



A TRADE UNION TAKE ON THE SDGs



2020



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INTRODUCTION

This edition of “A Trade Union Take on the SDGs” was compiled under the difficult conditions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent responses of governments. Despite challenging circumstances and an increasing exposure to the social and economic deprivation emerging in the wake of the crisis, trade unionists have remained faithful to their commitment to provide an independent worker’s perspective on how governments are carrying out the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“The SDGs could have put us on track towards a world with access to universal health coverage and quality health care and more inclusive and sustainable economies.” António Guterres, United Nations Secretary General.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the flaws of the current global economic model. The virus has uncovered the disastrous social, sanitary and economic state of the world after decades of market fundamentalism, and it has severely hampered global, national and local efforts to carry out and realise the SDGs.

Considering this, the global calls of trade unions for a **New Social Contract** with **SDG 8** at its core – [#TimeFor8](#) – is more relevant than ever to put the world back on track towards reaching the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and to recover from the devastation caused by COVID-19 in a resilient, sustainable and inclusive manner.

“Recovery plans could give us a new model for the global economy, a new commitment to sharing the world’s wealth and a renewed investment in compliance and the rule of law. Out of the health and economic devastation, let’s rebuild with a renewed social contract.” Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation.

The “Trade Union Take on the SDGs” consists in the compilation and findings analysis of the [SDGs country reports](#) produced by trade union organisations in 14 countries in 2020. This is the result of an in-depth engagement at national level, highlighting how governments implement transparency and make use of consultation and social dialogue to involve trade unions in the drafting and implementation of SDG national plans. Furthermore, the “Trade Union Take on the SDGs” reflects how countries are doing to reach specific key SDG targets in the context of existing structural, social and economic challenges.

Year after year, the monitoring by trade unions of the national SDG implementation provides an important and independent assessment of how governments are doing in this process. This work is an essential contribution of the labour movement to the Decade of Action (2020–2030) to deliver the SDGs.



The COVID-19 pandemic has hit countries around the world with a terrible impact in terms of health and loss of lives. The necessary lockdown measures adopted by most governments have had deep socio-economic consequences, impacting the incomes and livelihoods of people all around the globe. Many workers have lost their jobs and incomes while others have been especially hard hit by furloughs. The lack of a comprehensive and universal social protection system in many countries means that most workers remain uncovered to face these consequences. The pandemic has pointed to an urgent need to guarantee income to cover basic needs and to extend access to universal social protection and free health care to all. It has shown that occupational health and safety is fundamental to contain the spread of COVID-19 and that public services such as health care, access to water and sanitation and schooling are essential.

The global threats that we are facing are seriously challenging progress and entail important setbacks for the achievement of the SDGs by 2030. Trade unions all over the world are mobilising to work with their governments and employers, through social dialogue, on responses to the crisis that will leave no one behind¹.

¹ See <https://www.ituc-csi.org/covid-19-responses>

ASSESSING PROGRESS

TRANSPARENCY



CONSULTATION



SOCIAL DIALOGUE



TRANSPARENCY

Trade unions assessed the transparency of the SDG implementation process within their country based on two indicators: (1) ability to access information on the process and outcomes, decision-making procedures, consultation meetings, policy documents, persons or institutions in charge and (2) awareness of reasoning behind decision-making: clear explanations of how and why implementation decisions are made.

The input provided by trade unions has exposed clear limitations on transparency, with trade unions in nine out of the 14 countries analysed having access to limited or no information on the SDG implementation process. Limitations to access to information took various forms, most notably relating to how the information was made available, who was allowed to access it and with what regularity. Coupled with a lack of clear contact points, this constituted a major barrier to transparency. There was only one case where information was made readily available to stakeholders, while in the two worst cases no updates on implementation were made available at all.

CONSULTATION

Multi-stakeholder consultations are vital to ensure a truly participative implementation process, as described in the 2030 Agenda. If the interests and perspectives of those impacted are not integrated into the policy-making process, resulting policies and their implementation will simply not work for wider society or for ensuring that no one is left behind. Trade unions and civil society organisations have a key role to play in designing policies that meet these demands.

Trade unions assessed consultation modalities available in their countries, with special attention given to the functioning of multi-stakeholder consultation platforms. Although the ratings on consultation are overall better than those on

transparency, only three countries were shown to have adequate consultation processes in place. Numerous trade unions flag the existence of a disingenuous consultation process: while branded as consultations, meetings are de facto information sessions, where stakeholders' contributions and recommendations are not taken on board. In some countries, consultations lack structure and are organised on an ad hoc basis, rather than systematically and according to a clear work plan. Finally, and most worryingly, four out of the 14 countries analysed still lack any formal consultation process at all.

SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Social dialogue is a fundamental means of implementing Agenda 2030 – the use of tripartite or bipartite social dialogue to establish common positions between employers and workers has been shown to have a positive effect on achieving the SDGs targets². It builds consensus among social partners, facilitates policy implementation and results in more inclusive policies. Shaping the world of work to meet the demands of Agenda 2030 is crosscutting and fundamental to achieving each of the 17 SDGs. Analysis by trade unions has highlighted vastly insufficient integration of social dialogue into the implementation process of the SDGs, and in half of the countries analysed, social partners were not involved at all in defining and realising the government's SDGs national plan. Cases in which workers and employers are consulted together are rare and tend to be limited by a siloed approach on single SDGs rather than focusing on their interlinkages, i.e., the driving role of SDG 8 across the whole of the 2030 Agenda. Moreover, where social partners are consulted, little effort to bridge their perspectives or encourage joint submissions on the SDG implementation process is made. No trade union reported the existence of a tripartite entity to implement and monitor the SDGs, which would involve both social partners and decision makers.

² See Social dialogue as a driver and governance instrument for sustainable development: <https://www.ituc-csi.org/issue-paper-social-dialogue-development>; The contribution of social dialogue to the 2030 Agenda: Formalising the informal economy: <https://www.ituc-csi.org/social-dialogue-for-sdgs-formalising-informal-economy>; The contribution of social dialogue to the 2030 Agenda - Promoting a Just Transition towards sustainable economies and societies for all: <https://www.ituc-csi.org/social-dialogue-for-sdgs-promoting-just-transition>

ASSESSING PROGRESS

WHERE ARE WE AT WITH... ³

SHARED ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

Shared economic well-being means going beyond the purely quantitative aspects of GDP growth to analyse if and how economic progress is distributed and therefore look at the levels of inequality and poverty in each country. The findings of the country reports show that wealth is not being distributed equally. Latin American countries such as [Brazil](#), [Colombia](#), [Argentina](#) and [Chile](#) are a flagrant example of this. Although these countries are considered upper-middle income and high income, they maintain high levels of inequality with the top 10 per cent of income earners holding close to 40 per cent of wealth, whereas the lowest 20 per cent of income earners hold around four per cent of GDP. Similar levels of inequality are also present in certain African countries like [Zambia](#) and [Malawi](#) which, even though considered as low-income, had growth rates close to 4 per cent and a high incidence of poverty.

Although income per capita is too often taken as a measure of the well-being of people, the country reports show that growth alone does not grant wider well-being for all.

QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT

When we look at the country reports findings on quality of employment, we see important setbacks in many African countries. The examples of [Kenya](#) and [Burundi](#) stand out. [Kenya](#) has an unemployment rate close to nine per cent, but 84 per cent of people work in the informal economy and 53.5 per cent of the working population is considered to be in vulnerable work. [Burundi](#) has an unemployment rate below two per cent but has 89.4 per cent of its working population in the informal economy, working poverty levels are close to 70 per cent, and 96.4 per cent of the working population are in vulnerable work. In the Latin American region, the case of [Venezuela](#) stands out dramatically with an unemployment rate of 47.2 per cent, around 60 per cent of workers in the informal economy, and minimum wages which are insufficient and cover less than 30 per cent of the economically active population.

Therefore, when looking at job creation, a greater focus needs to be put on the quality of employment and specific policies need to be put forward to this aim.

LABOUR VULNERABILITY

Labour vulnerability includes exposure of workers to risks, under-protection and exclusion. Many challenges have emerged on occupational health and safety and youth employment as well as access to social protection. We have found strong deficits in these areas in countries like [Zambia](#) and [Malawi](#), where we find NEET⁴ rates of 29.9 per cent and 32.9 per cent, respectively. In addition, the percentage of the population covered by at least one social protection instrument is 15.3 per cent in [Zambia](#) while it stands at 21.3 per cent in [Malawi](#). This calls for a scaling-up of investments to increase social protection coverage in many countries around the world.

LABOUR RIGHTS

In terms of labour rights, violations are occurring in many of the 14 countries, especially notable are the scandalous labour rights violations that occurred in countries like [Bangladesh](#), [Brazil](#), [Colombia](#) and [Zimbabwe](#). Workers in [Bangladesh](#) have suffered violence, mass dismissals and regressive laws, while [Zimbabwe](#) has seen the prosecution of union leaders and violence and threats against trade unionists. [Brazil](#) and [Colombia](#) have both seen cases of murder of trade unionists, and while in the former there has been brutal repression of strikes and threats and intimidation, the latter has seen extreme violence and union busting and dismissals. Unsurprisingly, the [2020 ITUC Global Rights Index](#) includes these four countries amongst the ten worst countries in the world for working people and [Burundi](#) as a country where there is no guarantee of rights due to the breakdown of the rule of law.

By suppressing workers' rights, countries are seriously compromising the achievement of SDG 8 and the whole 2030 Agenda.

³ The country reports referred to in this section can be found at <https://www.ituc-csi.org/2030Agenda>. The data used are precedent to the pandemic.

⁴ "Not in Education, Employment, or Training"

RECOMMENDATIONS

With the COVID-19 crisis, new challenges for the implementation of the SDGs have emerged. These have shown the need for targeted approaches to ensure a strong recovery for all. In this context, trade unions are calling on governments to involve social partners (workers' and employers' organisations) in building up responses to the crisis that can protect jobs, put in place universal social protection systems and access to health care, ensure direct support to MSMEs and stimulate aggregate demand, as well as active employment policies to promote decent work.

*The United Nations Secretary General's report on the responses to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 acknowledges **"the importance of social dialogue and social partners in the control of the virus at the workplace and beyond, but also to avoid massive job losses in the short and medium term."***⁵

Integrating social dialogue as a governance mechanism for the implementation of the SDGs is a specific recommendation repeatedly put forward by the country reports, which unfortunately remains still unattended.

Moreover, the need for further internal coordination amongst ministries is still a big challenge at national level. This is true in particular for social partners, as they are usually related to labour ministries that, on their turn, are very rarely involved by ministries of planning.

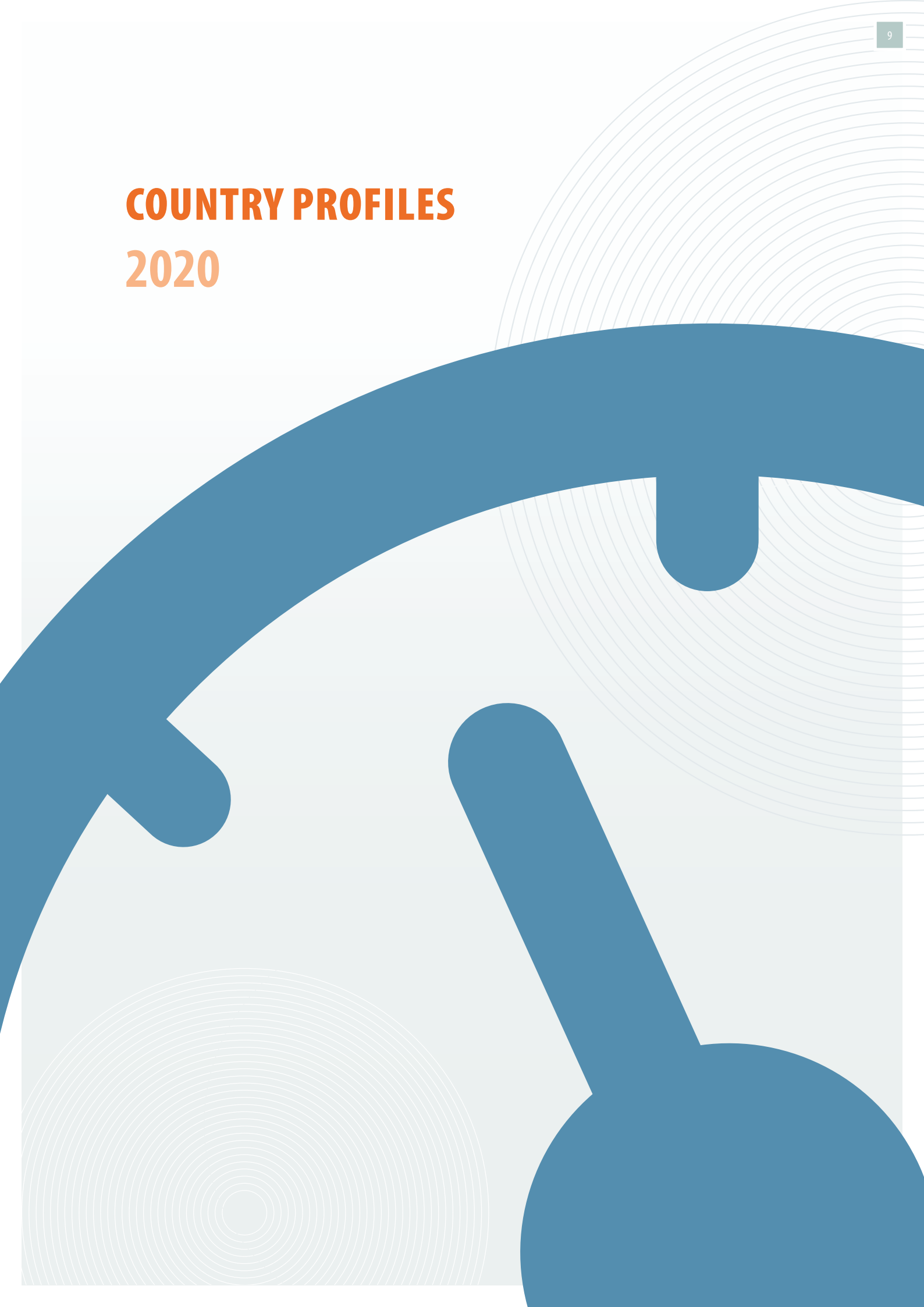
Finally, trade unions suggested specific indicators and targets that they believe should be integrated into their countries' SDGs assessment to ensure a more representative picture of their progress.

