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# **Healthy workplaces: A model for action**

**Dr Maria Neira  
Director  
Dept of Public Health &  
Environment  
WHO headquarters  
Geneva, Switzerland**



# I. Our target population: 'the global workforce'

Most of the world's 2.8 billion workers can benefit from a "healthy workplace" approach, and particularly...

- the 1.9 billion workers who are employed in unhealthy & unsafe working conditions...and that includes 170 million children



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## II. Healthy workplaces: a new way of thinking

*A comprehensive approach that embraces:*

- ▶ Traditional & emerging occupational health – minimizing workers' exposure to job-related physical & psychosocial risks
- ▶ Health promotion – promoting healthy behaviours among workers, both job- and lifestyle-related
- ▶ Enterprise involvement in community – to address broader social & environmental determinants of workers health



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# Occupational health risks ➡

- ▶ 160 million new cases of work-related illness every year
- ▶ Occupational risks play a big role in chronic diseases:
  - ▶ 26% CVD & chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
  - ▶ 15% asthma
  - ▶ 10% cancer
  - ▶ 8% injuries
  - ▶ 8 % depression



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# Health promotion: improved workers' health → better performance

Workplace-based initiatives can help support, for instance:

- Smoking cessation
- Obesity control
- Cardiovascular health
- HIV/TB testing & treatment
- Exercise & physical activity



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# **Enterprise community involvement ➡ social & environmental determinants**

- ▶ Safe/healthy access to work – public transport, carpools, walking, cycling
- ▶ Voluntary pollution/waste control & cleanup
- ▶ Primary health care measures unavailable through health care services



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### III. A little history...

Healthy workplaces is inspired by the WHO definition of health as:

**“a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”**

*WHO constitution, signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States and entered into force on 7 April 1948*



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# Paradigm shift

**From: Labour approach**  
*Occupational health*



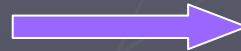
**To: Public health approach**  
*Workers' health*

**Action at workplace**



**Action to include workers' families & communities**

**Work-related health issues only**



**Include all health determinants**

**Work under labour contract**



**Include all workers** (self-employed, informal workers)

**Employers' responsibility**

**All stakeholders' responsible**  
(insurance, health & environm. authorities, a.o.)

**Negotiation between workers and employers**



**Health protection is a non-negotiable**



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# Increased business awareness

1. The 'right' thing to do: businesses are part of society and ethical/social frameworks
2. The 'legal' thing to do: in our globalized world, businesses that ignore or undermine workers' health are open to litigation and media scrutiny
3. The 'smart' thing to do: businesses that protect workers' health are among the most successful over time



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# IV. Global policy anchors

- ▶ WHO Global Strategy on Occupational health for All, 1996
- ▶ ILO Global Strategy 2003 & Promotional Framework
- ▶ World Health Assembly *Worker's health: global plan of action* (2007)



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# V. The 'Healthy Workplaces' model :

## *Combining health protection & health promotion*

- ▣ Developed by leading occupational health experts out of systematic review of literature
- ▣ Peer-reviewed by WHO regions, ILO, other key agencies
- ▣ October 2009 workshop involving 56 experts from 22 countries, international worker & employer representatives



