

Title	Decent work: Concept and indicators
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Abstract	<p>The concept of “decent work” was launched in these terms in 1999, in the Report of the Director-General to the International Labour Conference meeting in its 87th Session. The idea both conveys the broad and varied dimensions associated with work today and encapsulates them in an expression that everyone can appreciate. But what does the notion of decent work really comprise?</p> <p>Four components of the notion are elaborated in the same Report of the Director-General: employment, social protection, workers’ rights and social dialogue. Employment here covers work of all kinds and has both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Thus, decent work applies not just to workers in the formal economy but also to unregulated wage workers, the self-employed and home workers. It also refers to adequate opportunities for work, remuneration (in cash and in kind), and embraces safety at work and healthy working conditions. Social security and income security are also essential components – defined according to each society’s capacity and level of development. The two other components emphasize the social relations of workers: the fundamental rights of workers (freedom of association, nondiscrimination at work, and the absence of forced labour and child labour); and social dialogue, in which workers exercise their right to present their views, defend their interests and engage in discussions to negotiate work-related matters with employers and authorities.</p> <p>But how to find measures encompassing all these notions and expressing their interconnectedness? How to assess the current state and future progress of decent work in the world? Researchers are tackling this question from different angles, and this special issue of the International Labour Review presents a selection of approaches.</p> <p>This article discusses the indicators of decent work. It shows how the notion of decent work is anchored in the long-established and enduring concerns of the ILO. Starting with a general discussion of the uses and limitations of indicators, the article examines the suitability of a range of indicators applied to the four major components of decent work outlined above, in various economic and institutional structures, and highlighting relevant ILO standards. Finally, an attempt is made to develop an index to assess decent work performance in industrial countries.</p>