⁵ See "Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19" <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/SG-Report-Socio-Economic-Impact-of-Covid19.pdf>



COUNTRY PROFILES

2020





COVID-19:
WORKERS DEMAND
JOBS, INCOME AND
SOCIAL
PROTECTION



ARGENTINA

**A TRADE UNION
FOCUS ON THE SDGs**

#HLPF2020

COVID-19: WORKERS NEED RESPONSES FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

The national government's response to Covid-19 has prioritised measures to protect lives and employment, wages and production, focussing on vulnerable population groups in particular. On 19 March, "compulsory and preventive social isolation" measures were set in place.

Despite the very fragile economic situation inherited from the previous administration, the government adopted key measures, such as: exceptional work leave; a 60-day ban on dismissals; credit lines for basic inputs; the extension of debt repayment deadlines for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises; the bolstering of unemployment insurance; extra payments of non-contributory allowances (such as the universal allowance for each child and for pregnancy); a bonus for retired persons; emergency income for small taxpayers, informal and self-employed workers; the suspension of utility service cut-offs for non-payment (e.g., electricity, gas and water); the freezing of rents and suspension of evictions, and the creation of the Emergency Assistance Programme for Work and Production. Covid-19 was declared an occupational illness.

Trade unions are playing an active part in the crisis committees, consulted within the framework of social dialogue on measures linked to the pandemic. They have also reiterated the need to work towards universal health and social protection coverage, a more progressive taxation policy, and to protect the rights further jeopardised by the pandemic.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

Argentina's new government, which came to power in December 2019, has mainstreamed the 2030 Agenda into its national plans. The priority sustainable development goals (SDGs) are goals 1, 2 and 6, which are being implemented through actions such as the national programme "Argentina against Hunger" and "The First Thousand Days", a programme linked to children's rights and nutrition.

The National Council for Social Policy, overseen by the Ministry of Social Development, is in charge of follow-up on the 2030 Agenda. Implementation of the SDGs at local level focuses on the specific needs of individual regions, and technical assistance is offered at every stage in the process.

The outgoing government organised a briefing for civil society, including trade unions, on the progress made towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, but trade unions were not given an opportunity to provide feedback on the information

presented or to shape the national plans for the implementation of the SDGs. The outgoing government had, however, started a formal dialogue with trade unions on this matter, and as a result, the National Council for Social Policy organised an exchange between the different ministries in charge of the SDGs and the civil society platform "PAMPA2030".

The new government has requested the setting up of an inter-institutional and inter-ministerial dialogue on the SDGs with the participation of civil society, including trade unions, to serve as a means of consultation on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The social dialogue structure recently began discussing the SDGs, assessing the impact of any proposed reforms on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

TRANSPARENCY



Regular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



Informal or ad hoc consultation

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners submit joint contributions to the government's SDG national plan



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Against the background of recurrent economic crises, resulting from the implementation of erroneous economic policies (over-indebtedness, capital flight, public spending cuts, etc.), there has been a downward trend in the progress towards meeting the SDG targets. The new government is trying to reverse this trend, but is confronted with various obstacles, such as the unsustainability of Argentina's foreign debt.

With regards to SDG 1, the indicators for **target 1.1 (eradicating extreme poverty)** have worsened. Multidimensional poverty affected 37.5 per cent of the population in 2019, increasing by 8 points since 2010. This is largely a product of the decrease in real household income and the resulting impact on access to food and healthcare. While 66.1 per cent of the population was covered by at least one type of social protection, only 9.8 per cent of the unemployed were receiving support, making **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures)** a difficult target to reach. In 2019, 63.3 per cent of government spending was dedicated to essential services (health, social assistance, social security, education and culture, science and technology, work, housing and urban planning, drinking water and sewerage), but within the context of ever-shrinking GDP and high inflation.

To progress with the implementation of **SDG 5 (gender equality)**, on taking office, the new government created the Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity. Women in Argentina perform nearly twice as many hours of unpaid domestic labour as men, suggesting challenges for reaching **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)**. With regard to **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation in political, economic and public life)**, in 2017, 65.9 per cent of women aged 25 or over had completed at least some secondary education.

With regard to **SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth)**, progress on reaching **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)** has been stalled, as unemployment levels grew to 9.7 per cent in 2019, with youth unemployment being particularly high – 17.9 per cent for men aged 14-

29 and 22.6 per cent for women in the same age bracket. Thirty-five per cent of workers receive a salary below the legal minimum.

In addition, 35 per cent of workers are in the informal sector, with their work classified as precarious. Underemployment has risen to 13.1 per cent, affecting more women (15.7 per cent) than men (11.1 per cent). Indicators for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** stand at a high 19 per cent. In 2019, the number of collective bargaining agreements rose, with almost four times more being concluded than during the same period the year before, promising improvements with regards to **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**. Only 51.8 per cent of workers are, however, covered by collective bargaining agreements.

Argentina must intensify its efforts towards meeting **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)**, as between 2015–2019, the gap between the richest and poorest sectors of the population grew by 33 per cent. In 2019, the share of the top 10 per cent income earners in overall GDP stood at 32.8 per cent, as compared to the meagre 4.4 per cent share of the bottom 20 per cent.

In 2018, the government convened the fifth national climate change cabinet, in which trade unions were invited to participate. Based on a series of sectoral plans developed over 2018–2019, a national mitigation strategy on climate change was drawn up as a first step towards reaching **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning)**.

With regard to **SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions)**, trade unions continue to report restrictions on access to justice for the most disadvantaged groups, set against the background of continuously worsening labour conditions. Between 2016 and 2018, 538 acts of repression and criminalisation against popular protest movements were registered.

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Trade unions are urging the Argentinian government to institutionalise social dialogue through the creation of a Council for Socio-Economic Development, as announced by President Fernández in March 2020, to design a national development strategy based on a fair and equitable new social contract. This strategy should include structured multi-stakeholder dialogue processes to consult on the 2030 Agenda and the reactivation of the decent work country programme, which was suspended in 2015.

In addition, in light of Covid-19, the trade unions consider that urgent measures are required to:

- Strengthen the social protection system and public investment in essential services, especially health, ensuring financing and sustainability via a progressive taxation programme.
- Ensure the effective implementation of programmes to make public investments into infrastructure and housing, as well as policies to stimulate aggregate demand, to boost economic growth, combined with active employment policies to help promote decent work.
- Ensure direct support to help micro, small and medium-sized companies to withstand the sudden fall in demand (as an indirect way of protecting jobs).
- Ensure the traceability of the supply chains for food and essential goods, to stop the speculative practices that affect workers' purchasing power.



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BANGLADESH

**A TRADE UNION
FOCUS ON THE SDGs**

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**COVID-19:
WORKERS DEMAND
JOBS, INCOME AND
SOCIAL
PROTECTION**

COVID-19: WORKERS NEED RESPONSES FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

Bangladesh went into lockdown on 26 March. The COVID-19 pandemic showed that the Government of Bangladesh must strengthen the country's resilience to future shocks by investing in an efficient Universal Social Protection system, including free access to healthcare and income protection provisions. Furthermore, the Government of Bangladesh must shift resources from the National Development Plan to activate a COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund for all socially vulnerable people and workers, including those in the informal economy, as well as micro-industries.

This far, the Government of Bangladesh's current response plan has consisted in an extensive preventive information and awareness campaign; the opening of nine testing centres across the country; the provision of financial incentives as wage support for workers in export-oriented industries; and the distribution of limited-scale free food packages for informal workers, socially vulnerable and low-income groups across the country, who lost their work because of the pandemic.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The Government of Bangladesh has integrated the SDGs in its 7th Five-Year National Development Plan. The General Economics Division (GED) under the Ministry of Planning (MoP) is coordinating the implementation of Agenda 2030. In addition, an SDG Coordinator has been appointed in the office of the Prime Minister.

Some attempts at ensuring transparency are being made by the government of Bangladesh as access to information on the implementation of SDGs is open to all and some publications on SDG progress are available to citizens and civil society groups. However, trade unions state that the reporting mechanisms are not fully adequate and that not all information is made available.

While some consultations on SDG implementation are held, trade unions are only consulted on the implementation of SDG 8 and financing for the SDGs, and only to a limited extent. Trade unions and workers representatives have not been effectively involved by the government as a social partner in a dialogue on the implementation of SDGs at national level. While some trade unions' inputs have been taken up by the government, the progress of implementation leaves much to be desired.

Trade unions report that the Government of Bangladesh has developed an SDG Financing Plan funded by internal resources, ODA from international donors and the private sector.

TRANSPARENCY



Irregular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



Informal or ad hoc consultation

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners contribute individually to government's SDG national plan



Jatio Sramik League (JSL)
Bangladesh Labour Federation (BLF)
Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal (BJSD)

Bangladesh Mukto Sramik Federation (BMSF)
Bangladesh Sanjukta Sramik Federation (BSSF)
Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress (BFTUC)



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

The data below are related to the country situation pre-COVID. Certainly, the impact of the pandemic will make the overall scenario even worse if adequate responses are not put in place urgently.

The proportion of people living on below \$1 per day in Bangladesh declined from 34.8 per cent in 2000 to 14.8 per cent in 2017. However, the rate of decline in poverty over that period weakened between 2010-16 compared to 2005-2010, a trend which can be attributed to rising income inequality. This indicates that **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)** is far from being reached. While extreme poverty has been falling in both urban and rural areas, the disparity in income between them is profound, with extreme poverty rates being twice as high in rural areas.

Reaching **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures)** is far off the mark: while the government has put forward a wide array of social protection mechanisms, their coverage is very limited. 28 per cent of the population is covered by at least one social protection benefit; only 33 per cent of persons above retirement age receive a pension and only 29 per cent of children are covered by social protection benefits. No unemployment benefits are made available.

Women are more likely to be in informal employment than men and an overwhelming majority of them work in the informal labour market (91.8 per cent of women, as compared to 82.1 per cent of men), suggesting efforts need to be made to progress on **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)**. With regards to **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life)**, in 2017, female enrolment in secondary education in Bangladesh stood at 67 per cent. With the impact of COVID19 and its resulting loss of paid work this figure is expected to fall significantly.

There are significant obstacles to Bangladesh meeting the targets set by **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)**. Only 14.9 per cent of people worked in the formal economy in 2018, with higher rates for urban (22.7 per cent) than rural areas (11.9 per cent), posing a challenge to reach **target 8.3 (support**

productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of MSMEs). Achieving **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)** is still far off, as the wage disparity between women and men has recently deteriorated due to a faster reduction in real wage rates for female workers (estimated at 3.8 per cent in 2016, compared to 1.9 per cent for male workers for the same type of work). Indicators on **target 8.7 (take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour)** remain worrying, as in 2019, 10.8 per cent of children aged between 5-17 were engaged in child labour. Delivering on **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)** is a serious challenge given the legal and administrative barriers to union registration and that the labour court system in Bangladesh fails to meet the minimum standards due to the low number of labour courts compared to the high number of labour disputes and pending cases. In addition, the unionisation rate is estimated at an extremely low 5 per cent.

Significant progress remains to be made for Bangladesh to reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)**, as for the bottom 20 per cent of the income earners in the country, the growth rate of household income per capita increased by only a paltry 1.3 per cent between 2010-2016.

The government of Bangladesh has so far failed to substantially address the implementation of **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning)**, despite the fact that according to 2017 estimates, over 12 million people in Bangladesh were afflicted by adverse effects of climate change. Rising sea levels and the inundation of fertile lands is an enormous threat.

Performance on **target 16.10 (ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements)** remains poor. According to the ITUC Rights Index, Bangladesh is one of the top ten countries violating trade union rights and is listed as a 'Country at Risk'.

