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# Personal security and sustainable development at work

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## Abstract

The objective of the work was to study the international aspects of the regulation of social and labor relations, with emphasis on global processes and their influence, on the part of international institutions, on the security of the individual and stable development in the work environment. The study used scientific methods such as: systemic analysis, comparison, functional historical, legal comparative and communicative. It was established that the sharp multiplication of global problems that have currently appeared before mankind requires consensual efforts of all members of the world community. In the conclusions it was stressed that all measures of the world community in terms of labor have to start from the true fact that it affirms the safety and dignity of work of each person as a fundamental value. Consequently, the category «security» should be considered not only as an abstract dominant of development of a certain spectrum of labor social relations, but also as a real reason for the valid assurance of each individual. Definitely, the guarantee of safety should be based on the active position of each separate individual, not only in the sphere of occupational safety and hygiene, but in all spheres of social relations.

**Keywords:** stable development; objectives of stable development; security of the individual; decent work; labor rights.

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## Seguridad del individuo y desarrollo estable en el campo laboral

### Resumen

El objetivo del trabajo fue el estudio de los aspectos internacionales de la regulación de las relaciones sociales y laborales; con énfasis en los procesos globales y su influencia, por parte de las instituciones internacionales, en la seguridad del individuo y desarrollo estable en el ámbito de trabajo. En el estudio se utilizaban métodos científicos como: análisis sistémico, comparación, histórico funcional, comparativo jurídico y comunicativo. Se estableció que la multiplicación brusca de problemas globales que actualmente han aparecido ante la humanidad requiere de esfuerzos consensuados de todos los miembros de la comunidad mundial. En las conclusiones se subraya que todas las medidas de la comunidad mundial en términos laborales tienen que partir del hecho verdadero que afirma en la seguridad y dignidad de trabajo de cada persona como valor fundamental. En consecuencia, la categoría «seguridad» debe considerarse no sólo como dominante abstracta de desarrollo de cierto espectro de las relaciones sociales laborales sino, además, como motivo real para el aseguramiento válido de cada individuo. Definitivamente, la garantía de seguridad debe basarse en la posición activa de cada individuo separado, no sólo en el ámbito de seguridad e higiene de trabajo sino en todas las esferas de relaciones sociales.

**Palabras clave:** desarrollo estable; objetivos del desarrollo estable; seguridad del individuo; trabajo digno; derechos laborales.

### Introduction

At the present time, the importance of international aspects of regulation of social and labor relations gains momentum; this is primarily attributed to powerful global processes and the growing influence of international institutions on national states. The United Nations (UN) is the most respected among such institutions; its activities are traditionally aimed at protecting the rights and freedoms of people around the world. The social protection of workers is one of them. In this respect, the Sustainable Development Goals (hereinafter referred to as the “SDGs”), which were approved by the UN General Assembly in 2015 and became a point of reference for the world community for the development of various spheres of social life, deserve consideration.

The importance of the world community's constant response to new challenges and threats has significantly increased due to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has become perhaps the greatest threat to the uninterrupted existence of humanity since the end of two world wars. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about significant changes to the lives of millions of people around the world, including social and labor relations and social protection of workers (in particular, causing a rapid rise in unemployment, impoverishment, increasing uneven social and economic development of certain regions, digital transformation of labor, and increasing informal employment, etc.).

Under such conditions, great importance is attached to the activities of the International Labor Organization (hereinafter referred to as the "ILO"), which for more than a century have been focused on the development of international labor standards and the protection of working people globally.

Moreover, the security and health of every individual lie at the bottom of the development and improvement of any spheres of social relations. In this case, it is appropriate to quote the constitutional provision that an individual, his life and health, honor and dignity, inviolability and security shall be recognized in Ukraine as the highest social value.

## 1. Literature review

The focus of attention of interested parties and the world community taken as a whole on multi-faceted aspects of sustainable development creates a strong potential for discussions in the course of which the most important problems of our time are considered: the essence and features of modern political and legal development; the place of international organizations in the process of political and legal regulation of certain aspects of social relations; the implementation of international standards into national legal systems, while complying with the already defined criteria for ensuring human and citizen security.

