

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE ACTION PLANS BY KEY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Background

In 2010, the WSH Construction and Landscape Committee launched a sectoral plan detailing the Construction industry's plans to improve its workplace safety and health standards. The target was to reduce workplace construction fatality rate from 8.1 per 100,000 workers in 2009 to 1.8 fatalities per 100,000 workers by 2018.

The implementation of the sectoral plans, such as building workers' competency, building risk management capacities of the industry and implementing mandatory ConSASS audits for major projects, has helped to reduce the workplace fatality rate to 5.5 per 100,000 workers in 2011.

The workplace fatality rate deteriorated to 7.2 per 100,000 workers in 2013, translating to 33 fatalities. This trend continued into the first quarter of 2014 which saw a spate of construction accidents resulting in 11 fatalities. Efforts by the industry, supported by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Council, have helped to arrest the situation. 2014 ended with 27 fatalities in the Construction sector and a reduced workplace fatality rate of 5.5 per 100,000 workers.

Nevertheless, the rate of improvement has slowed. A more determined and concerted plan of action is needed by construction industry stakeholders to meet the Construction industry fatalities rate target of 1.8 and to ensure that any WSH progress is sustainable.

A Recommitment to 1.8 by 2018

In December 2014, the leaders from 10 construction stakeholder groups came together to discuss what could be done to improve the WSH performance of the industry. The stakeholder groups are:

1. Public Sector WSH Commitment Group;
2. Real Estate Developers of Singapore (REDAS);
3. Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA);
4. Association of Consulting Engineers Singapore (ACES);
5. Institute of Engineers Singapore (IES);
6. Singapore Contractor Association Limited (SCAL);
7. Specialist Trade Alliance of Singapore (STAS);
8. Society of Project Managers (SPM);
9. Singapore Institute of Safety Officer (SISO); and
10. Building Construction And Timber Industries Union (BATU).

Since then, the stakeholders have agreed to recommit themselves to the target of 1.8 workplace fatalities per 100,000 workers by 2018. This will require a 25% reduction in the fatality rate every year for the next 3 years. To achieve this target,

stakeholders not only need to do their part, but also collaborate with each other and the government.

Renewed industry efforts to achieve target

Over a period of 8 months, each stakeholder group consulted their members and developed specific stakeholder WSH action plans. The WSH Council facilitated the development of the plans and consultations across the stakeholder groups. The action plans developed focus on six key areas over a construction project life cycle. These key areas are as follows:

1. Leadership

To improve the safety performance of the construction industry, all stakeholders agreed that leadership is key to influence the behaviour of the industry players. **Developers (Public Sector WSH Commitment Group and REDAS)** have committed to set WSH policies and clear WSH goals and expectations at the start of their projects. This expectation will then be communicated to all project players which will work towards achieving these WSH goals.

Developers (Public Sector WSH Commitment Group and REDAS) and **contractors (SCAL)** have jointly agreed to follow through the WSH goals by having regular safety and health reviews with project members. This is important to align all project members to the WSH goals set and if necessary, put in measures to ensure that intermediate milestones of the WSH goals are achieved.

To have visible demonstration of leadership to all project members and workers, **developers (Public Sector WSH Commitment Group and REDAS)** and **contractors (SCAL)** will collaborate to monitor site performance by regularly walking the sites with other stakeholders to show joint efforts to improve WSH performance.

2. Procurement

Procurement is an important part of the construction value chain as it is often the lever that drives industry players' behaviour. Hence, it is vital that industry stakeholders incorporate good procurement practices that would ensure that work will be done safely and encourage sustained WSH performance.

To set good standards, **Public Sector WSH Commitment Group** will require main contractors and subcontractors to have minimally bizSAFE Level 3 or an equivalent recognition. This is important as the bizSAFE framework builds risk management capabilities of contractors. In addition, the **Public Sector WSH Commitment Group** will also consider past WSH performance of contractors before awarding tenders to them. This will create a good incentive for contractors to continuously focus on WSH.

Stakeholders (**SIA, ACES, and SPM**) have committed to support the **developers** in considering WSH in procurement. Other stakeholders (**STAS and SISO**) will produce procurement guidance materials with criteria for evaluation and selection of good contractors. This will ensure that downstream WSH requirements are considered upstream during the procurement process.

3. Design for Safety (DfS)

Design for Safety (DfS) is the consideration of risks at the design and planning stage of the project, with the objective to eliminate or reduce risks through the design of the building or structure. In the event that some risks cannot be eliminated, DfS will require downstream stakeholders to be informed to ensure that they are better prepared to mitigate the risks.

To facilitate the implementation of DfS, **developers** have committed to ensure that sufficient time and resources are provided for the project. In addition, **developers (REDAS)** will also review options with **designers** and **contractors** to reduce or mitigate construction risks and ensure that residual risks are communicated to downstream industry players.

To build competency in DfS, stakeholders (**SIA, ACES, IES, STAS** and **SISO**) will work together to produce DfS guidance material, conduct DfS training, set up an online library of good DfS practices and share good DfS practices at forums and seminars. To ensure that new entrants to the Construction industry are competent in DfS, **IES, ACES** and **SISO** will work with the institutes of higher learning to incorporate DfS into the learning curriculum.

4. Training

Training is important to ensure that workers are competent to work safely. To achieve this, **developers (REDAS)** are working with **contractors (SCAL)** and WSH Council to develop a site orientation and induction programme that will help to educate workers on WSH issues.

IES is also committed to work on a WSH competency building framework for engineers and develop WSH courses for them. In addition, stakeholder groups (**SPM** and **STAS**) will also enhance training for project managers and other industry players working on the ground to ensure that they are better trained in WSH. This includes conducting webinars and forums on WSH issues as well as producing guidance materials and case studies on WSH.

5. WSH Culture

A sustainable WSH Culture requires firstly a mindset change, followed by an eventual behavioural change. To build such a WSH culture in the construction industry, **developers** will develop various incentives with **contractors** to create and sustain improvements in WSH performance.

Contractors (SCAL) will encourage their members to support national safety events and organise safety campaigns within their companies.

6. WSH Practices

Sharing of good WSH practices among stakeholders in the industry will help to raise WSH standards. As such, **SCAL** members are committed to carry out inter-site visits to learn from other **contractors**. Stakeholder groups (**SCAL** and **ACES**) will also encourage peer-sharing sessions for members of their associations, sharing of articles on WSH and case studies on incidents to improve WSH standards in the Construction industry. The Union, **BATU**, will also raise awareness of good WSH

practices and guidelines by working with MOM, WSH Council and Migrants Workers' Centre (MWC) to reach workers on the ground.

With their action plans in place, stakeholders of the Construction industry have committed to collaborate towards improving the WSH performance of the Construction industry and changing the way that stakeholders work. The plans will be implemented with support from BATU, Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) and MOM. With this commitment, the Construction industry will be a safer and healthier place to work in.