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The Government of Bangladesh needs to put in place policies and measures in order to tackle the economic and social shocks resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Today more than ever the SDGs show the way in building a sustainable and inclusive economy and society.

Trade Unions call on the Government of Bangladesh to ensure urgent action to cope with pandemic emergency in line with the SDGs, including:

- A detailed impact and needs assessment analysis at different industrial sectors, especially to agriculture sector production to ensure national food security and prevention of famine as result from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Establishing an Emergency Fund for post COVID-19 response with appropriate resources and accountability mechanisms at different levels to grant free access to healthcare, as well as, income support for working people and their families.
- Develop a two year national economic and social recovery plan (Post Covid-19 Period).
- Ensure better industrial relations at national and sector level, through a functioning National Tripartite Consultation platform and a possible national agreement between Government- Employer and Trade Unions during the pandemic period.
- Trade Unions in Bangladesh welcome the [Global action to support the garment industry](#) which sees employer and worker organisations along with leading brands, retailers endorse a [call for action](#) and commit to work with governments and financial institutions to mobilise sufficient funding to enable manufacturers to ensure business continuity including the payment of wages, as well as income-support and job-retention schemes to address the impact of the crisis.

**COVID-19:
WORKERS DEMAND
JOBS, INCOME AND
SOCIAL
PROTECTION**



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COVID-19:
WORKERS DEMAND
JOBS, INCOME AND
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COVID-19: WORKERS NEED RESPONSES FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

Since the start of the pandemic, President Bolsonaro has downplayed the severity of the disease, attacked the policy of social isolation and fired the Minister of Health for following WHO guidelines for COVID-19.

In terms of measures, the government approved a basic income package, but reserved for certain categories of workers (in the informal economy, self-employed or receiving social assistance) and only covering half of their average monthly income. In addition, a national moratorium on most loans was approved as well as a moratorium on mortgages and rentals in most states and municipalities.

The right to paid sick leave has only been partially recognized as well as the possibility of reducing working hours (in which case the government covers only part of the wage loss). Due to the cuts in the health system in recent years, the public health network faces serious difficulties in responding to the pandemic.

In this context, CUT Brazil asks the government to prioritize the extension of coverage in social protection and free access to health services, the protection of wages and income, and the forecast of paid sick leave.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The process of implementation of the SDGs is in sharp regression in Brazil. Following the coup d'état which removed President Dilma Rousseff and the period of instability that resulted, the Bolsonaro government is taking actions which fail to integrate SDG targets and are contrary to the principles of sustainable development.

The government of President Bolsonaro has reorganised political priorities and ministries, including those that had previously dealt with the SDGs. Under the previous government, a commission uniting key ministries oversaw the implementation of the SDGs; however, since the ministerial reorganisation, it is not clear which ministries will form part of this committee or if its work will continue.

Trade unions denounce the lack of transparency and access to information with regard to all government policies, including those on the SDGs. While the previous government had put in place a forum for discussion on Agenda 2030 with the

participation of social partners, the current government shows no sign of wishing to continue this practice. Trade unions believe that the Bolsonaro government is actively dismantling all social dialogue spaces.

Trade unions further state that, far from providing additional resources to the implementation of the SDGs, the government has cut spending in areas which were contributing to the fulfilment of the goals. Of particular concern is the pension reform introduced by the current government, which raises the retirement age and lowers the value of the transfers. The government's approach to funding environmental protection is also highly concerning, as at a time of unprecedented forest fires in the Amazon, it has reduced funding to combat deforestation by a third, cut more than \$4 million dedicated to firefighting in the Amazon as well as 95 per cent of funds allocated to combatting climate change.

TRANSPARENCY



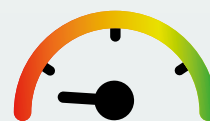
Irregular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



No consultation process at all

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners not involved in defining and realising government's SDG national plan



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Brazil is regressing with regard to **SDG 1 (end poverty in all its forms everywhere)**. Indicators for **target 1.1 (eradicating extreme poverty)**, which had once been showing steady improvement, have begun worsening again, as the percentage of the population living below the international poverty line has been rising since 2014, when it stood at 4.5 per cent, reaching 6.5 per cent in 2018. 61.5 per cent of the population was covered by at least one social protection benefit in 2016, with an estimated 78 per cent of persons of retirement age receiving a pension in 2016. However, only 7.8 per cent of the unemployed received unemployment benefits in 2016, suggesting uneven progress on **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems)**. In addition, the recently passed pension reform plan raises the retirement age and lowers the transfers for significant numbers of pensioners.

There is still need for progress on reaching **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies)**, as 2017 indicators showed women performing over twice the amount of unpaid labour than men per day. **Target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life)** is also far off being reached, with only 61 per cent of women attaining some form of secondary education between 2010-2017.

There are substantial obstacles to Brazil meeting the targets set by **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)**. In 2015, 38.3 per cent of non-agricultural work was informal, suggesting that reaching **target 8.3 (support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of MSMEs)** remained far off. In addition, 2018 data show that 27.6 per cent of jobs are precarious, a number which has remained stagnant since 2016. On **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)**, unemployment stands at a high 11 per cent, with women affected more (13.1 per cent) than men (9.2 per cent) and youth between 14-17 (39.2 per cent) and

18-24 (23.8 per cent) worst off overall. NEET indicators for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** stood at a worrying 23.5 per cent in 2019, with women significantly more affected (28.4 per cent) than men (18.8 per cent). Indicators on **target 8.7 (take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour)** remain worrying, as 8.5 per cent of girls aged 14-17 and 15 per cent of boys of the same age were engaged in child labour; in addition, the number of people affected by forced labour more than doubled between 2016 and 2018 (from 0.08 per cent to 1.8 per cent). Performance on **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)** is poor, with 23 violations of labour rights noted in 2017 – the highest number since 2012. Trade union density has been steadily dropping and stood at a low 12.5 per cent in 2018.

Significant progress remains to be made for Brazil to reduce social inequalities and reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)**, as the labour share of GDP has been steadily dropping in the past years, standing at 60.4 per cent in 2017. Furthermore, the share of the top 10 per cent of income earners has been growing, accounting for 42.5 per cent of overall GDP, while the share of the bottom 20 per cent of income earners has been dropping, accounting for a miniscule 3.1 per cent of GDP in 2018.

Trade unions warn that far from taking action on **SDG 13 (take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts)**, the Bolsonaro government is contributing to aggravating the climate crisis.

With regard to **SDG 16 (promote peaceful and inclusive societies)**, trade unions warn that the situation in Brazil has been deteriorating since the coup d'état which removed President Rousseff. Violations against labour rights and trade union leaders, indigenous and community leaders are widespread, and the persecution of political opposition leaders continues.

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

CUT Brazil calls on the government to:

- End instrumentalizing the pandemic to attack democracy, freedom and life, and re-establish social dialogue and civil society participation in finding solutions to the upcoming economic, social and humanitarian distress.
- Invest in quality and universal public services (including health, education, transportation and social protection) by repealing Constitutional Amendment 95/2016, which limits public investments in these areas, and by revoking the recent labour and pension reforms.
- Ensure the protection of all workers from contagion, including by distributing personal protective equipment to workers in all activities that cannot be suspended; ensuring that primary health care teams reach rural and traditional communities; and suspending all non-essential activities and expanding teleworking.
- Establish a universal basic income. During the pandemic, guarantee a living emergency income for all unemployed, informal, self-employed and platform workers; moreover, suspend the payment of services (water, energy, telephone and internet) and other expenses such as rent, medical insurance, public transport, loans and financing.
- Create an Emergency Fund financed by the State, the private sector and by taxing the wealthiest sectors. Beyond the crisis, a progressive tax reform must be pursued, in order to tax digital services for technology giants, large fortunes, financial transactions and large profits. In the context of the health emergency, rescue financing should not be granted to companies that operate through tax havens.



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BURUNDI

**A TRADE UNION
FOCUS ON THE SDGs**

#HLPF2020

**COVID-19:
WORKERS DEMAND
JOBS, INCOME AND
SOCIAL
PROTECTION**

COVID-19: WORKERS NEED RESPONSES FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

To avoid the spread of Covid-19 in Burundi, the government has limited access to the country and has introduced quarantine measures for people coming from abroad. A diagnostic centre and isolation facilities have been set up and an expanded scientific committee has been appointed for the care and monitoring of Covid-19 patients. However, the social protection measures to respond to the crisis remain weak. Paid sick leave and wage and income protections only apply to public servants and employees in a few public and private companies.

Trade unions are calling on the government to set up a national tripartite structure to manage the pandemic and to strengthen and expand the social protection system. A budget linked to the crisis needs to be adopted to provide support and assistance for vulnerable people. Immediate action is required to increase the number of decent and hygienic isolation facilities and to provide free pandemic-related care and quarantine (food and accommodation), as well as to reinforce human and material resources in hospitals and emergency services and to increase the number of diagnostic and treatment centres.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The Burundi government has established a national list of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2016-2030 and integrated them into the 2018-2027 National Development Plan (NDP).

The government is working on all SDGs but has chosen not to undertake certain targets of SDG 8 (8.2; 8.4; 8.5; 8.6; 8.7; 8.8). The SDGs have been integrated into national policies: SDG 8 into the national employment policy and SDGs 1, 5, 10, 13 and 16 into the revision of the employment and social security code as well as the Decent Work Country Programme 2019-2023.

Work on the SDGs is coordinated by a multisectoral and multidisciplinary national monitoring commission of experts under the supervision of the second Vice

President of the Republic. Different ministries are responsible for the inclusion of SDGs into their respective policy areas.

Trade unions report that they are not consulted on the planning or implementation of the SDGs and that the 2030 Agenda is not discussed through social dialogue. The national monitoring commission does not include trade union representatives, nor are they informed on the implementation progress. Ministries organise consultation sessions, but these do not involve social partners. Trade unions have made submissions on relevant sectoral policies which contribute to SDG implementation, although they are not directly integrated into the NDP.

TRANSPARENCY



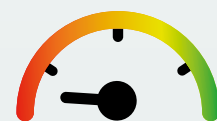
Irregular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



Information sessions but no interaction

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners not involved in defining and realising government's SDG national plan



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Given its placement at the bottom of the global ranking for the human development index (HDI of 0.423 in 2018, 185th place), enormous challenges are in the way of Burundi reaching the SDGs.

Between 2013-2014, 80.2 per cent of the overall population was living below the international poverty threshold of \$1.9 per day, and in 2014, 69.4 per cent of employed persons above 15 were living under the poverty threshold, indicating that **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)** was dramatically far off being reached. In 2016, nearly half of the households in Burundi suffered food insecurity, placing the country in last place of the 2017 Global Food Security Index.

Only one per cent of women and 1.2 per cent of men between 15 and 49 were part of a mutual social insurance and only 21.8 per cent of women and 21 per cent of men in the same age bracket were covered by sickness insurance in 2017, suggesting that reaching **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures)** is far off the mark.

With regard to **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life)**, in 2018, 38.8 per cent of parliamentarians were women, and in 2014, 26.2 per cent of decision-making posts in the administration were occupied by women. However, in the same year only 7.5 per cent of women above 25 years old had at least some secondary education.

There are serious concerns about Burundi meeting the targets set by **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and**

productive employment and decent work for all). The percentage of people working in the informal economy in non-agricultural sectors was 89.4 per cent in 2014, posing a challenge to reaching **target 8.3 (support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of MSMEs)**. In addition, the average salary in 2014 stood at \$1.37, below the international poverty threshold. Below-subsistence-level wages are effectively legalised, as the minimum wage is fixed at \$0.06 in rural and \$0.08 urban areas. In 2018, 94.6 per cent of all employment in Burundi was classified as precarious. Achieving **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)** is still far off, as in 2015, 41.3 per cent of workers were qualified as underemployed. NEET indicators for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** stood at 6.2 per cent in 2017. Reported labour rights violations show big challenges in the implementation of **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**.

Significant progress remains to be made for Burundi to reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)**, as the labour share of GDP (wages and social protection transfers) remained extremely low, at 19.6 per cent, in 2014. In 2013, the share of the top ten per cent of income earners accounted for 31 per cent of GDP, while the bottom 20 per cent of income earners accounted for 6.9 per cent of GDP.

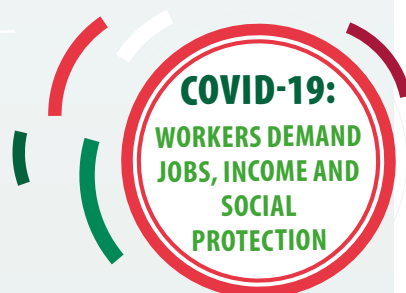
The development of a Just Transition policy which was validated with social partners indicates a first step to reach **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning)**.

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The government of Burundi needs to put in place policies and measures in order to tackle the economic and social shocks brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. Today more than ever the SDGs show the way in building up a sustainable and inclusive economy and society.