In the study of the topic outlined in the title of the work, both a merely chronological process of accumulation and development of relevant knowledge, as well as a thematic divide related to responding to the challenges and threats caused by the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, are distinct.

For the initial stage of research on the outlined topic, the work of T. Hák and his co-authors is important; they state that the SDGs need a clear operationalization and further development of their implementation mechanisms (the authors suggest, for example, paying more attention to policy formation, while noting that "the final format of the goals and targets is, of course, a matter of political process" (Hák *et al.*, 2016: n/p)).

The tenor of the discussions acquired a qualitatively new connotation in connection with the crisis of social and social and labor relations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a figurative statement of R. Naidoo and B. Fisher, UN documents “became been another casualty of COVID-19.” At the same time, the authors urge the UN, in order to fully and timely learn the lessons from COVID-19, to convene the high-level forum to find out how and when to update the SDGs, what specific goals should be verified and whether each pathway is resilient to global disruptions (the authors believe that all this definitely applies to Goal 8) (Naidoo and Fisher, 2020).

By this time, considerable empirical material had already been accumulated, which testifies to different themes in the achievement of various goals in certain countries and regions. In this regard, the research of Ch. Meschede should attract the interest of researchers; it provides a reasoned analysis of the bibliography and at the same time offers suggestions for future lines of research of the relevant issues (Meschede, 2020).

In this case, the references to the political process encourage researchers to analyze the effective participation of an individual in social and social and labor relations. The work of C.M. Lipset and A. Etzioni has provided a reliable foundation for modern researchers to continue studies in this area today. Substantiating the sociological approach to an entry of an individual into politics, these authors emphasize the activity of an individual. Such approach was pursued in the works of H. Arendt in the phrase “*vita activa*” coined by her (distinguishing three types of activity, putting “labor” in the first place, followed by “work”, and then by other activity as well as activity determined by the previous forms (Etzioni, 1968; Lipset, 1981; Arendt, 2005).

Therefore, socialization also becomes a rather complex process, which is based not only on merely political activity, but also on the professional activity and actions of an individual and many other factors. For example, T.A. Smith argues that the study of individual’s political preferences in relation to other stimuli or influencing factors shows that such preferences are against the background of merely economic and lifestyle factors (Smith, 1979).

B. Tsymbal and other authors believe that modern challenges and dangers make it necessary to protect the interests of the country’s population and result in the need for a state participation in ensuring the best possible level of social protection and personal security. The level of social protection of the population can be increased under the condition of adopting a complex of consistent efforts to stabilize the development of entrepreneurship, as well as through strengthening the social protection of the population and providing people with comprehensive assistance from the public authorities (Tsymbal et al., 2022).

The above findings are supported by G. Reeher, who raises the question of overcoming the alienation of the public from politics. The researcher also addresses the fundamental principles of personality functioning and at the same time emphasizes that a properly organized process of political socialization is able to solve the specified problem (Reeher, 2006). This gives additional arguments to the works of D. Walsh, who states that “the person is transcendence, not only as an aspiration, but as his or her very reality” (Walsh, 2015).

B.M. Tsymbal and other scholars focus on the fact that the concept of sustainable development contains the main goals, the achievement of which should ensure both the social security of the country’s population and the personal security, and has targets related to individual goals, namely the creation of conditions by the state in order for the economically active part of the population to achieve its self-actualization (Tsymbal *et al.*, 2022).

Therefore, according to our preliminary assessment, the implementation of all seventeen sustainable development goals is a factor of systems effects on all aspects of an individual’s life, including personal security in its various manifestations.

## 2. Materials and methods

The research is based on a philosophical understanding of methodology as a complex and multifaceted means of knowledge development. At the same time, special attention is paid to the concept of “discipline-specific methodology”, i.e., the selection of relevant starting principles and tools for specific research from the general methodological repertoire (for our subject, the separation from the complex system of social and social and labor relations of those phenomena and subjects of legal reality that directly relate to the general principles of adoption and implementation of the sustainable development goals, their interconnection with and mutual influences on the so-called “environment”). Therefore, the methodology in this regard is the provider of a universal toolkit for scientific inquiry at various stages of scientific and research work.