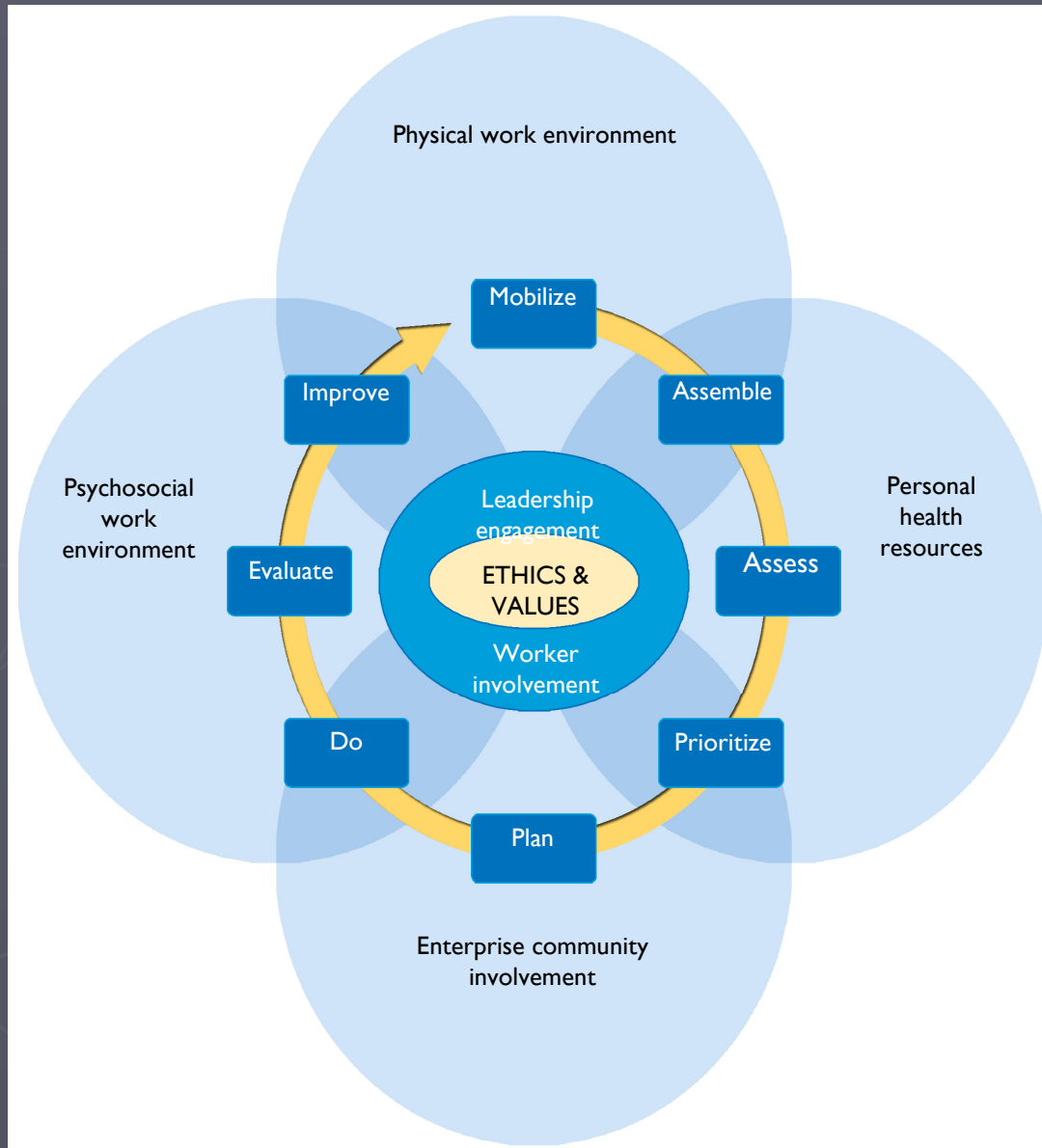
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# VI. A holistic framework for action

## 1. Action in four realms:

- Physical work
- Psychosocial environment
- Personal health
- Community involvement

## 2. A model of continuous improvement



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# Physical Work Environment

## practical examples

- ▶ Eliminate a toxic chemical or substitute with less hazardous
- ▶ Install machine guards/exhaust ventilation
- ▶ Train workers on safe operating procedures
- ▶ Personal protective equipment such as respirators or hard hats