Trade unions call on the government of Burundi to ensure urgent action to cope with the pandemic crisis in line with the SDGs, through the following measures:

- Involve social partners in responses to the Covid-19 crisis as well as in shaping national development policies and implementing the SDGs.
- Adopt and ensure the implementation of all targets related to SDG 8.
- Develop a strategy to mobilise funds to address the flaws in the health system and the economic shocks resulting from the coronavirus pandemic.
- Protect the supply of food and essential services and ensure that appropriate pricing is maintained. Food supply chains, especially priority supplies and access to essential services such as telecommunications and public services, must be guaranteed, and prices must be kept at affordable levels.
- Formulate policy to support public and private companies and informal sector activities likely to suffer the consequences of the Covid-19 crisis.
- Devise strategies to counter rumours and political manipulation of the crisis.



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CHILE

A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2020

**COVID-19:
WORKERS DEMAND
JOBS, INCOME AND
SOCIAL
PROTECTION**

COVID-19: WORKERS NEED RESPONSES FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

The government has responded to Covid-19 with a policy of partial social isolation, with measures such as curfews, 'dynamic quarantines' and the recommendation to stay at home.

According to the Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT), the government has prioritised protecting the economy over people's health and has taken advantage of the situation to make working conditions more precarious. An 'employment protection law', for example, has been passed that allows companies to suspend employment contracts, in which case the salary is paid out of the worker's unemployment insurance (in other words, his or her own savings). The government has also enacted a law on teleworking, whereby the workday can be extended to 12 continuous hours. Income support measures, as well as the moratorium on credit payments, have been provided only for the most vulnerable segment of the population, reaching very few people, in practice. The CUT considers it a priority to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic by extending social protection coverage and free access to health care services, protecting wages and employment and extending the moratorium on the payment of utilities, implementing a wealth tax on large fortunes, and providing a guaranteed universal basic income.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

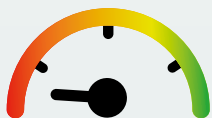
Trade unions report that since the current government came to power in March 2018, no activities relevant to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have taken place. On the contrary, despite the widespread protests which have shaken the country since October 2019, calling for basic rights such as decent wages, healthcare, education, housing and pensions, the government has only intensified its neoliberal agenda, using the Covid-19 pandemic as a pretext for increasing the precarity of working conditions in the country.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Chile is done through the National Council for Sustainable Development, chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the participation of the Ministries of the Economy, Development and Tourism, Social Development and the Environment. The role of the Council is to advise the president on the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda, to coordinate its implementation at national and regional levels and to consult with governmental

bodies, international organisations, the private sector and civil society.

Trade unions have not been systematically informed of or consulted on the SDG implementation process and warn that there is a lack of transparency with regard to the government's actions on this matter. Although the government co-organised workshops on several SDGs with organizations such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in April 2019, no official consultation accompanied this process. Trade unions were invited to attend an information session with the Ministry of Labour in April 2019, which they did not qualify as a consultation; no other sessions have been held since. Social partners such as the CUT have not been invited to discuss or provide input towards the implementation of the SDGs within the framework of the Superior Labour Council (CSL), where social dialogue takes place.

TRANSPARENCIA



No access to information at all

CONSULTA



No consultation process at all

DIÁLOGO SOCIAL



Social partners not involved in defining and realising government's SDG national plan



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Indicators for **target 1.1 (eradicating extreme poverty)** suggest that, in 2019, 0.2 per cent of the population was living in extreme poverty on under \$1.90 per day; a further 3.7 per cent were living in near poverty on under \$5.50 per day in 2017. These are shocking numbers in a country with a human development index (HDI) of 0.847, in the top 50 best scores. In terms of social protection benefits, in 2016, only 45.6 per cent of the unemployed received related payments, and only 18.8 per cent of vulnerable people were covered by social assistance. This suggests that **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems)** has not yet been reached. In addition, government spending on essential services, including health, education and social protection, stood at only 10.7 per cent in 2017.

As regards **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies)**, 2015 data shows that women spend more than twice as much time (24.7 per cent) on unpaid labour compared to men (10.8 per cent). Performance on **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life)** is satisfactory; however, between 2010-2017, 79 per cent of women obtained at least a secondary education, as compared to 80.9 per cent of men.

There are substantial obstacles to Chile meeting the targets set under **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)**. As regards **target 8.3 (support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation)**, the proportion of informal work remains high, at 28.3 per cent in 2017 (26.3 per cent for men and 31 per cent for women). In addition, 10.6 per cent of jobs are low paid. In 2018, 24.1 per cent of jobs were classified as precarious, a proportion that has remained steady, with a tendency

towards increasing, since 2010. The overall unemployment rate stood at 7.7 per cent, with young women (aged 15-24) being most likely to be unemployed (20.3 per cent) in 2018, suggesting that **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)** requires attention. In addition, in 2018-2019, the gender pay gap stood at 21.6 per cent. The indicators for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** stood at 16.5 per cent, (14 per cent for men and 19.4 per cent for women) in 2019. With regard to **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**, collective bargaining coverage stood at only 17.9 per cent in 2016 and the unionisation rate at only 19.6 per cent.

Significant progress remains to be made for Chile to reduce social inequalities and reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)**, as the share of the top ten per cent of income earners accounted for 36.3 per cent of overall GDP in 2017, while the bottom 20 per cent of income earners accounted for a miniscule 5.8 per cent.

With regard to **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning)**, while Chile has a National Policy and Strategic Plan for Disaster Risk Management from 2016 and a 2013 law which states that by 2025 the country should rely on renewable energy sources for 20 per cent of energy consumption, trade unions warn that these policies are not being implemented effectively enough.

With regard to meeting **target 16.10 (protect fundamental freedoms)**, a major cause for concern is the violent repression used by police forces in response to the October 2019 popular protests, which resulted in at least 33 deaths, more than 330 people suffering eye injuries, thousands of others being wounded and over ten thousand demonstrators being arrested.

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT) urges the Chilean government to involve civil society in discussions and consultations on the 2030 Agenda by creating a civil society council and broad social dialogue. Moreover, the discussion on the implementation of the SDGs should be placed on the agenda of the Superior Labour Council, a legal body with tripartite representation.

As regards the Covid-19 emergency, the CUT urges the government to take the following measures:

- In terms of economic measures, to introduce an expansionary monetary policy with the aim of injecting more liquidity into the economy and ensuring direct assistance to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. It should also adopt an expansionary fiscal policy that accelerates budgetary measures for all public services, especially the extension of social protection and health coverage, the supply of medicines and health materials, as well as the increase in medical personnel. It should, in addition, place a wealth tax on large fortunes, introduce a guaranteed universal basic income, and suspend the payment of mortgage loans and basic services.
- In terms of work and employment, the government must ensure basic health, safety and environmental conditions in the workplace, as well as the suspension, as a result of the pandemic, of productive processes that are not essential, without impacting wages. In addition, the grounds for the termination of employment should be provisionally lifted.



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COVID-19:
WORKERS DEMAND
JOBS, INCOME AND
SOCIAL
PROTECTION



COLOMBIA

**A TRADE UNION
FOCUS ON THE SDGs**

#HLPF2020

COVID-19: WORKERS NEED RESPONSES FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

On 24 March, the government decreed a nationwide lockdown. The support measures announced by the government include an increase in the social protection and health system budget for the most vulnerable groups, moratoria on credit repayments, and access to loans for companies (mainly benefiting big capital). Access to these measures has, however, been slow for micro, small and medium-size companies, and the provision of assistance to families has been marred by corrupt practices.

The trade union movement and social organisations as a whole consider the state measures to be inadequate and counterproductive in some respects. The Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT) has denounced the government's attempt to exploit the pandemic to promote a labour reform that would reduce wages, suspend collective bargaining agreements and affect the pension system. The trade union movement considers it urgent that the government prioritise universal social protection and free access to health services, ensure safe working conditions, protect wages and incomes and save jobs, introduce a basic income and provide effective support to micro, small and medium-size enterprises (which account for 80 per cent of employment), while extending the moratoria on credit repayments and lowering the high interest rates.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The Colombian government is implementing the 2030 Agenda through its National Development Plan for 2018-2022, called "Pact for Colombia, Pact for Equity". The plan focuses on three areas: legality, aiming to consolidate the rule of law throughout the country; entrepreneurship and productivity, aiming to reduce the country's dependence on fossil fuels; and equity, focusing on guaranteeing equal opportunities for social inclusion. In addition, issues such as sustainable development, provision of public services, women's, disabled people's and ethnic minorities' equality are mainstreamed throughout the plan.

The High-Level Interinstitutional Committee on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is in charge of the 2030 Agenda's preparation and effective implementation and oversees the implementation of the SDGs. It is chaired by the director of the National Planning Department and consists of the ministers for foreign affairs, finance, environment and sustainable development, the Administrative Department

of the Presidency of the Republic, with the participation of the minister counsellor for the government and the private sector, the director of the National Administrative Department of Statistics and the director of the Administrative Department for Social Prosperity.

The trade unions report that no consultations were organised with them on the 2030 Agenda and that the government does not see them as partners in the implementation of the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda is not discussed within the country's social dialogue structures, which are failing, more generally, to respond to the workers' demands and people's most pressing needs.

With no resources allocated to the implementation of activities related to the 2030 Agenda, trade unions fear that the government is not serious about acting on its stated intentions.

TRANSPARENCY



Regular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



No consultation process at all

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners not involved in defining and realising government's SDG national plan



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Data from 2018 indicate that 27 per cent of the Colombian population was living in poverty (24.4 per cent in urban and 36.1 per cent in rural areas); 20.4 per cent of employed people were living below the poverty line and 26 per cent of workers earned less than half the national legal minimum wage. Colombia's GINI index (0.517 in 2018) is among the highest in the region, which suggests that **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)** is very far from being reached.

The indicators on **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures)** are worrying: in 2016, only 40.8 per cent of the population was covered by at least one social protection benefit; only 4.6 per cent of the unemployed population received unemployment assistance and only 51.7 per cent of persons above retirement age were receiving a pension. Government spending on social protection was just 5.5 per cent of GDP in 2018. Improvement is needed to achieve progress on **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)**, as women spend more than twice as long on unpaid work as men, on average. Performance on **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels)** is satisfactory, as 49 per cent of those enrolled in preschool, primary and secondary education were women and girls, as were 51.6 per cent of those enrolled in higher education.

Regarding **target 8.3 (promote policies that support productive activities, decent job creation)**, in 2019, 65.3 per cent of workers were in the informal sector, most often those working in agriculture, commerce, hotels and restaurants, construction, transport and manufacturing; 25 per cent of workers were in low paid jobs; 56 per cent of workers earned less than the legal minimum wage and 47 per cent were in vulnerable employment. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, at least 15 million precarious workers have lost their income or part of it. As for **Target 8.5 (achieve full and productive employment and decent work)**, the 2019 unemployment rate was 9.7 per cent and was much more likely to affect women (12.7 per cent) than men (7.4 per cent); the

situation was even worse among young people (aged 15 to 24), whose overall unemployment rate was 19 per cent (25.5 per cent for young women and 14.5 per cent for young men). The young people "not in employment, education or training" (NEETs) indicators for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** was 23 per cent in 2019 (31.9 per cent for young women compared to 14.4 per cent for young men). Progress is still needed to reach **target 8.7 (end child labour in all its forms)**, as 2019 indicators showed that 5.4 per cent of children (aged 5 to 17) were engaged in child labour. **Target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)** is very far from being met as, in 2019, an average of 318 workplace accidents took place every hour and 492 work-related deaths were registered. Collective bargaining coverage was just 15.7 per cent in 2017, while the unionisation rate was just 4.7 per cent in 2019.

Significant progress is still needed for Colombia to reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies and progressively achieve greater equality)**, as the top 10 per cent of income earners had a 39.7 per cent share of GDP, while the bottom 20 per cent of income earners had a 4 per cent share of GDP, in 2018.

With regard to **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning)**, a National Climate Change Policy was established in 2014, followed by a National Energy Plan and a National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change. A national tax on carbon was introduced in 2017.

Meeting **target 16.10 (protect fundamental freedoms)** remains far off, as trade unions reported a total of 226 violent incidents that directly affected union members and leaders in 2019: 12 killings, 198 death threats, 11 cases of harassment, four attempted murders and one forced disappearance. The government's rhetoric on SDG 16 contrasts with its lack of commitment to fulfilling the national Peace Agreement.

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The unions are calling on the government to ensure the open and transparent participation of the social partners in the 2030 Agenda implementation processes, and to allocate adequate resources.

In the context of Covid-19, the trade union and social movement is urging the government to:

- Protect people's lives with a health and social protection system designed to meet people's needs; ensure access to food, public services and utilities for the unemployed; introduce a basic income and biosecurity measures, and put an end to its regressive labour and pension reform, which in no way contributes to protecting workers' jobs and incomes or ensuring economic recovery.
- Call on all political and social forces to take part in a national pact to establish a public social security system as a basic human right, and to establish a pact to protect decent and dignified work and to stimulate the economy and economic growth.
- Adopt economic, monetary and fiscal policy initiatives that are more conducive to economic recovery and the defence of decent work by making use of primary credit and part of the international reserves, renegotiating foreign debt and reviewing the tax system to remove the exemptions benefiting big business, etc.



