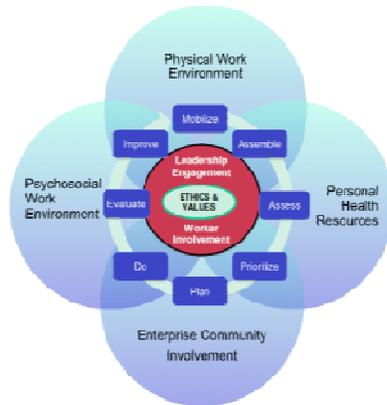# Five Keys to Healthy Workplaces: No Business Wealth without Workers' Health

A healthy workplace is "one in which workers and managers collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect and promote the health, safety and well-being of all workers and the sustainability of the workplace by considering the following, based on identified needs:

- health and safety concerns in the physical work environment;

- health, safety and well-being concerns in the psychosocial work environment including organization of work and workplace culture;

- personal health resources in the workplace (support and encouragement of healthy lifestyles by the employer);

- ways of participating in the community to improve the health of workers, their families and members of the community".

Due to mounting social and public pressure and rising consumer expectations, enterprises are increasingly being expected to go beyond their legal requirements and act more responsibly. Creating workplaces that are healthy for their employees and that prevent illness and disease, is one way in which companies can meet these rising expectations, while also improving productivity and competitiveness. While there are a number of tools available for creating healthy workplaces at the enterprise level, most focus on specific occupational hazards, industries or sectors but no comprehensive scheme for good practice exists. To provide companies with such a scheme, the World Health Organization (WHO), on the basis of the WHO Global Plan of Action on Workers' Health, 2008-2017, launched the Global Framework for Healthy Workplaces in April 2010. Good practices and tools that fit the Framework are being collected for practical implementation.

Key 1: Leadership commitment and engagement
- ✓ Mobilize and gain commitment from major stakeholders (e.g. senior leadership, union leadership) to integrate healthy workplaces into the enterprise's business goals and values
- ✓ Get necessary permissions, resources and support
- ✓ Provide key evidence of this commitment by developing and adopting a comprehensive policy that is signed by the enterprise's highest authority which clearly indicates that healthy workplace initiatives are part of the organization's business strategy.

Key 2: Involve workers and their representatives
- ✓ Workers and their representatives must not simply be "consulted" or "informed" but must be actively involved in every step of the risk assessment and management process from planning to evaluation considering their opinions and ideas
- ✓ It is critical that workers have some collective means of expression.

Key 3: Business ethics and legality
- ✓ One of the most basic of universally accepted ethical principles is to "do no harm" to others and to ensure employees' health and safety
- ✓ Adhere to workers' social and ethical codes as part of their role in the broader community
- ✓ Enforce occupational health codes and laws
- ✓ Take responsibility for workers, their families and the public and avoid undue risks and human suffering.

Key 4: Use a systematic, comprehensive process to ensure effectiveness and continual improvement
- ✓ Mobilize strategic commitment to a healthy workplace
- ✓ Assemble the resources required
- ✓ Assess the current situation and the desired future
- ✓ Develop priorities

- ✓ Develop a comprehensive overall plan and specific project action plans by learning from others, for example, consult experts from a local university or ask experienced union leaders to act as mentors, visit other enterprises, consult the virtual world
- ✓ Implement the plan
- ✓ Evaluate the acceptance and effectiveness of the plan
- ✓ Improve when circumstances indicate it is needed.

Key 5: Sustainability and integration
- ✓ Gain senior management commitment to use a health, safety and well-being "filter" for all decisions
- ✓ Integrate the healthy workplace initiatives into the enterprise's overall strategic business plan
- ✓ Use cross-functional teams or matrices to reduce isolation of work groups and establish a health and safety committee and a workplace wellness committee
- ✓ Evaluate and continuously improve
- ✓ Measure not only financial performance but also customer knowledge, internal business processes and employees' learning and growth to develop long-term business success
- ✓ Maintain a comprehensive view to workplace health and safety and examine all aspects to identify a wider range of effective solutions
- ✓ Consider external influences such as lack of primary health care resources in the community
- ✓ Reinforce and recognize desired behaviour through performance management systems that set behavioural standards and output targets.

To learn more: http://www.who.int/occupational_health/healthy_workplaces