

Safety pays!

M. Sc. Helmut Ehnes

**Secretary General
International Social Security Association (ISSA), section mining**

**Director prevention
Institution for statutory Accident Insurance and Prevention**

The worldwide economy is in a period of growth. In particular countries such as, for example, China, India and Brazil are currently experiencing an unexpected economic revival. China alone had an average growth in the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2007 of 10%. The service sector, industry, agriculture and mining are all benefiting from this.

Behind this development there are almost 3 billion employees, of these 200 million are children, who only make this development possible with their work. Solely in 2007 45 million new jobs were generated worldwide. Yet a picture emerges with harsh contrasts. Although new jobs are being created, there are more and more people who cannot live from their work. Almost 490 million workers – that is 16.4 per cent of all those employed – do not earn enough to exceed the threshold of the absolute poverty line of 1 US dollar per person per day. 1.3 billion employees live below the 2 dollar borderline.

The conditions in which people have to work are very different and depend heavily on which region of the Earth they live and work. The majority of employees are in precarious inhumane working relationships. This means that, in addition to the low earnings and no social protection, they also have to work in conditions that represent a considerable risk to health and life. These conditions are found in particular in South Asia, sub-Sahara Africa and Latin America including the Caribbean.