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**COVID-19:
WORKERS DEMAND
JOBS, INCOME AND
SOCIAL
PROTECTION**



FINLAND

A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2020

COVID-19: WORKERS NEED RESPONSES FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

The Finnish government declared a state of emergency on 18 March, with policies such as quarantine, travel restrictions, and closure of public spaces and schools. The government's current response includes the following: payment of a sickness allowance for employees and guardians or parents of children under 16 years old; unemployment benefits during layoff regardless of business activities or studies (based on a proposal presented by trade unions); temporary right to entrepreneurs and jobseekers to unemployment security, budget increase of health care, unemployment benefits, basic social assistance and housing allowance; credit support to companies including Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs); appeal to creditors to temporarily reduce or suspend the rent of companies; shortening of the notice period preceding employee temporary layoffs, but with the extension of the time frame for employee re-employment obligation if the employee was laid off during the state of emergency.

Trade unions support the government's response to the pandemic. At the same time, from the trade union view, among the mentioned measures, the increase of budget for basic social assistance and housing allowance are particularly important and should be reinforced, as well as the extended right to unemployment benefit during temporary layoff.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

In December 2019, the new Finnish government released its programme called "Inclusive and Competent Finland - a Socially, Economically and Ecologically Sustainable Society". While the programme does not directly address Agenda 2030, trade unions are optimistic that it will contribute to its implementation, as the programme's key pillars are income security, well-functioning health and social services and solid education.

The implementation of and consultations on Agenda 2030 fall under the supervision of the Secretary for Sustainable Development, who reports to the Prime Minister's office.

The new Finnish government is preparing a new roadmap and a global action plan to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While the exact priorities are not yet known, trade unions expect them to be more socially oriented than under

the previous government, which had cut costs for key initiatives such as health and social policy reform, education and the activation of unemployed youth. Stakeholders are asked to comment on the preparation of the roadmap and monitor and estimate the implementation of the global action plan for SDGs. Trade unions and civil society have been asked to give their view on the progress of sustainable development over 2017-2019, contributing to Finland's official VNR.

While social dialogue partners are not especially encouraged to make joint submissions on Agenda 2030 as such, there is room in the Sustainable Development Council for dialogue focusing on indicators also closely linked to SDG 8. Sustainable development budgeting was introduced under the previous government, although trade unions regret that it only applies to ecological and not social development goals.

TRANSPARENCY



Complete access to information

CONSULTATION



Structured multi-stakeholder platform

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners contribute individually to the government's SDG national plan



Akava

SAK



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Finnish trade unions stress that improvement on several key indicators is needed to achieve the SDGs in their country.

Indicators on **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty)** show that 1.7 per cent of employed persons were living under poverty in 2017 according to nationally defined thresholds. With regard to **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures)**, while all of the population was effectively covered by at least one social protection cash transfer, 14 per cent of children lived in low-income households, a trend which trade unions described as likely to get worse. Indicators relating to **target 1.a (ensure significant mobilisation of resources to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions)** show that in 2017, only 2,2 per cent of Finnish Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was spent on unemployment policy, and only one per cent was allocated to the activation of the unemployed, placing the country behind the median spending on this objective in Europe. In 2017, only 5,3 per cent of GDP was spent on education as a result of the government cuts in this area. 2015 spending on health was 9,4 per cent of GDP, 0,1 per cent less than the year before. The budgetary allocation for all social welfare funding was 31,6 per cent of the budget 2015.

There is a need for improvement to achieve progress on **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life)**, as in 2018, women represented only 29 per cent of the board members of stock market companies and between 26 per cent and 34 per cent of other companies' boards. However, in 2018, 75 per cent of the population had at least a secondary education: 76 per cent of women and 74 per cent men; in addition, 36 per cent of women have achieved a higher degree in education, compared to only 28 per cent of men.

There are multiple concerns about the targets set by **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive**

employment and decent work for all). Regarding **target 8.3 (promote policies that support productive activities, decent job creation)**, in 2016, 7,1 per cent of employed persons were in low-paid work (4,6 per cent of men and 9,6 per cent of women). In 2018, 9,2 per cent of the work was precarious. On **target 8.5 (achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all)**, unemployment has seen a decrease, with 2019 rates for men standing at 6,1 per cent and women 5,8 per cent; however, 2018 underemployment rates have increased to 9,2 per cent. Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) indicators for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** for 2018 stood at 11,8 per cent of youth aged between 16-29. Concerning deteriorations continued in regard to **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**, as the number of workplace injuries has risen by two per cent from 2017 levels in 2018. Trade union density is estimated to stand at 59,4 per cent in 2017, down by 5,1 per cent from the year before; collective bargaining coverage stood at 88,8 per cent in 2017, down from 91,9 per cent in 2013.

Progress remains to be made for Finland to reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)**, as the labour share of GDP (wages and social protection transfers) stood at 56,3 per cent in 2017. The 2017 Gini index measuring inequalities stood at 27 per cent, indicating that inequality is on the rise in the country, as in 1995 the index stood at 19,8 per cent. The percentage of low-income households stood at 12,1 per cent in 2017.

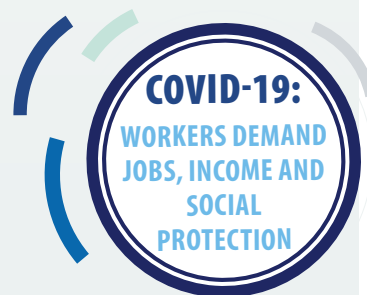
Finland has prepared a climate change adaption strategy and a low greenhouse gas emissions strategy, indicating first steps to reach **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning)**. While a specific plan on a Just Transition has not been included in the national, sectoral or regional climate strategies, the government programme mentions the implementation of Just Transition as part of its climate policy activities.

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Finnish trade unions call on their government to ensure that the implementation of the SDGs leads to meaningful changes in policy with a focus on social development. This can be achieved by setting concrete policy objectives, by developing solid means for their implementation including appropriate financial allocations, and by including the social development aspect of sustainable development into the budgetary process.

Trade unions call on the government of Finland to maintain and enhance the response to the pandemic emergency in line with the SDGs, such as:

- Temporarily interrupting the counting of maximum payment for unemployment benefits in order to guarantee the equal treatment of all who were made redundant or laid off; Minimising the debt problems of households by increasing the labour market benefit, the basic allowance and the basic earnings-related benefit.
- Doubling the amount of the maximum compensation of guarantee pay and extending its duration.
- Enhancing the education and training offer through policies including the following: improving the availability of e-learning through separate funding to educational institutions; increasing short qualification training and short-term training (especially for sectors suffering from labour shortages); strengthening citizens' digital literacy; resolving work-based learning and the recognition of skills, even in exceptional circumstances; and widening the tax exemption for employer-sponsored training.



Akava

SAK



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**COVID-19:
WORKERS DEMAND
JOBS, INCOME AND
SOCIAL
PROTECTION**



FRANCE

**A TRADE UNION
FOCUS ON THE SDGs**

#HLPF2020

COVID-19: WORKERS NEED RESPONSES FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

The containment measures in France began on 17 March 2020 and included: a government plan for businesses (such as state guarantees for loans to businesses or a solidarity fund for micro-enterprises); the waiving of 'waiting days' for paid sick leave for public servants and employees with COVID-19; measures to protect income in the event of unemployment (such as compensation for short-time working, an extension of the rights of unemployed persons reaching the end of their eligibility period); a one-off solidarity payment for recipients of minimum social benefits and specific assistance for self-employed persons without work. The deferral of certain tax and social security payments and an extension of the wintertime eviction truce were also announced. It should, however, be pointed out that despite the measures taken, the impact of the crisis on jobs and businesses is still likely to be very harsh. March 2020, for example, saw a 7.1 per cent rise in unemployment. It is, therefore, essential that additional measures be taken without delay, in consultation with the social partners. The CFDT is already discussing ideas with various civil society actors, under the umbrella of the "Pact for Living Power" (Pacte du Pouvoir de Vivre), with a view to promoting a different development model allying concern for the environment and social progress.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

France published its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) roadmap in 2019. The document is the result of a major consultation process organised by state departments to take on board the views expressed by a large section of organised civil society. The process, which lasted around eight months, culminated in the presentation of its roadmap at the SDG Summit held in New York at the end of September 2019. Trade union organisations played an active role in the construction phase of the document. Although a number of their contributions were taken into account, some challenges have nevertheless been underestimated or met with a lack of ambition. And despite their positive

assessment of the state's approach to consultation during this process, the trade union organisations continue to be wary about the application of the roadmap, which will require coherent policy action and solid implementation strategies.

In addition, aside from the specific work on the SDGs, it remains to be seen to what extent the trade union positions are taken on board within the framework of policy decisions or the implementation of action plans. While openings have been observed, much remains to be done to make way for substantial change.

TRANSPARENCY



Regular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



Structured multi-stakeholder platform

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners contribute individually to the government's SDG national plan



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

The French trade unions stress that although France's human development index value was 0.891, in 2019, placing it in 24th place globally, improvements are still needed on several key indicators for the country to achieve the SDGs.

With regard to **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty)**, the indicators for 2018 show that an estimated 14.7 per cent of the population was living below the poverty line (defined as 60 per cent of the national median income), and while this is relatively low for Europe, the percentage is particularly high among certain population groups, such as young people. The poverty rate is kept relatively low thanks to social protection covering key areas (health, old age, disability, family, housing, unemployment), as well as guaranteed minimum incomes and pensions. It should, however, be pointed out that the current 'social minimums' are not, in themselves, enough to enable people to escape poverty. In 2017, France allocated 31.7 per cent of GDP to social protection, the highest rate in Europe, enabling it to perform relatively well (although it could still do better) on **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors)**. The COVID-19 crisis has also highlighted the flaws in the public health system, which has suffered significant damage over the last few years, with spending restraints affecting health professionals' working conditions and the quality of the care provided.

Progress needs to be made towards meeting **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)**, bearing in mind that, according to the figures for 2009 and 2010, women spent nearly twice as much time (4 hours 1 minute) as men (2 hours 13 minutes) on unpaid work per day.

There are numerous concerns regarding the targets set under **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)**. Regarding **target 8.3 (promote**

policies that support productive activities and decent job creation), 7.4 per cent of jobs were estimated to be precarious in 2018, and the poverty rate (income below 60 per cent of the median) was 7.1 per cent among salaried workers and 17.2 per cent among self-employed workers. As regards **target 8.5 (achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all)**, a gender pay gap of 23.7 per cent persists. The rate of unemployment was 8.1 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2019, and young people aged between 15 and 24 were the worst affected (19.2 per cent). The indicators on young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** was 12.9 per cent in 2018. A number of concerns have emerged in relation to **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)** in light of the major decisions taken regarding the labour legislation, in recent years, without proper consultation with the social partners, resulting in a lowering of labour protections.

Progress is still required to reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)** as, in 2017, the income share of the top 10 per cent of income earners was 25.8 per cent while the share of the bottom 20 per cent was 8.1 per cent. Moreover, the evolution in the GINI coefficient (0.294 in 2018) shows that, despite a slight fall in 2016, inequalities in living standards have seen the largest rise since 2010 and are wider than they were around 20 years ago.

As regards **target 16.3 (promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all)**, the proportion of the incarcerated population being held without a conviction was 30 per cent in 2018.

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The SDGs have been put at the centre of the 2020 cycle of the European Semester – linked to the European Pillar of Social Rights – to guide the EU's economic governance for the next decade. Greater coherence is therefore needed in terms of the action taken at international, European and national level to reach the targets under the SDGs. France's trade union organisations call on the French government to integrate the SDGs within national policies in an effective manner, insisting on the centrality of SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) as well as the particular importance and relevance, in the current context, of the following SDGs:

- SDG 3 (Good health and well-being): strengthen the capacity to respond to the current and future health crises, and support public health and care systems by breaking with austerity.
- SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls): limit the greater impact that the health crisis has on women.
- SDG 2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture): address the inherent limitations of the current model of globalisation in light of the dependence on global supply chains for essential goods.

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the persistence of inequalities and the need to achieve the SDGs as soon as possible – particularly in the knowledge that meeting these goals would contribute to making our societies more resilient and to limiting the socio-economic impact of crises such as these on workers and their families.

**COVID-19:
WORKERS DEMAND
JOBS, INCOME AND
SOCIAL
PROTECTION**



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KENYA

**A TRADE UNION
FOCUS ON THE SDGs**

#HLPF2020

**COVID-19:
WORKERS DEMAND
JOBS, INCOME AND
SOCIAL
PROTECTION**

COVID-19: WORKERS NEED RESPONSES FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

The Kenyan government has put in place specific measures to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, including a partial lockdown in four counties and a dusk-to-dawn curfew in all the country. The government has established an economic stimulus programme that comprises measures such as tax relief for people and enterprises, a horizontal expansion of the cash transfer programme to cover more vulnerable people (elderly, orphans and persons with severe disability), a weekly stipend for the vulnerable (especially the urban poor) and the lowering of the Central Bank Rate and cash reserve ratio by one per cent to provide affordable credit to SMEs. Expansion of healthcare towards universal coverage has initially been piloted in three counties.

