# Global Symposium on Occupational Safety and Health
## Risks and Strategies

# Report

### Organized by:
UN Global Compact Network India (UN GCNI),
PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI),
Indo-German Focal Point (IGFP) – India, and
Centre for Transparency and Accountability in
Governance (CTAG), NLU Delhi

# BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is a fundamental aspect of promoting workplace dignity, sustainable industrial development, and human rights. The global discourse on OSH has rapidly evolved to encompass not only physical safety but also psychosocial well-being, digital innovation, and inclusive governance. As India witnesses an acceleration in industrialization, technological transformation, and demographic shifts in its labor force, the imperative to revisit and reimagine OSH frameworks becomes urgent.

The Global Symposium on Occupational Safety and Health: Risks and Strategies was conceived as a multi-stakeholder knowledge-sharing platform to deliberate on emerging risks, share international best practices, and develop collaborative strategies to advance the Vision Zero agenda. The symposium aimed to address not only existing OSH challenges but also to anticipate and prepare for future risks arising from automation, climate change, mental health, and the informalization of labor.

# INAUGURAL SESSION

The Symposium commenced with a high-level inaugural session featuring remarks from eminent leaders across sectors. Shri Ashish Wig, Chair, HR & IR Committee, PHDCCI, extended a warm welcome to all participants and emphasized the importance of embedding OSH into organizational strategy as a core productivity and governance function.

Dr. Somnath Singh, Deputy Director, UN Global Compact Network India, delivered the theme address, highlighting the intersection of OSH with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 3, SDG 8, and SDG 12. He called for a rights-based and principles-driven approach to OSH as a moral and ethical responsibility of businesses.

Dr. Fuelleman from Switzerland brought in a comparative international perspective, underscoring the need for localized adaptation of global OSH norms. He advocated for bilateral collaborations in institutional resilience and workforce training.

Prof. Bimal Sahu, Director, Indo-German Focal Point, delivered a special address, stressing the transformative power of Vision Zero and digitized training platforms. He laid the foundation for the subsequent sessions by advocating for integrated, behavior-based safety systems.

# SESSION I: VISION ZERO TO NET ZERO

**Session Chair:** Dr. Jatinder Singh, Deputy Secretary General, PHDCCI - Advocated for Vision Zero to be embedded in ESG frameworks, emphasizing its role in improving employee trust, retention, and performance. He explored the ideological and operational alignment between Vision Zero and Net Zero, particularly in the context of workplace safety and sustainability.

**Key Highlights:**

- Kristina Eger (BG BAU, Germany): Shared the success of AI-based prevention models in German construction, emphasizing e-learning, safety simulation, and data-driven interventions.

- Mr. Srinivas Bhoospure (IT Expert, Hyderabad): Demonstrated how AI, predictive analytics, and sensor-based wearables are revolutionizing industrial accident prevention in India.

- Prof. Bimal Sahu: Highlighted scalable digital training models tailored for MSMEs and stressed the need for safety training to reach the last worker.
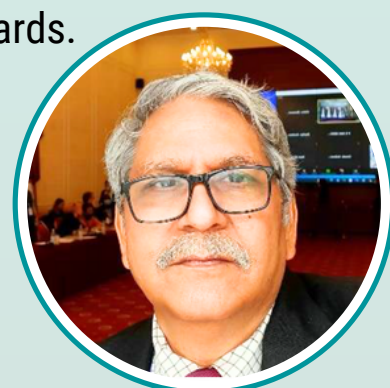
## SESSION II: OSH PREVENTION STRATEGIES — AWARENESS, CAPACITY BUILDING, AI & INNOVATION

**Session Chair:** Dr. Somnath Singh, Deputy Director, UN GCNI - Focused on proactive risk mitigation, awareness generation, and capacity building using new technologies and stakeholder-centered models.

**Key Highlights:**

- Dr. Helmut Ehnes (ISSA): Called for predictive risk management, safety leadership, and behavior-based safety programs.

