Trade in occupational safety and health: tracing the embodied human and economic harm in labour along the global supply chain

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Abstract: Over the past years there has been enormous concern about labour conditions in developing countries particularly around work for the export market. This study addresses human rights issues related to Occupational Safety and Health for people suffering injuries from work demanded as a result of international trade arrangements. Here we present Occupational Safety and Health Footprints, which include the number of work-related accidents that occur throughout the world and that are directly and indirectly linked to the consumption of products, calculated for every nation's consumption bundle. OSHF include fatal footprints, non-fatal footprints, days lost footprints and wages lost footprints per given year. In order to calculate the OSHF, we used a comprehensive Multi-Regional Input Output MRIO table (Eora) in addition to data from the International Labour Organization, ASEAN Occupational Safety and Health Network (ASEAN-OSHNET) and others. This study finds that in 2010 there were 12 fatal and 4.8 thousand non-fatal incidents, 27 thousand days lost and two million US$ lost in wages per 100 thousand workers in supply chains worldwide. The results presented in this paper show hidden accidents throughout global supply chains and hence can be used to apply pressure on international organizations, governments and focal companies to improve the conditions of workers, particularly in terms of OSH in the workplace.

Keywords: Occupational safety and health, social footprint, occupational accidents footprint, multi-regional input-output analysis, global supply chains, international trade.
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