Although other important measures are being put in place by the government, most of these leave out informal economy workers. These workers constitute 84 per cent of the workforce. COTU (K) calls on the Kenyan government to further extend social protection coverage to informal economy workers and provide more cash transfers and grants to vulnerable communities. Subsidised loans to SMEs should be increased, and childcare support to frontline workers should be guaranteed.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The Kenyan government implements the 2030 Agenda through its Vision 2030 strategy, rolled out in five-year Medium-Term Plans (MTPs). The 2018-2022 MTP, together with the County Integrated Development Plans, mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Agenda 2063.

Kenya aims to implement all SDGs, and all ministries are required to mainstream the SDGs in all their strategic plans, policies, budgets, and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems. In addition, the government has prioritised the Big Four Agenda (Universal Health Coverage, Affordable Housing, Manufacturing and Food Security), which also mirrors the SDG aspirations. The Ministry of Devolution and Planning coordinates the implementation and monitoring of the

SDGs; an inter-agency technical committee representing all ministries has been set up within it and linked with the county governments.

Trade unions report that there is a lack of transparency in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. They further add that government reporting, along with coordination among the different government agencies and non-state actors implementing the various SDGs, is not adequate. Trade unions are not specifically consulted on the implementation of the SDGs. Their engagement in the implementation of SDG 8 is only possible indirectly through the development and monitoring of the Decent Work Country Program, which involves both social partners.

TRANSPARENCY



Irregular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



Informal or ad hoc consultation

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners not involved in defining and realising government's SDG national plan



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

In 2019, 36 per cent of the Kenyan population was living on less than \$1.25 a day, indicating that **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)** was a long way from being reached. Poverty affects the urban population more heavily due to a higher unemployment rate (11 per cent) in cities, and the high level of informal sector employment in these areas. Thirty-one per cent of Kenyan workers are considered as working poor.

Reaching **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures)** is far off the mark: in 2019, only 21 per cent of Kenyans had any form of insurance, 11 per cent participated in contributory pension schemes, around 23 per cent of informal economy workers were covered by the statutory health insurance and a mere 24.8 per cent of over 65-year-olds were receiving pensions or cash transfer benefits. Government expenditure on health was a paltry 3.2 per cent of the national annual budget in 2019.

Women are more likely to be in informal employment than men – 63 per cent of workers employed in that sector were women in 2019, suggesting efforts need to be made to progress on **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)**. With regard to **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life)**, in 2019 only 21.8 per cent of parliamentarians were women and only 29.8 per cent of women had at least a secondary level of education.

There are significant obstacles to Kenya meeting the targets set by **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)**. The percentage of people working in the informal economy was 84 per cent in 2019, posing a challenge to reaching **target 8.3 (support productive activities, decent job**

creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of MSMEs). In addition, 53.5 per cent of workers were classified as vulnerable in 2019. Achieving **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)** is still far off, as the combined rate of under-employment and unemployment was 12.6 per cent, 11.7 per cent for males and 13.5 per cent for females, in 2019. NEET indicators for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** stood at 14.8 per cent, 10.8 per cent for men and 18.8 per cent for women, in 2019. Urgent action is needed on **target 8.7 (take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour)**, as 35.6 per cent of children aged 5-14 were involved in child labour, while modern slavery was estimated at 0.69 per cent in Kenya in 2019. Delivering on **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)** is a serious challenge given that there are only 44 labour inspectors for a 19 million-strong workforce and only 2.5 per cent of workers in the formal sector are covered by collective bargaining agreements. Trade unionists have experienced gross mistreatment from the state owing to their work, such as arrests for calling for strikes, the withholding of salaries for striking workers, the non-remittance of union dues by public employers and the non-implementation of collective bargaining agreements.

Significant progress remains to be made for Kenya to reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)**, as the labour share of GDP (wages and social protection transfers) remained relatively low, at 43.9 per cent, in 2017. In 2013, the share of the top 10 per cent of income earners accounted for 31.6 per cent of GDP, while the bottom 20 per cent of income earners accounted for six per cent of GDP.

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The government of Kenya needs to put in place policies and measures in order to tackle the economic and social shocks brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. Today more than ever the SDGs show the way in building up a sustainable and inclusive economy and society.

The Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU) calls on the government of Kenya to ensure urgent action to cope with the pandemic emergency in line with the SDGs, through the following measures:

- Give priority in the budget to critical sectors like health and labour.
- Prioritise tax-funded social services over external debt-financed capital infrastructure.
- Set up a multi-stakeholder SDG monitoring forum which would include trade unions to allow for the monitoring of labour-specific SDGs.
- Institutionalise employment insurance as an integral part of the social protection system.
- Institutionalise a pandemic and emergency fund.
- Review labour laws to recognise emerging work arrangements, such as telework, and provide for responses to pandemic situations.



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COVID-19:
WORKERS DEMAND
JOB, INCOME AND
SOCIAL
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LITHUANIA

A TRADE UNION
FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2020

COVID-19: WORKERS NEED RESPONSES FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

Lithuania introduced quarantine measures on 16 March 2020. The government's response plan included measures for wage support (guaranteed minimum wage for those who cannot work remotely and support for part-time workers, depending of their previous working time and salary), unemployment benefits for workers who have lost their jobs, and income support for non-standard workers (in particular in the cultural sector). In terms of sick leave, specific sick pay was set for employees who were infected while performing their duties, including healthcare professionals and caregivers; moreover, bonuses were granted to medical personnel working with infected patients. Also, a moratorium for up to six months was foreseen for mortgages and companies' payments.

According to LPSK Lithuania, in order to leave no one behind when facing the pandemic, the government should further enhance measures related to wage and income protection, paid sick leave and childcare support for frontline workers in health, food retail, pharmacies and other vital areas. Moreover, the government should better protect women experiencing domestic violence, strengthen the capacities of the social security system in general and resist pressure from employers demanding the suspension of some provisions of the Labour Code.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The Lithuanian government has integrated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into key strategic planning documents, such as the National Strategy for Sustainable Development and the National Progress Strategy 'Lithuania 2030'. The official priorities stemming from the 2030 Agenda are SDGs 1, 5, 13 and 16. However, trade unions' partners alert that implementation remains a challenge, in particular due to changes in political leadership, as continuity and commitment to the implementation of the objectives set by previous governments are lacking.

The work on the 2030 Agenda is coordinated by the National Commission for Sustainable Development, which was established in 2000. While all ministries integrate the SDGs according to their area of competence, the Ministry of the Environment coordinates the overall process, and the Ministry of International Affairs is responsible for development cooperation.

Trade unions report that there is a need for a better structured process for informing and consulting social partners on the 2030 Agenda. While an e-consultation was launched on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, trade unions were not invited to negotiate concrete aspects. Nonetheless, even if not in the context of discussing the SDGs, trade unions continue providing input to discussions promoting the increase of wages (especially in the public sector), pensions, and broader and more adequate social protection, promoting equality and better access to the labour market.

The implementation of the SDGs is not on the agenda during tripartite dialogues, but relevant issues are discussed in the context of the dialogues.

TRANSPARENCY



Regular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



Informal or ad hoc consultation

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners contribute individually to government's SDG national plan



LIETUVOS
PROFESINIŲ
SAJUNGŲ
KONFEDERACIJA



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Lithuanian trade unions highlight the need to improve performance on several key indicators to reach the goals set by the 2030 Agenda in their country.

Indicators on **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty)** show that while only 1.3 per cent of the population was living below the international poverty line of \$1.9 a day, 22.9 per cent of the population was at risk of poverty in 2018 according to nationally defined thresholds. In addition, 8.5 per cent of workers were at risk of poverty in 2017. With regard to **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures)**, while 92.7 per cent of the population was effectively covered by at least one social protection cash transfer, only 25.9 per cent of unemployed people were receiving unemployment cash benefits in 2014. However, general government expenditures on essential areas were relatively high in 2018, representing 13.4 per cent of the budget for education, 17.4 per cent for healthcare and 35.4 per cent for social security.

There is a need for improvement to achieve progress on **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work), as women spend significantly more of their time (17.7 per cent)** on unpaid and care labour than men (9.3 per cent); this is especially the case for rural women (21 per cent). With regard to **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life)** in 2018, there were 39.2 per cent of women in managerial positions.

There are multiple concerns about the targets set by **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)**. Regarding **target 8.3 (promote policies that support productive activities, decent job creation)**, the total share of low-paid work in the economy was 21.3 per cent in 2014, worse among women (24.1 per cent) than among men (18.1 per cent). In 2018, 9.5 per cent of employment was categorised as vulnerable. On **target 8.5 (achieve full and**

productive employment and decent work for all), unemployment stood at 6.9 per cent for men and 5.4 per cent for women in 2018. Women's wages were on average 16.6 per cent lower than men's in the second quarter of 2019. NEET indicators for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** stood at 8.5 per cent for men and 7.6 per cent for women in 2018. With regard to **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**, trade unions estimate that due to a recently signed national collective agreement covering the budgetary sector, collective bargaining agreement coverage is at around 40 per cent today. Eight violations of labour rights have been noted in 2019, six in law and two in practice.

Progress remains to be made for Lithuania to reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)**, as the labour share of GDP (wages and social protection transfers) remains low, standing at 43.5 per cent in 2017. In addition, in 2015, wealth inequalities remained a challenge as the share of GDP that went to the top 10 per cent income earners was 28.6 per cent, while the share that went to the bottom 20 per cent was 6.1 per cent.

The development of an Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030 indicates a first step to reach **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning)**. However, trade unions report that climate-related issues remain low on the political agenda.

With regard to **target 16.3 (promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all)**, trade unions report that since the entry into force of a new Labour Code in 2017, Labour Dispute Committees deal with disputes concerning the dismissal of workers, legality of removal from work, and non-pecuniary damages, all of which were previously settled by the courts. This administrative service is free of charge.

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Trade unions call on the government of Lithuania to ensure urgent action to cope with the pandemic emergency in line with the SDGs, such as:

- Enhancing the financing of essential public services to respond adequately to the crisis and to be prepared for future crises. In this framework, trade unions stress the need for a real progressive tax system that ensures a fair distribution of the financial burden between labour and capital.
- Saving jobs by supporting companies that are committed to workers' rights and sustainability. Considering that in the current health crisis employers' organisations have unilaterally tried to push for changes of the Labour Code to hinder workers' rights, rather than looking for balanced solutions by collective bargaining, public support to business should only come with the commitment to protect workers' rights and the environment.
- Ensuring proper involvement of social partners in the design of solutions to the Covid-19 crisis and to the 2030 Agenda. One urgent discussion refers to the current economic structure, which is heavily based on low value-added sectors with low wages and a higher representation of migrant workers, generating a race to the bottom of working conditions for the overall working class. Given this situation, the Covid-19 recovery plan of the government needs to include the creation of stable quality jobs in sustainable high value-added sectors, as well as the investment to up-skilling and re-qualification of workers from vulnerable sectors.



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MALAWI

A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2020

COVID-19: WORKERS NEED RESPONSES FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

Following the declaration of the Covid-19 pandemic the president of Malawi declared a state of disaster in the country and cross-border passenger travel was suspended; however, no lockdown measures have been put in place as these were blocked by the country's High Court. The government did nonetheless introduce specific measures for the containment of the pandemic, to increase the capacity of the health sector and to mitigate risks for the economy. Specific measures to support the economy were predominantly oriented at supporting business while measures to support wages or protect the income of workers have been limited. Although the government has introduced an emergency social cash transfer for informal economy workers in the urban and peri urban areas for a period of six months, the social protection system still needs to be strengthened and universalised.

In this context trade unions are urging employers to ensure the safety and health of workers and have urgently demanded increased risk allowances for health workers. Trade unions have insisted on the need for social dialogue and collective bargaining with employers and the government to deal with the crisis and have been engaging in this sense.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The government of Malawi has integrated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its national development plan, the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy for 2017-2022 (MGDS III). The MGDS cascades down to the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), sectoral policies and strategic plans and annual budgets.

The National Planning Commission (NPC) oversees the integration of the SDGs into national plans, it also monitors, enforces implementation and reports on the country's performance on the 2030 Agenda. All ministries, departments and agencies are required to mainstream the SDGs in their organisational and sectoral planning. Sector Working Groups consisting of civil servants, private sector representatives and CSOs working on the relevant sector are in charge of monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the SDGs. The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development plays a coordination and oversight role over local governments, which

are expected to mainstream the SDGs in their district and urban development plans. Trade unions report that although the decision-making process on the prioritisation of SDGs and the budget allocations foreseen for their implementation are transparent, the access to information is however limited. During the design phase of the MGDS, consultations on mainstreaming the SDGs into the plan took place with all relevant stakeholders. Consultations on the SDGs implementation continue to take place annually through the budget consultation process. However, trade union input was limited to SDG 8 and some elements of SDG 5. Social dialogue discussions do not include SDGs in their agenda, with social partners making individual submissions on the 2030 Agenda.

