Abstract from:

Prof. Dr. Gerard Zwetsloot
International Conference

“Fair Globalization – Safe Workplace –
24.-26. October 2005, Düsseldorf, Germany
Messe und Kongresszentrum

Session 2: 25 Oct. 2005; 14:00-14:30

**Corporate Social Responsibility and Safety and Health at Work in a Globalised World**

**SPEAKER:**
Prof. Dr. Gerard I.J.M. Zwetsloot

**FUNCTION:**
Professor at Erasmus Centre for Sustainability and Management of Erasmus University Rotterdam
Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research, TNO, The Netherlands

**ABSTRACT:**

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is the integration by companies of social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis. It implies going beyond the fulfilment of legal requirements by investing 'more' in human capital, the environment and relations with stakeholders.

Safe and sound working conditions, and good worker health belong to the social responsibilities of companies, and can be regarded as an integral part of CSR.

CSR opens a number of new perspectives on OSH, each of them creating opportunities for strengthening and further development of OSH (as part of CSR). Some important perspectives will be presented and discussed, and illustrated by practical examples from companies.

CSR puts OSH in a more strategic perspective. Let us be honest: OSH is usually strongly focussed on the operational level. Today only very few companies see OSH as a strategic issue for the company's future. Why not?

The global perspective on OSH. Are we sure that Western companies are not shifting their OSH problems to companies and suppliers in low-wage countries? We know that for individuals, health is the basis for wealth. That may be true for societies as well. Can OSH contribute to the international development agenda?

Another striking finding is the broadening of the policy arena. civil society, the mass media and NGOs are becoming increasingly important.

CSR also puts OSH in a broader perspective, linking it closer with related issues like: public safety and health issues (including product safety or fundamental labour rights. Ethical considerations are increasingly on the agenda. It seems that we (OSH experts) sometimes forget to use the value aspect of OSH.

In company practice we observe a range of “unconventional” change and learning strategies. These address individuals or small groups very directly, and this often generates meaningful change.

Finally, a set of specific recommendations will be given especially for safety and health professionals. Those will be discussed for their relevance in practical situations, especially in SMEs.