



Susan Kihuga (first far left) with Seismic Mitigation Project personnel and contractors during a weekly safety walk to the construction site on 20 January 2022 at ESCAP.

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Ensuring occupational safety and health in Liberia, Afghanistan and Thailand

Susan Kihuga (Kenya) is a specialist in occupational health and safety. Her volunteering experience with the United Nations has taken her from Liberia to Afghanistan to Thailand. Susan's delivery has been key to keeping UN personnel safe and sound in their workplaces.

For the past two years, Susan has been serving as a UN Volunteer with the UN Economic Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP). As the Occupational Safety and Health Officer, she has drafted a specific occupational safety and health policy, which is in the process of implementation.

Susan has also taken part in developing over 26 COVID-19 prevention and control standard operation procedures and policies, conducted risk assessments for ESCAP locations, including offices, workshops, stores, construction sites and supported UN entities.

Moreover, she has trained over 400 staff members, contractors and vendors on safety and health topics, including COVID-19 awareness, prevention and control measures, safety and health awareness trainings, as well as incident and hazard reporting systems, among others. "My day day-to-day work involves conducting risk assessments for all workplaces, safety and health inspections, in addition to briefings for ESCAP staff and contractors," Susan shares.

“Over the past two years, Susan has displayed exceptionally good competencies and skills that are relevant to the functions of her assignment. We are quite grateful and appreciative of all Susan’s contributions to ESCAP. Her efforts were a huge factor in helping ESCAP keep everyone in the compound safe. Susan would be an asset to any organization.” --Dr Teoliza Almendras, Susan's supervisor at ESCAP

He continues, "She is an excellent team player, and she constantly works with colleagues to achieve everyone’s goal. A good example of this is the fact that she has done beyond her normal duties to support our Seismic Mitigation Project colleagues in all matters related to occupational safety and health, while their safety office is being recruited, for which our colleagues are very appreciative and grateful."

“As I look back on my volunteering involvement over the years, I can proudly say that it has exposed me to a wealth of experiences, growth, exposure, and perfected my professional and academic skills. Volunteering has been a very fulfilling service; it have given me great global exposure and practice. -- Susan Kihuga, UN Volunteer Occupational Safety and Health Officer

Susan's first experience with UNV was with the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), where she served as an Occupational Health and Safety Officer from February 2008 to June 2011. At UNMIL she supported senior management in setting up the UNMIL Health and Safety Council and other working committees at the field offices. She developed the health and safety policy, delivered health and safety trainings for senior managers, supervisors, staff members and contractors, conducted induction training for fresh staff members. As a result, the occupational injuries reduced from 119 reported injuries in 2007-2008 to 40 in 2011.

Her second UN Volunteer assignment was with the UN Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), where Susan served as an Occupational Safety and Health Officer from August 2011 to March 2014. There, she supported management to develop the UNAMA Occupational Health and Safety Policy and ensured implementation of the policy at UNAMA headquarters, regional and provincial offices.

Prior to joining ESCAP, Susan had a break of six years outside the United Nations. The break gave her an opportunity to work with International Rescue committee both in Liberia and Sierra Leone where she supported Ebola response programs in West Africa for almost three years as a supervisor of nurses and a health programme manager. She also deputized the National Occupational Safety and Health Council for three years with the Directorate of Occupational Safety and Health in Kenya.

 **Asia and the Pacific**

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