- Adv. Saji Narayanan (Former President, BMS): Urged inclusion of workers and trade unions in safety planning and lawmaking.

- Mr. S.P. Rana (Labour Dept., GNCT Delhi): Shared practical enforcement challenges and recommended digital tools and dashboards.

- Dr. Shyam Pingle (ICOH): Stressed the need for national registries for occupational diseases and the inclusion of occupational health in primary care.

# SESSION III: LEGAL DIMENSIONS, ENFORCEMENT & OCCUPATIONAL SICKNESS

**Session Chair:** Prof. J.S. Mann, Director, CTAG/NLUD - Investigated policy gaps, enforcement limitations, and systemic challenges in OSH governance.

**Key Highlights:**

- Dr. Ramesh VM: Highlighted OSH gaps in MSMEs and called for community-level training with visual communication aids.
- Prof. Umesh Chandra Ojha (ESIC): Introduced psychological safety and mental health first aid as foundational to safe workplaces.
- Mr. J.S. Mann (CTAG): Recommended centralized compliance portals and third-party audits.
- Mr. V. Shashi Kumar: Advocated for OSH-specialized courts and cross-training of inspectors.

# SESSION IV: OSH CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

**Session Chair:** Dr. Somnath Singh (UN GCNI) - Addressed practical barriers, academic gaps, and institutional weaknesses in implementing OSH strategies across regions and sectors.

**Key Highlights:**

- Prof. Subhasis Sahu (Kalyani University): Called for grassroots OSH research and state-level policy labs.
- Pernille Thau (Human House, Denmark): Advocated for well-being metrics, resilience training, and leadership empathy.
- Mr. Promod P. (Factories & Boilers, Kerala): Shared Kerala's OSH innovations such as safety scorecards and mobile awareness vans.
- Dr. Florence (Former CDMO): Emphasized holistic worker health, routine screenings, and workplace counseling.

# CONCLUDING REMARKS

The symposium concluded with closing remarks and a vote of thanks by Dr. Somnath Singh, Deputy Director, UN GCNI. He expressed deep gratitude to all co-organizers, national and international speakers, moderators, and participants. He reiterated UN GCNI's commitment to:

- Publishing a detailed proceedings document.
- Engaging policymakers and industry in follow-up dialogues.
- Supporting implementation of recommendations via training and collective action initiatives.

## Lessons Learned

- Vision Zero is not an aspirational goal but an actionable framework grounded in leadership, systems thinking, and behavior change.
- OSH governance must be inclusive, integrating workers' voices, trade unions, and informal sectors.
- Technology and AI offer transformative potential for predictive safety but require contextual adaptation and capacity building.
- Psychological safety and mental health must be mainstreamed within OSH discussions.

## Challenges Highlighted

- Fragmented OSH implementation and poor enforcement in MSMEs.
- Under-reporting of occupational diseases and weak health surveillance.
- Lack of standardized, digitized inspection protocols.
- Exclusion of informal and gig workers from formal OSH frameworks.

## Recommendations and Way Forward

- Develop a national OSH and occupational disease registry.
- Institutionalize AI-driven digital inspection and predictive safety systems.
- Expand OSH training using mobile-based micro-learning modules.
- Mainstream psychological safety and mental health support in EHS policies.
- Strengthen multi-stakeholder platforms for policy co-creation.
- Create OSH research cells in universities and encourage academic-industry partnerships.
- Incentivize companies through ESG-linked OSH scorecards and public dashboards.

## Participation and Engagement

The symposium drew participation from over 500 professionals across sectors. Attendees included representatives from academia, government, industry, international organizations, and labor unions. All participants received e-certificates, and interactive sessions, case studies, and breakout rooms fostered deep engagement.

## Acknowledgements

UN GCNI and partner organizations extend sincere appreciation to all stakeholders who contributed to the success of this symposium. The event stands as a testament to the power of collaborative leadership and shared responsibility in building safe, healthy, and equitable workplaces in India and beyond.