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### *ISO 26000 and Sustainability: a new perspective on health and safety at work*

What's about ISO26000?

It is the *guidance* on social responsibility prepared by an *ad-hoc* ISO Working Group on Social Responsibility, according to a multi-stakeholder approach involving experts from developed and undeveloped countries and international or broadly-based regional organizations concerned in different aspects of social responsibility.

The aim of the guidance is to contribute to a sustainable development, intending to be useful to all types of organizations - in private, public and non profit sectors, large or small, operating in developed or developing countries - keeping in mind that the guidance is not a management system standard and it is not intended or appropriate for certification purposes, regulatory or contractual use; it would only be a reference to assist each one toward a socially responsible pathway.

And what about health and safety at work in ISO 26000? In this new perspective it becomes yet more significant that the occupational health and safety aspects, as well as the aspects relating to the value chain, are dealt with throughout the main core subjects of the whole guidance, where relevant. And even if occupational health and safety aspects are specifically an issue of labour practises, as the best possible location, the specific contents are really severe; despite of many considerations look like ordinary for developed countries, such as Italy, they seems too strong for the developing ones.

As news, in Italy the recent occupational health and safety (OH&S) legislative decree n.81/08 refers social responsibility as a means by which enhances level of workers' safeguard and well being, also promoting the adoption of voluntary instruments, such as ethic or conduct codes, to direct employers, employees and stakeholders towards levels of OH&S higher than by law. The same legislative decree also allows to finance and sponsor small and medium enterprises innovative projects for improving new original management solutions according to social responsibility, reflecting a stakeholder engagement process and role, according to a win-win approach whereby social responsibility is both a means and a way to improve ethical behaviour with the overarching goal to maximize all contributions to a sustainable development.