



Dhaka, 28 April 2020

Statement on International Workers Memorial Day (IWMD) - 2020

Stop Pandemic at Work: Recognize Covid-19 as an Occupational Disease

28 April is a day of remembrance for workers who were killed, injured or disabled due to lack of proper health and safety at work. World Day for safety and Health at Work is an opportunity to highlight the preventable nature of most workplace incidents and ill health and to promote campaigns for the fight of improvements in workplace safety and health. We must recognize the economic cost, the immeasurable human suffering such illnesses and accidents. These are all-the-more tragic because they are largely preventable. The International Workers Memorial Day on 28 April is an annual international campaign to promote safe, healthy and decent work.

160 million people in Bangladesh currently living life with lockdown situation due to rapid spread of Covid-19, most of the working people at formal and informal sector are out of workplace as an impact of this state direction, but workers and employees at health sector, public and emergency services, , print and media, workers at readymade garments sector, agriculture, food and retail sector, household waste recycling sector keep continuing their work at this pandemic period to keep the society and nation functional with serious threat of corona virus exposure. We are already experiencing in Bangladesh that, most of the functioning workplaces measures such as distancing and personal equipment are insufficient and most of the cases absent. One thing that is clear is very clear to us that, most of the transmission is occurring in workplaces such as, production facilities, hospitals and care facilities, as well as the workplaces where transmission can occur between workers with the public. It's also need to mention here that still a big majority working population under this pandemic doing job at the workplaces without the comprehensive legal protection when exposed to a disease caused by a biological agent. This poses a tremendous risk to workers and employees, their families as well as the communities where they live.

Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHE) demanding on this special day to stop pandemic at work and asking the government to immediately recognize the Covid-19 as an occupational disease in Bangladesh. Urgent efforts are needed to ensure that vulnerable group of workers and employees with Covid-19 should have appropriate access to proper housing, with space for quarantine and social distancing while sleeping and eating, potable water and proper sanitation facilities on and off the job, free health care, safe transport, safe work practices and income protection.

A just response to the corona virus pandemic is one that demands access to healthcare, safety and hygiene, social protection, and basic human rights. Now more than ever civil society must strive to not only provide aid where it is needed, but to act in solidarity with emergent working class and social movements demanding a better and safer world for all.