

*Conceptual paper*

## **Historical landmarks of decent work**

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### **Structured Abstract**

**Purpose:** this article systemizes the main historical milestones which led to the current concept of decent work and presents some implications for business.

**Approach:** after presenting the scenario which gives a special meaning and importance to decent work, the historical landmarks are systematized until the definition of the Decent Work Agenda.

**Findings:** *Decent work* is a concept that has evolved since the ILO Foundation in 1919 and had several important steps throughout its development: Philadelphia Declaration in 1944, ILO constitution update in 1946, Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, Human Development Report, first edition in 1990, World Summit for Social Development in 1995, ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in 1998, World Economic Forum in 1999, Global Compact in 2000, United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2000, ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization in 2008, Global Jobs Compact in 2009, and inclusion in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Throughout this development we can witness the refinement and operationalization of the concept, its institutionalization and its spread at political level, at least as an intention.

**Practical implications:** the business area is a privileged forum to turn policies into practices and some examples are provided.

**Value:** although decent work emerged in a very different social and economic scenario from the present time, it is claimed to be even more topical and relevant for the development of business and society today.

**Keywords:** business ethics, business management, decent work, human rights, workplace relations.

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