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on Measurement of the Quality of Employment
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**Comparing occupational safety and health (OSH) developments, in various countries,
in the framework of economic globalisation**

Invited paper submitted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO)¹

Summary

1. One of the issues that frequently emerges in the framework of economic integration and the liberalisation of international trade, in relation to occupational safety and health (OSH), is the identification of differences among countries that may result in a significant influence on the implementation of these processes.
2. The identification of these differences is important for a number of reasons.
 - First, to identify asymmetries among the OSH national systems, with a view to their later harmonisation, in a context where it is considered that the economic development which implies economic integration and openness should be accompanied by social integration and progress. Or, in a context where it is considered that a certain harmonisation in the field of OSH is essential for the international market to work well.
 - Second, comparison is also important for the identification of possible deficiencies in the OSH infrastructure, with respect to other countries, in a context in which it is considered that the prevention of occupational risks is an important factor in the country's competitiveness.
 - Finally, the fear of "social dumping" could also be a motive for comparison. The question here is the identification of possible sources of unfair competition in a context where some minimal levels of OSH conditions would have been previously defined, below which one would fall into "social dumping".

1 Paper written by Alberto López-Valcárcel.

3. Different reasons for comparison will lead to different types of comparison:
 - Comparison of the OSH capability or infrastructure available in the country;
 - Comparison of the recognition and respect of certain core OSH workers' rights;
 - Comparison of the OSH management, or OSH code of conduct, in enterprises;
 - Comparison of the OSH risk of the workers.

4. Finally, each type of comparison will require different kinds of indicators:
 - Capability or infrastructure indicators;
 - Performance indicators.