In this connection, considerable attention is paid to the systems analysis method, which is recognized as one of the main directions of the methodology of special scientific knowledge and the application of which ensures all the necessary phenomena and processes linked into a single coherent object. The main factors of the application of such a method in the context of the implementation of the given task include: the scale of the problem under consideration (which has respect to both the general determinants of the development of social relations for a significant period of time, and the complexity of individual tasks, which are specified in a

significant number of indicators), as well as the emergence of numerous challenges and threats, the adequate response to which is impossible without account various related issues considered (the first is the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused a crisis of social and social and labor relations unprecedented since the world wars).

All this requires the entire necessary set of regulatory and legal acts of different legal force to be included in the analysis, which in this case also acquire systemic unity, and as specific norms are aimed at regulating the appropriate spectrum of social and social and labor relations. While doing so, special attention is paid to the variety of internal and external factors of the implementation of the SDGs, to the partial structural isolation and systemic unity of the conducted research.

The implementation of the tasks set in the introductory part is also based on a number of other methods, namely:

1. the historical and legal method (to enunciate provisions regarding the essence and features of the modern international legal order, retrospective analysis of the development and adoption of international labor standards, clarification of the basis and reasons for the adoption of the updated Agenda of the United Nations, as well as to clarify the phasing in the process of the ILO's activities in order to implement certain goals);
2. the structural and functional method (to characterize the significance of the activities of the ILO as a whole and its separate structures in the implementation of the SDGs, to fully reveal the problems of the interconnections of certain goals and indicators, as well as to substantiate conclusions which contain certain provisions that taken in totality are important both for the implementation of certain goals and for a complete understanding of the significance of SDG 8 for the development of social relations as a whole);
3. the comparison method (which makes it possible to conduct a comprehensive analysis of sources and literature, to single out key points in the updated understanding of the outlined issues, to fully analyze the specifics of the ILO's activities in order to implement the set targets before and after the emergence of new challenges and threats, first of all, the COVID-19 pandemic);
4. the special comparative and legal method (to group and compare the documents of this organization with respect to the emergence of new challenges and threats), as well as the approaches of synergetics (as a result of which it becomes possible to find out the impact on the implementation of the SDGs of seemingly insignificant events and circumstances that, as time progressed, acquired the importance of powerful factors of global world development and the activities of most intergovernmental and state institutions);

5. in this respect, significant attention is paid to bifurcation points, which make it possible to additionally substantiate the provisions regarding qualitative changes in relation to the implementation of the SDGs in connection with the emergence of new challenges and threats).

In this respect, the importance of the communicative method should be noted, because the use of a communicative resource, among other things, allows focusing on the so-called “feedback”, on the active participation of all involved organizations and interested parties in the renewed understanding of the place of the ILO.

### 3. Results and discussion

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the United Nations Millennium Declaration, adopted in 2000 at the UN Millennium Summit, became relevant. The Declaration defined a comprehensive framework of values, principles and key factors of development under the three main mandates of the United Nations: peace and security, development, and human rights (General Assembly United Nations, 2000).

Today, the world community is invited to focus on the global transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015, which includes 17 sustainable development goals and 169 targets. The approved goals and targets comprise diverse spheres of social relations (social, economic, humanitarian, environmental, security, etc.).

Within the framework of the subject being analyzed in the article, the first thing to pay attention to is **Goal 8**. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023). The specified goal acquires functional significance in the following targets:

1. **SDG 8.3**. Increase employment.
2. **SDG 8.4**. Reduce the share of youth not in employment, education or professional training.
3. **SDG 8.5**. Promote a safe and secure working environment for all workers, including through the application of innovative technologies in terms of health and safety (General Assembly United Nations, 2015).

