplaces for all workers. We call for this network to continue⁴.

2. A new Workers' Health Global Plan of Action

Following the GPA 2008–2017⁵, a new plan of action would:

- Reflect the ILO's recognition of a safe and healthy working environment as a fundamental principle and right at work, and ensure WHO efforts reinforce and strengthen global standards
- Prevent occupational illnesses and injuries, and protect and promote the health of all workers globally
- Address emerging risks, such as those associated with climate change, digitalization and psychosocial hazards
- Integrate occupational health into public health systems

¹ https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/OSH_Globaly_Strategy_r6.pdf

² <https://www.who.int/about/general-programme-of-work/fourteenth>

³ <https://www.who.int/initiatives/gappa>

⁴ <https://www.who.int/groups/who-health-in-the-world-of-work-network#reports>

⁵ https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwaha/pdf_files/wha60/a60_r26-en.pdf,

- Expand access to occupational health services to all workers, including migrant workers and those in the informal sector.

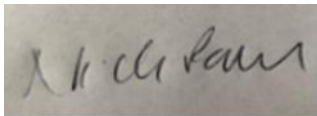
The WHA must lead to concrete commitments, actions, and accountability, an opportunity for commitment between countries on shared principles and standards for occupational health and safety. We hope Member States and the WHO seize this opportunity and commit to a resolution and framework that ensures the protection and promotion of workers globally.

3. **Continuation of the Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centres for Occupational Health**, with a view to expanding this network with non-state actors

Finally, we call for strengthened collaboration and coordination of WHO and ILO at the global, regional and country levels to stimulate intersectoral partnerships between health and labour ministries.

Thank you very much for your commitment to global health. All signatories are committed to safe and healthy working environments and are here to support and work with WHO to provide technical expertise on occupational safety and health.

Sincerely,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read "Nick Pahl".

Nick Pahl, SOM CEO

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On behalf of the following endorsing organisations:

The Society of Occupational Medicine (SOM)



IOMSC (International Occupational Medicine Society Collaborative)



WHWB (Workplace Health Without Borders)



Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)



American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA)



International Ergonomics Association (IEA)



International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA)



OSHAfrica



Addendum: April 25, 2026

Additional endorsements of the March 31, 2026 letter to Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

1. Board of Certified Safety Professionals (BCSP) (USA)
2. National Safety Council (USA)
3. Campus Safety Health and Environmental Management Association (CSHEMA) (USA)
4. South African Society of Occupational Medicine (SASOM)
5. Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene (SAIOH)