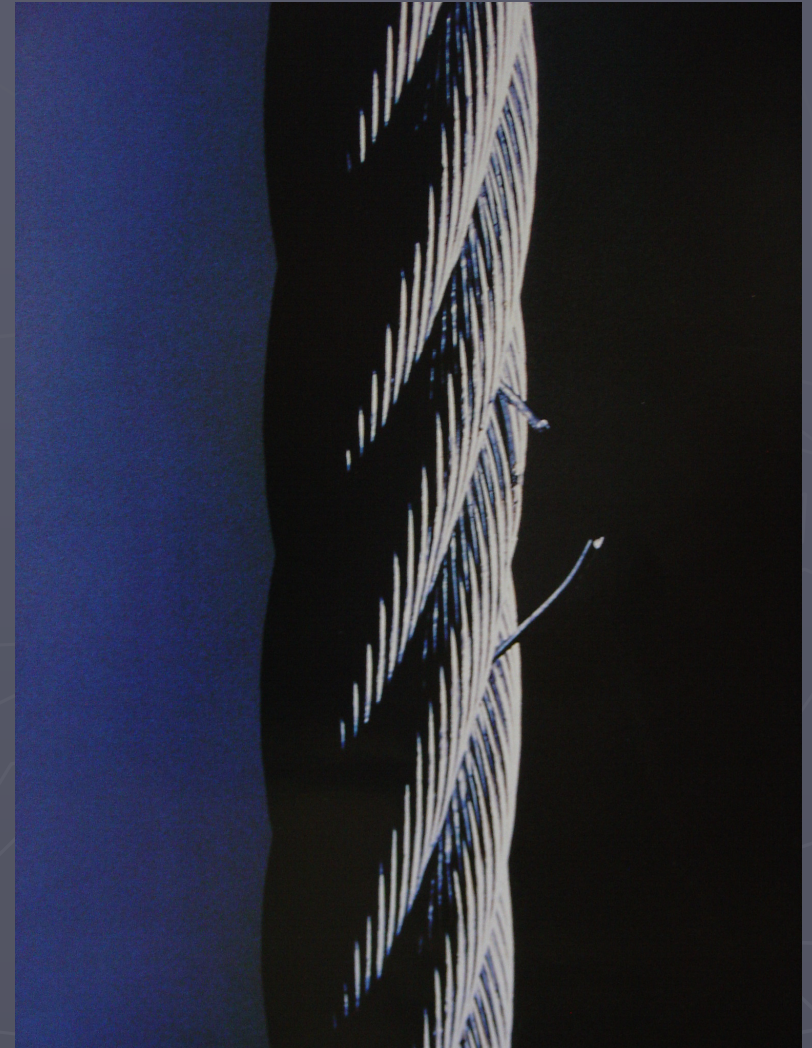


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# Psychosocial Environment

## practical examples

- ▣ Reallocate work to reduce workload
- ▣ Zero tolerance for harassment, bullying, discrimination
- ▣ Respect work-family balance
- ▣ Recognize and reward good performance
- ▣ Meaningful worker input into decisions that affect them



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# Personal Health Resources Support practical examples

- ▶ provide fitness facilities, classes or equipment for workers;
- ▶ provide healthy food choices (e.g., cafeteria)
- ▶ put no-smoking policies in place, provide smoking cessation assistance;
- ▶ provide information about alcohol and drugs, and employee assistance counseling



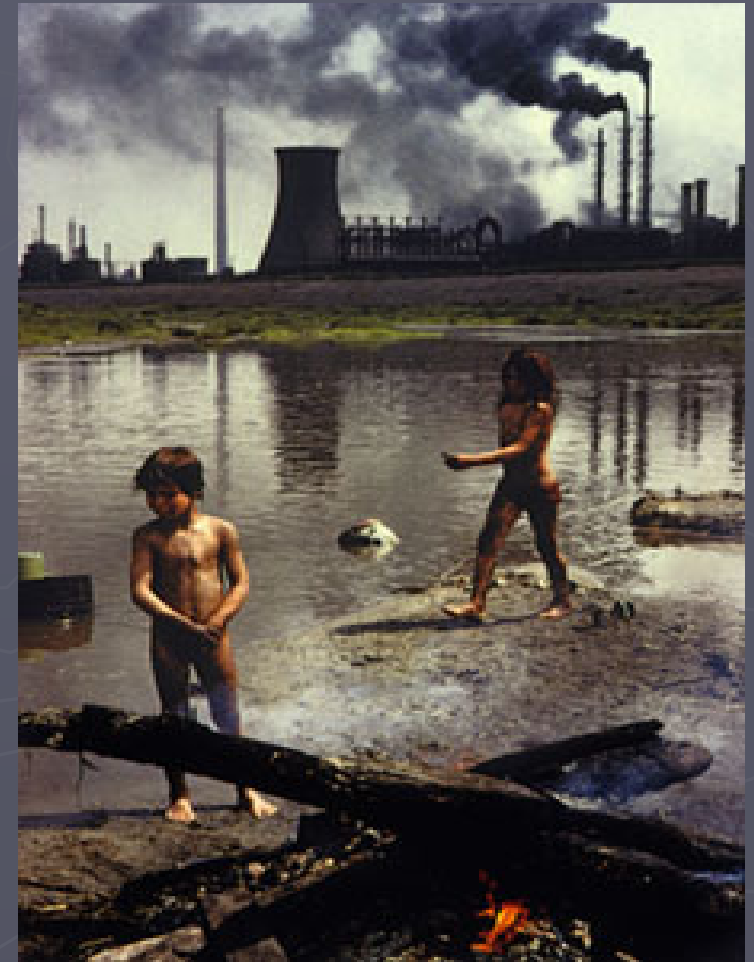
**As an employer you can create or remove barriers to lifestyle changes!**