The specified goal and the targets cover a complex of interrelated issues that traditionally pertain to the competence the ILO: the economic growth

is not an end in itself; it must necessarily be combined with effective social protection and adequate safety of workers (in addition, it has been repeatedly proven that the expenses for measures ensuring safety and health of workers lead not to a slowdown, but to an acceleration in the rate of economic growth); full and productive employment is the fundamental principle and core component of social protection; decent work for all is the basis of the decent work program, which was worked out at the end of the 1990s and which today has become a kind of a road map for improving international labor standards.

At the same time, a number of issues related to the implementation of the SDG and the social protection and safety of workers have no proper line of argument. The academic community still considers inadequately the peculiarities of the modern activity of the ILO, which is related to responding to new challenges and threats.

This applies, in particular, to clarifying the place of occupational safety and health in the renewed agenda of the world community. Indeed, the ILO has been successfully developing international labor standards for a century and already has solid experience in responding effectively to the numerous challenges and threats faced by workers in the world of work.

This applies, in particular, to social protection and social security of people regardless of their professional level, gender, etc. Today, this organization is largely focused on ensuring decent work for people all over the world, regardless of race, gender or any other characteristics.

In this case, it is significant that world leaders are increasingly pointing out that achieving the SDGs requires the joint efforts of all organizations and interested parties.

For example, at the SDG Summit held in September 2019, world leaders proposed to declare a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development. The UN Secretary-General called on all sectors of society to mobilize for a decade of action on the following three levels: global action to secure greater leadership, more resources and smarter solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals; local action embedding the needed transitions in the policies, budgets, institutions and regulatory frameworks of governments, cities and local authorities; and people action, including by youth, civil society, the media, the private sector, unions, academia and other stakeholders, to generate an unstoppable movement pushing for the required transformations (General Assembly United Nations, 2019).

Over the past twenty years, the concept of decent work has already been included and substantiated in various versions in most of the program documents, international legal norms and analytical developments of this organization. Today, this concept has already become the object of active research in several thousand articles, monographs and dissertations.

From the point of view of our research, it is advisable to focus on the key moments of the solutions and developments related to the concept of the decent work, which are provided in the basic documents of this organization. They are systematized in the table “Solutions and Developments of the ILO related to the Concept of the Decent Work” (Table 1).

**Table 1: Solutions and Developments of the ILO related to the Concept of the Decent Work**

<b>Report (abbreviated title)</b>	<b>Essence and structure of the basic principles of decent work</b>
Declaration [1998]	Fundamental principles and rights at work (FPRW): freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; the effective abolition of child labour; the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation (General Assembly United Nations, 2019).
Report (1999)	The purpose of decent work is to promote opportunities for productive labour for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity; promoting decent work for men and women around the world as the main goal of the ILO in present-day conditions. In this regard, the need is emphasized to transfer from several dozen main programs to four strategic objectives, which are listed in the 1998 ILO Declaration (International Labour Organization, 1998a).
Declaration (2008)	Four strategic objectives of the ILO are named and detailed: (1) promoting employment (includes three components); (2) developing and enhancing measures of social protection – social security and labour protection (also includes three components); (3) promoting social dialogue and tripartism (total of four targets are provided); (4) respecting, promoting and realizing the FPRW (International Labour Organization, 1999).
Declaration (2019)	All workers should enjoy adequate protection in accordance with the concept of the decent work, taking into account: respect for their fundamental rights; an adequate minimum wage; maximum limits on working time; safety and health at work. Safe and healthy working environment as a fundamental factor that promotes decent work (International Labour Organization, 2008).

Source: authors.

Taking into consideration the subject of this research, the following structural and logical chain is especially noteworthy: fundamental principles and rights at work, decent work, occupational safety and health. At the same time, attention should also be paid to the fact that one of the basic components is missing here – ensuring the safety of each individual worker and individual as a whole.

The primary focus should be on the reports of the ILO, which are traditionally prepared for presentation at the sessions of the International Labor Conference (hereinafter referred to as the “ILC”) and which cover the most important problems of the development of social and labor relations. A kind of divide in the content of these reports precisely pertains to 2019-2020, which caused the start of work on defining whole new points of reference for the development of social and social and labor relations.

