



Dr. Gerry Eijkemans, PWR and Dr. Kevin Bowe, Deputy Director/Vice President-Medical Services, National Insurance Board of The Bahamas In order to take the first steps to address the staggering number of work related accidents, injuries and diseases in the Caribbean region, a 2-day sub-regional planning meeting was held to discuss the way forward, followed by a 1 day seminar and exchange of best practices in the Caribbean by selected sector. These meetings took place on December 10th-12th, 2012 in Nassau, The Bahamas and were organized by Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) Bahamas, the National Insurance Board of the Bahamas (NIB) and St. George's University in Grenada and hosted jointly by the PAHO/WHO Bahamas office and the NIB of the Bahamas. Delegates from various Caribbean nations, Government representatives from the Ministries of Labour, Health and National Social Security Systems, academia, employers, workers representatives, the ILO and PAHO HQ came together to meet three main objectives:

- To assess the current status of OHS in the Caribbean
- To strengthen and expand a network of OHS practitioners, in the region and beyond
- To work towards a sub-regional framework (strategic plan) for OHS in the Caribbean (as part of the Global and Regional WHO and ILO frameworks)

Through the use of information sessions as plenary and working group activities, both the 2-day planning meeting and the following seminar yielded the following outcomes:

- A draft Call for Action in the areas of OHS in the sub-region, agreed to in principle by the stakeholders represented, supported by both PAHO and ILO
- A clear understanding of the current situation in the Caribbean with respect to OHS
- A strengthened and expanded network of OHS practitioners in the Caribbean

- The development of an overarching sub-regional framework for OHS in the Caribbean, supported by PAHO and ILO
- A renewed commitment from various stakeholders to incorporate OHS in their priorities and responsibilities
- Enhanced knowledge transfer and exchange in local industry successes in OHS
- Increased awareness among various stakeholder groups about the importance and feasibility of OHS in the workplace
- Enhanced understanding of different models of workplace hazard assessment as well as best practices for health promotion in the workplace



Conference Attendees

The meeting was very successful; representatives from the various sectors signed a Call for Action and PAHO and ILO will jointly support further development of Occupational Health and Safety in the Caribbean.