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# Enterprise Community Environment practical examples

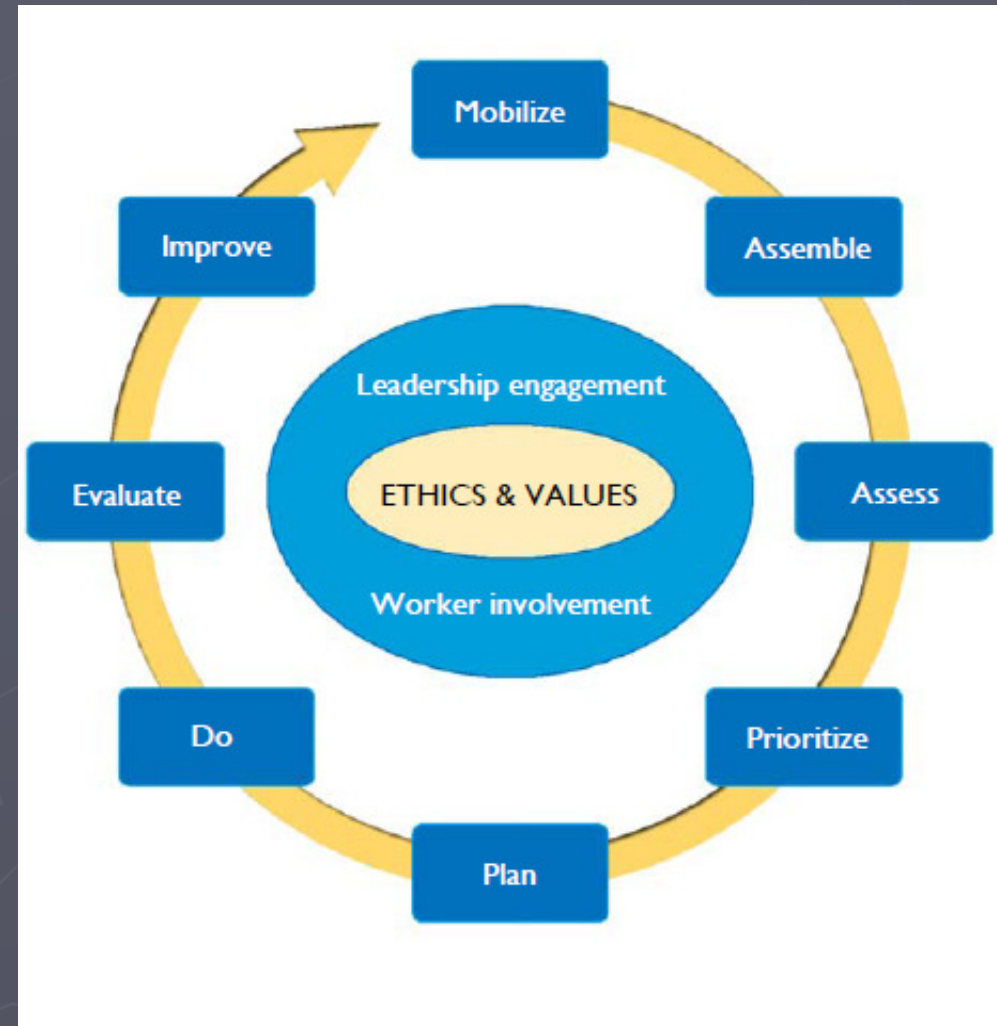
- Free/affordable Primary health care to workers/family members;
- Literacy education to workers/families;
- Voluntary controls over pollutants released into the air or water;
- Financial support to worthwhile community causes;
- Minimize greenhouse gas emissions.



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# VII. Crosscutting principles for success

- Leadership engagement
- Involve workers & their representatives
- Do an effective gap analysis
- Learn from others
- Integrate activities
- Evaluate and improve



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# VIII. Next steps

In line with further implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* for workers' health, collaboration between WHO, member states, collaborating centres, and civil society groups to develop further:

- ▶ Practical guidance
- ▶ Sector-specific guidance & tools
- ▶ Training modules



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Thank you for your attention and your  
kind invitation !



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