Year after year, such reports have gradually revealed the most important principles of the ILO’s participation in the development and implementation of the SDGs (the most important reports in terms of the subject of the research are provided in Table 2).

**Table 2. Reports of the ILO Covering the Development and Implementation of the SDGs: 2017-2019.**

<b>Report (abbreviated title)</b>	<b>Thematic scope</b>
World Social Protection Report 2017–19... (2017)	The report is based on a comprehensive assessment and prospects for the development of the social protection in the light of the goals to be achieved by 2030; issues regarding progress and major gaps in this area of relations that need to be closed are analyzed (International Labour Organization, 2019a).
ILO. Towards 2030... (2018)	The report is based on methods regarding the need to comply with the core principles and fundamental principles and rights at work when implementing the SDGs (International Labour Organization, 2017).
Time to Act for SDG 8... (2019)	The subject of the report is the statement that the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development are harmoniously combined in SDG 8. This means that the lack of progress in achieving SDG 8 will hinder progress towards the implementation of other SDGs (International Labour Organization, 2019b).

Source: authors.

It is known that the program principles of the ILO become normative in the conventions – current documents of this organization, which contain specific international legal norms in the area of social and labor relations. In this case, principal emphasis needs to be placed on the ILO Convention No. 102 – The Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, which is repeatedly cited in the above reports. This convention reveals the essence of the term “persons protected” and indicates that social protection covers not only certain categories of workers and members of their families, but also, under certain conditions, other categories of the population (International Labour Organization, 1952).

Leaving the essence of the category's "protection" and "security" out of the analysis, we will only point to the fact that in the cited international legal norm there is no significant difference between them (which should also be recognized as some fault of the specified document as a whole, because the categories "human protection" and "personal security" have a related but under any circumstances not identical meaning).

The thematic scope of the reports has changed fundamentally in connection with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, which prompted an intensive search for ways to counteract its destructive force in all spheres of social and social and labor relations. At the same time, it should be noted that most of such reports lack a systematic approach to the analysis of pressing problems and ensuring the safety of each individual in the course of developing social and labor relations. In particular, it is quite convincingly evidenced by the absence of references to the connection between certain proposals and already available international legal norms.

## **Conclusions**

The dramatic increase in global problems faced by humanity today requires the concerted efforts of all members of the world community. First of all, it is about overcoming crisis phenomena and restructuring social relations aimed at sustainable development and protection of the vital interests of human and society as a whole. In a difficult situation, which affects all spheres of social and social and economic relations, it takes on particular significance. Therefore, the content of the UN Sustainable Development Goals should become a reliable road map for overcoming negative trends and ensuring continuous development. This applies, in particular, to promoting decent work and economic growth.

And in this respect, creating and promoting safe and healthy working environment for millions of workers should be of key importance. Therefore, the activity of the ILO, which has been developing international labor standards for a century, should take on special significance. The implementation of the declared goals and targets should primarily be based on the concept of decent work, which was developed long before the adoption of the updated Agenda of the United Nations and until recently included four strategic objectives of the ILO: promoting employment; developing and enhancing measures of social protection; promoting social dialogue and tripartism; respecting and realizing the fundamental principles and rights at work. Today, a fifth component is added: the creation of safe and healthy working environment is not only defined as a fundamental factor ensuring decent work, but also becomes one of the fundamental principles and rights at work.

At the same time, it is important to note the fact that the category “security” should be considered not only as an abstract keynote in the development of a certain spectrum of social and labor relations, but also as a real basis for the comprehensive provision for each individual. In this case, it is reasonable to emphasize the importance of the inductive method, that is, the analysis of the specified question “from the specific to the general”.

The above targets constitute a reliable foundation for the implementation of many other targets outlined in SDG 8 and many other goals. In these circumstances, official statements and current practical activities place an increasing emphasis on the fact that comprehensive security must be ensured by the active position of each individual – not only in the occupational safety but also in any other spheres of social relations.

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