Trade unions alert that budgetary allocations towards the SDGs are insufficient. In addition, Sector Working Groups are often underfunded, limiting their capacity to coordinate the implementation of the SDGs or report on their implementation.

TRANSPARENCY



Irregular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



Structured multi-stakeholder platform

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners submit joint contributions to the government's SDG national plan



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Given its placement at the bottom of the global ranking for its human development index (HDI of 0.485 in 2019, 172nd place), enormous challenges are in the way of Malawi reaching the SDGs.

With 70 per cent of its population living under the internationally defined poverty rate, Malawi faces significant challenges in meeting **SDG 1 (end poverty in all its forms everywhere)**. The proportion of the population living in poverty on under \$3.2 was at 87 per cent, suggesting that **target 1.1 (eradicating extreme poverty)** is far from being met. In 2020, the country's working poverty rate based on modelled estimates stood at 64.2 per cent, likely caused by low wages and a rising cost of living. Reaching **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures)** is far off, as the proportion of the population covered by at least one social protection benefit stood at only 21.3 per cent in 2016. The budgetary allocation towards education stood at an equivalent of six per cent of GDP, towards health at 2.7 per cent of GDP, while social protection is mostly financed off-budget by donors and development partners.

Achieving **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life)** remains a challenge, since as of 2018, only 7.6 per cent of women over 25 years of age have received at least some secondary education, compared to 25.9 per cent of men in the same age group.

There are significant obstacles to Malawi meeting the targets set by **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)**. In 2018, 59.5 per cent of workers were considered vulnerable, posing a challenge to reaching **target 8.3 (support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of**

MSMEs). The 2018 unemployment rate stood at a high 18.5 per cent (higher for women – 20.3 per cent than for men – 16.6 per cent), suggesting challenges in fulfilling **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men)**. Youth between 15 and 19 years of age had a staggering 35.8 per cent rate of unemployment. The gender pay gap remains significant, as in 2018, the median salary for men was roughly 21 per cent higher than for women. At 32.9 per cent, NEET (not in education, employment or training) indicators for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** were high, with women significantly more affected (41.4 per cent) than men (23.6 per cent). Indicators on **target 8.7 (take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour)** remain worrying, as 38 per cent of children aged 5-17 were involved in child labour in 2015; among them, 60 per cent were in hazardous work. Delivering on **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)** seems far off, as trade union density stood at just 5.5 per cent in 2013, and the number of trained labour inspectors is a paltry 148 in a country with a population of over 18 million.

Meeting **target 10.4 (progressive achievement of greater equality)** remains a challenge as the labour share of GDP (wages and social protection transfers) remains very low, standing at 35.1 per cent in 2017. In 2016, the income share of the top ten per cent of income earners stood at 38.1 per cent, while the share of the bottom 20 per cent of income earners accounted for only 6.4 per cent.

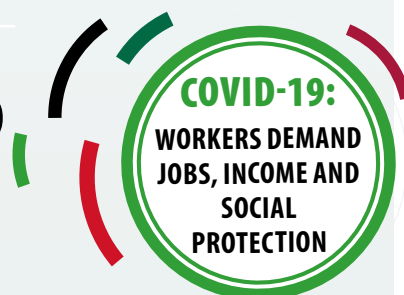
In order to meet **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning)**, the Malawi government has adopted a National Climate Change Management Policy in 2016. However, a meaningful dialogue with social partners to achieve a Just Transition has been missing.

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The government of Malawi needs to put in place policies and measures in order to tackle the economic and social shocks brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. Today more than ever the SDGs show the way in building up a sustainable and inclusive economy and society.

Trade unions call on the government of Malawi to ensure urgent action to cope with the pandemic crisis in line with the SDGs, through the following measures:

- Protect employees against arbitrary pay cuts.
- Protect workers against unnecessary job losses.
- Widen social protection coverage and institute social protection measures for low-income earning employees and those in the informal economy.
- Install a waiver on income tax for those earning less than MWK100,000 (\$135)
- Support job creation initiatives including support to MSME.
- Streamline expenditures and generally improve public finance management by making it more result oriented.
- Ensure no misappropriation of public funds allocated to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Address the political economy factors enabling corruption which derail focus on the desired development outcomes.



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**COVID-19:
WORKERS DEMAND
JOBS, INCOME AND
SOCIAL
PROTECTION**

VENEZUELA

A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2020

COVID-19: WORKERS NEED RESPONSES FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

On 13 March, the government ordered social confinement measures and the suspension of all activities. The support measures announced include the following: the extension until December 2020 of job security ("inamovilidad laboral") legislation to protect workers against dismissal; the suspension of rent payments for six months; the payment of a payroll subsidy to small and medium-sized enterprises, and solidarity vouchers for workers in the informal economy. ASI Venezuela, however, has underlined the delay in some payments, as well as their selective nature, favouring persons affiliated to the ruling party.

Considering the deep humanitarian crisis that the country is undergoing, the ASI trade union centre is calling on the government to urgently request humanitarian aid, not only to tackle the coronavirus crisis but also the permanent food and basic public services crisis. The pandemic has given rise to an urgent need to guarantee everyone a sufficient income to cover their basic needs and to extend access to universal social protection and free health care to all, along with unemployment or compulsory work suspension benefits. In terms of public services, it is essential that drinking water, electricity and gasoline supplies, which are scarce even for health service, food and medicine providers, are guaranteed.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The Venezuelan government has stated that its Third Homeland Plan, which sets out its development objectives for 2019-2025, incorporates all the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The office of the president oversees the Economic and Social Development Plan, which is implemented by the National Planning System, led by the Ministry of Popular Power for Planning.

The Venezuelan government has announced that 75.9 per cent of the 2020 budget will be allocated to social investment, establishing social and economic plans to protect the poorest segments of society. However, trade unions warn that these measures exclude anyone who does not belong to political organisations supportive of the government.

There is a lack of transparency with regard to the progress made in meeting the SDGs – the Venezuelan government's Voluntary National Review (VNR) presented at the 2016 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) did not include reliable or updated data on what measures were taken to implement the SDGs in the country and with what outcomes. On the contrary, trade unions believe that many targets have seen a regression, considering that the country is facing an aggravated humanitarian crisis, with widespread levels of malnutrition, the collapse of the public health system and the forced displacement of millions of Venezuelans.

TRANSPARENCY



No access to information at all

CONSULTATION



No consultation process at all

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners not involved in defining and realising government's SDG national plan



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Trade unions warn that the profound political and economic crisis in Venezuela has caused a humanitarian disaster and substantial regression in terms of the SDGs.

In 2019, 81.9 per cent of the population of Venezuela was living below the poverty line – 63.8 per cent in poverty and 18.1 per cent in extreme poverty – a highly alarming rate in relation to **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)**. In 2018, 89 per cent of the population did not have sufficient means to buy food. Only 13 per cent of Venezuelan households are considered not to be poor, suggesting an 80 per cent increase in poverty between 2013 and 2018, measured by income line, and 3.7 million Venezuelans are in a state of malnutrition.

With regard to **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures)**, in 2016, 28.3 per cent of people with disabilities were covered by social protection systems, 5.1 per cent were covered by unemployment benefits and 59.4 per cent received a pension (70 per cent men and 50.2 per cent women). Trade unions also warn of a crisis in the health care system (lack of supplies, medication and infrastructure) which is particularly devastating now, in the context of the coronavirus pandemic.

More effort is required for Venezuela to achieve **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)**, as women are nearly 50 times more likely than men to be entirely dedicated to unpaid domestic labour. Indicators on **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership in political, economic and public life)** show that in 2017, 71.7 per cent of women had attained at least a secondary education.

Venezuela is far from meeting the targets set by **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)**. Of all the countries in the Americas, Venezuela is the country with the most rapid loss of formal employment. Estimates suggest

that around 60 per cent of the country's working age population may be in the informal sector.

The situation with regard to **target 8.3 (support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation)** is particularly worrying, as the current regulations on the minimum wage are insufficient and discriminatory, covering only a third of the economically active population employed within the formal sector. In addition, the economic collapse and hyperinflation reaching 1,300,000 per cent in November 2019 make the minimum wage increases virtually meaningless. Venezuela is very unlikely to achieve **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**: ASI Venezuela warns that the state violates trade union rights on a regular basis, interfering in trade union elections, threatening, arresting and laying off trade union representatives and placing legal restrictions on the right to strike. The situation is alarming both in the context of **target 8.8** and **target 16.10 (ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements)**.

The high levels of forced migration among Venezuelans, due to the humanitarian situation, are extremely worrying in the context of **target 10.7 (facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people)**. An estimated four million people fled the country between 2015 and 2018.

With regard to **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning)**, the government has included the protection of the environment among the goals of its National Plan but has refused to discuss it with the social partners. Furthermore, the establishment of the Orinoco Mining Arc clearly undermines environmental goals, as it reduces local indigenous groups' access to basic services such as drinking water and electricity, and it poses a threat to the biodiversity in the area.

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

With regard to the SDGs, ASI Venezuela is urging the government to adopt social and economic policies that will curb the increase in inflation and the economic stranglehold on Venezuelan families and that will reduce poverty in a way that is sustainable and respects human rights. It is also essential that the social partners and civil society be included in the formulation of strategic plans for the achievement of the SDGs, as a prerequisite for designing a sustainable and inclusive development model.

In view of the Covid-19 pandemic, ASI Venezuela urges the government to issue an urgent request for humanitarian aid and multilateral cooperation to:

- Extend the distribution of food and medicine to the entire population, without any kind of discrimination, as well as the supply of drinking water, electricity, gas and solid waste collection.
- Guarantee job stability and extend social protection coverage to maintain the income of all workers affected by the crisis, ensuring an emergency minimum living income.
- Extend health service access to the entire population; establish a Covid-19 Scientific Committee, within this framework, to provide guidance and information regarding its development, as well as a tripartite mechanism to monitor compliance with the safety protocols in the workplace.
- While the crisis lasts, exempt workers from paying taxes and utility bills (electricity, water, gas, telephone), and suspend eviction proceedings for non-payment of rent.



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ZAMBIA

A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2020

**COVID-19:
WORKERS DEMAND
JOBS, INCOME AND
SOCIAL
PROTECTION**

COVID-19: WORKERS NEED RESPONSES FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

In response to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the government of the Republic of Zambia has put in place certain restrictions, amongst which include limiting public gatherings and travel as well as quarantine for travellers. It has also introduced a number of fiscal measures to respond to the crisis, such as tax waivers; a medium-term refinancing facility for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); and the promotion of local production of goods, along with value addition. These measures have, however, had little impact on workers, especially those in the informal economy. The refinancing facility for SMEs should ensure that eligible enterprises contribute to creating and sustaining employment, and the government should consider waiving tax on electricity tariffs and suspending water bills to increase the disposable income of households.

Although the government has continued to provide social protection packages and subsidised primary health care, no additional scheme has been provided in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the main challenge remains the huge informal economy where workers are uncovered. The government should therefore scale up social protection and increase coverage. It should further provide protective materials to the public, especially informal economy operators.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The government of Zambia has integrated the SDGs into its Seventh National Development Plan (NDP). SDGs 1-5 are prioritised, with the others addressed with lower priority. Overall, 52 per cent of the objectives listed in the NDP are aligned with the SDGs, 15 per cent are partially aligned and 33 per cent are not aligned.

The government entities in charge of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda are the Ministry of National Development and Planning and the Ministry of Finance. Trade unions feel that there has not been enough transparency on the SDG selection and implementation process, and input provided by civil society partners has not been sufficiently taken on board. While on the occasion of preparing the country's voluntary national review (VNR), the Zambian government has set up

ad hoc information sessions on the SDG implementation process, these have not adequately allowed for the provision of feedback. More broadly, trade unions report that although some of the recommendations they made were reflected within the chapter on labour issues of the NDP, the process of formulation and implementation of the NDP is not fully participatory.

Discussions within the Tripartite Consultative Labour Council, where social dialogue takes place, do not touch upon SDG implementation.

Trade unions warn that implementing the 2030 Agenda in Zambia will be a challenge given the lack of adequate financing, information management systems, and communication between the government and other stakeholders.

TRANSPARENCY



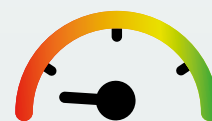
Irregular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



Information sessions but no interaction

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners not involved in defining and realising government's SDG national plan



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Zambia faces significant challenges in meeting **SDG 1 (end poverty in all its forms everywhere)**. In 2018, 53.6 per cent of the Zambian population was living in poverty, only a slight decline from 54.4 per cent in 2015; urban areas were much less affected (23.4 per cent) than rural ones (76.6 per cent). Working poverty levels stood at 51.3 per cent in 2019. The total proportion of the population living below the national poverty line was 60.5 per cent – the highest figure recorded in the past decade, suggesting that **target 1.1 (eradicating extreme poverty)** is far off being met. Indeed, in 2018, the HDI (0.591) increased by only 0.002 points, a slowdown most likely due to high inflation and allocative inefficiencies. Reaching **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures)** is far off, as the proportion of the population covered by at least one social protection benefit stood only at 15.3 per cent in 2016. The budgetary allocation towards social protection for 2019 stood at only 2.4 per cent.

Achieving **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)** remains far off, with women in Zambia performing three times more unpaid domestic work than men. With regard to **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life)**, the proportion of women with at least some secondary education stood at 73.4 per cent in 2016. As of 2015, the ratio of female to male mean years of schooling of the population age 25 and above stood at 86.5 per cent. Worryingly, the figures are predicted to fall due to the gradual worsening of the economic situation in the country.

There are significant obstacles to Zambia meeting the targets set by **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)**. In 2019, the proportion of informal employment outside of agriculture stood at 64.1 per cent, with much higher rates among women (69.5 per cent) than men (55.7 per cent). 36.5 per cent of workers were in low paid work – more often in urban (41.2

per cent) than rural (14.8 per cent) settings. 19.1 per cent of workers were in precarious employment, an increase from 13 per cent in 2014. This poses a challenge to reaching **target 8.3 (support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of MSMEs)**. The 2019 unemployment rate stood at 11.4 per cent (higher for women – 12.9 per cent than for men – 10.5 per cent), suggesting challenges in fulfilling **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men)**. Youth between 15 and 19 years of age had a staggering 30.3 per cent rate of unemployment. The 2018 underemployment rate stood at 7.1 per cent and was predicted to rise due to the impact of austerity measures. At 29.9 per cent in 2018, NEET indicators for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** were high, with women more affected (32.4 per cent) than men (26.9 per cent). Delivering on **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)** seems far off, as the number of work-related injuries and fatalities remains high, especially in the mining sector, which accounts for approximately 15 per cent of formally employed workers in Zambia. Trade union density stands at 11.7 per cent and collective bargaining coverage at only 22.9 per cent.

Target 10.4 (progressive achievement of greater equality) remains unmet as inequalities are increasing despite the continuous economic growth. In 2015, the income share of the top ten per cent of earners stood at 44 per cent, while the share of the bottom 20 per cent of earners accounted for a miniscule 2.9 per cent. In order to meet **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning)**, the Zambian government has adopted a National Climate Change Policy in 2017. However, a meaningful dialogue with social partners on the issue of the effects of climate change and greenhouse emissions has been missing, trade unions report.

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The government of Zambia needs to put in place policies and measures in order to tackle the economic and social shocks brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. Today more than ever, the SDGs show the way in building up a sustainable and inclusive economy and society.

Trade unions call on the government of Zambia to ensure urgent action to cope with the pandemic emergency in line with the SDGs, through the following measures:

- Improve social dialogue with unions and other key stakeholders and use established social dialogue structures such as the Tripartite Consultative Labour Council to discuss SDG implementation.
- Increase transparency and improve consultation and interactions with trade unions and other stakeholders in the implementation of the SDGs.
- Scale up social protection programs and coverage to ensure social inclusion, especially for informal economy operators and other vulnerable groups.
- Increase allocations towards social spending in national budgets.
- Establish a long-term macroeconomic framework that will promote local production and value addition to promote employment creation and for the economy to be resilient against external shocks.
- Guarantee a prudent management of national resources by ensuring stringent accountability measures, especially in public finance management.
- Develop a consensus-based national monitoring and evaluation performance framework to ensure that SDG national indicators collated are comprehensive, gender-sensitive and systematically acted upon.



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COVID-19:
WORKERS DEMAND
JOB, INCOME AND
SOCIAL
PROTECTION

ZIMBABWE

A TRADE UNION
FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2020

COVID-19: WORKERS NEED RESPONSES FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

The government of Zimbabwe declared the Covid-19 pandemic a national disaster and has enforced lockdown measures. It has set up a Covid-19 task force, excluding social partners, which has put forward responses that include an economic recovery and stimulus package and scaling up funding for medical expenses and towards Covid-19 related mitigatory measures. However, these measures have a limited coverage. Only two per cent of the population is covered by some sort of social security, thus leaving 98 per cent of the population at risk. Social protection coverage and free access to healthcare need to be extended, and social protection support should be benchmarked with the national Food Poverty Line to ensure households have at least food on the table.

Although measures such as paid sick leave and managed reduction of working hours are in place, these have not been accompanied by income security, and the majority of the workers, either with non-permanent employment or in the informal economy, are not benefiting from them. Trade unions have called on the government to establish a moratorium to freeze the retrenchment of workers; they have also called for a fund for distressed industries and informal economy operators adversely affected by the lockdown. However, given that social dialogue is ad hoc, stakeholders' contributions to Covid-19 measures have been limited.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The government of Zimbabwe has committed itself to implementing SDGs through the "Post-2015 Development Agenda: Zimbabwe Position Paper on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)". The paper gives priority to the SDGs that are expected to have a multiplier effect throughout the economy: SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13 and 17.

The government entities in charge of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda are the Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare, which is the coordinating ministry under the guidance and supervision of the Office of the President and Cabinet. While a multi-stakeholder forum to consult on the implementation of the SDGs exists, it is not consistently functional, and it has mostly been convened on the occasion of development of Zimbabwe's SDG Progress Report and upcoming voluntary national review (VNR). Information on progress towards meeting the SDGs is not consistently shared with all stakeholders, as forum discussions within it are largely ad hoc and government centric. While a CSO SDG platform exists, its operations have been limited

due to lack of funding. Trade union contributions have also been limited due to the exclusionary approach of the government.

So far, social dialogue around the SDGs has been minimal, and the government has been unilaterally implementing programmes side-lining the social partners. However, the National Tripartite Negotiation Forum has recently been renewed, supported by a new Act and paving the way for a new structure with an independent secretariat. Trade unions are involved in the setup of the new structure and expect it will provide an opportunity for tripartite deliberations on the SDGs.

Trade unions warn that not enough resources have been allocated to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Quite the opposite, the current budget fails to provide resources for essential social services such as water and sanitation, electricity, education, health and housing.

TRANSPARENCY



Irregular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



Informal or ad hoc consultation

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners submit joint contributions to the government's SDG national plan



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Zimbabwe faces significant challenges in meeting **SDG 1 (end poverty in all its forms everywhere)**. In 2017, 70.5 per cent of the Zimbabwean population was living in poverty, a slight decline from 72.3 per cent in 2011-12. Nonetheless, the rates of extreme poverty went up from 22.5 per cent to 29.3 per cent in the same timeframe, suggesting regression on **target 1.1 (eradicating extreme poverty)**. The increase in extreme poverty in rural areas is attributed to a worsening economic environment. In urban areas, deindustrialisation and job losses have led to an increase in the informalisation of the economy.

Reaching **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures)** is far off the mark, as Zimbabwe's 2020 budgetary allocation towards social protection was 0.7 per cent, significantly less than the 4.5 per cent of GDP stipulated in the Social Policy for Africa. In addition, social protection systems suffer from fragmentation, narrow coverage, duplication and underfunding; the growing inflation is further eroding the value of cash transfers and monthly pensions. Whilst the total healthcare budget increased from seven per cent to 10.1 per cent between 2019 and 2020, it remains short of the Abuja Declaration target of 15 per cent and the Sub-Saharan African average of 13 per cent. The country's dependence on donor funding in the health sector raises additional questions of the sustainability and predictability of the funding in a volatile political environment.

The continued deterioration of the socio-economic environment, coupled with austerity measures introduced in 2019 and the rollback in the state's provision for social services, has resulted in increased time spent by women and girls in care and unpaid work. Reaching **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)** remains far off, with women in Zimbabwe spending twice as much time, or even more, caring for family members, housekeeping and home duties as men.

There are significant obstacles to Zimbabwe meeting the targets set by **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)**. In 2019, the proportion

of informal employment stood at 76 per cent, and 19 per cent of workers were considered to be in precarious employment, an increase from 13 per cent in 2014. This poses a challenge to reaching **target 8.3 (support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of MSMEs)**. The 2019 unemployment rate stood at 16.4 per cent (higher for women, at 17.2 per cent, with the rate for men being 15.7 per cent), suggesting challenges in fulfilling **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men)**. In addition, women are more likely than men to be working in precarious work and low remunerated sectors; as a result, their average income is only two thirds of that of the average man's. The underemployment rate stands at 15.5 per cent. Indicators on **target 8.7 (take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour)** remain worrying, as trade unions warn of the harsh economic environment, vulnerability to exploitation, modern slavery and high human trafficking. Delivering on **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)** seems far off, as in 2019, Zimbabwe joined the list of the ten worst countries for workers, where wage theft and the non-remittance of union dues by employers are widespread.

Target 10.4 (progressive achievement of greater equality) remains unmet, and inequalities are increasing due to corruption and the stagnancy in wages and salaries versus the cost of living. Although the Gini coefficient of Zimbabwe between 2010 and 2017 was low, standing at 43.2 per cent, during this period the share of the bottom 40 per cent of income earners in GDP was 15.3 per cent, while the top ten per cent of income earners held 33.8 per cent of GDP.

While the Zimbabwean government has passed a number of policies in order to meet **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning)**, the insufficient allocation of financial resources is likely to limit their implementation.

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

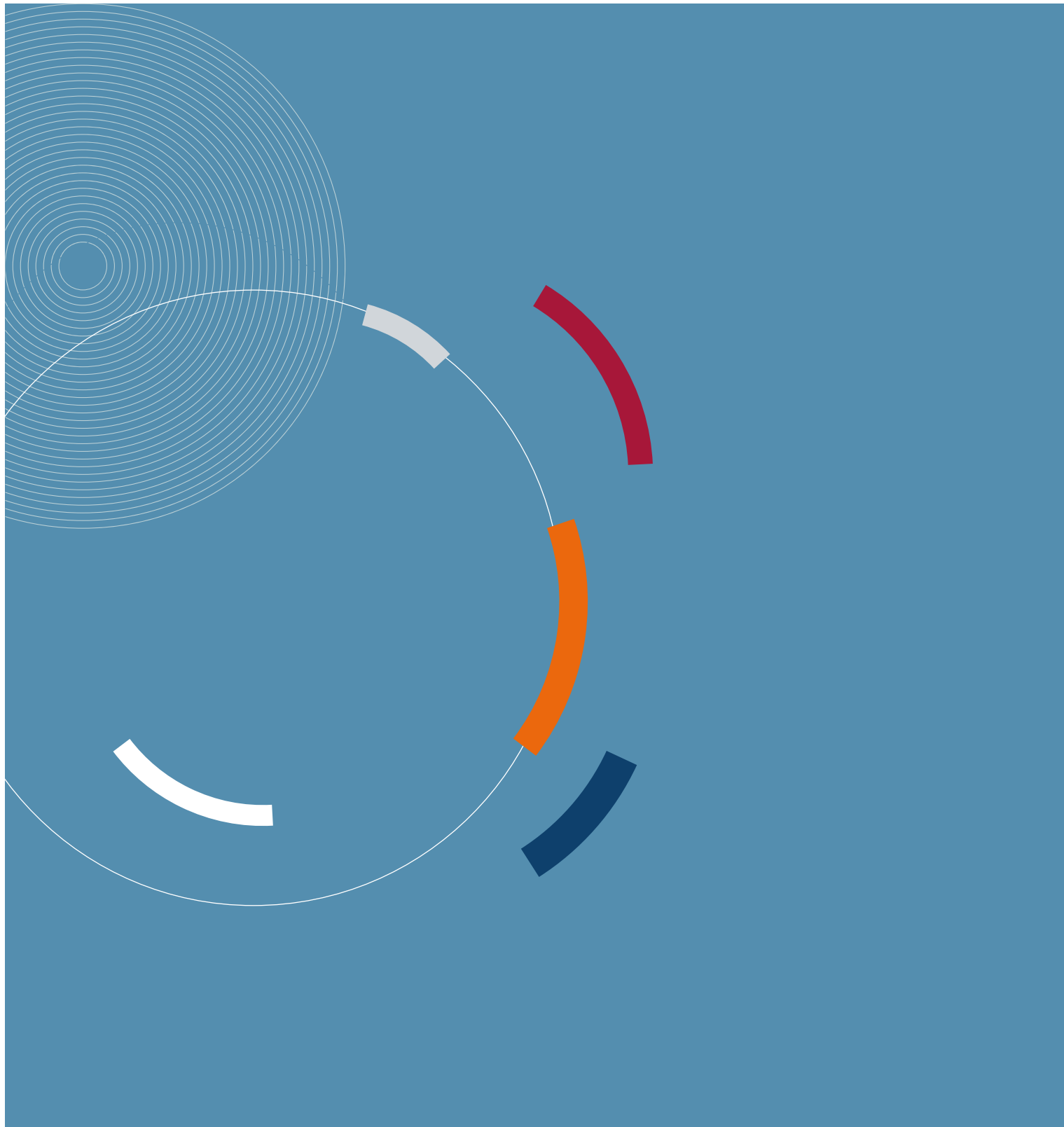
The government of Zimbabwe needs to put in place policies and measures in order to tackle the economic and social shocks brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. Today more than ever the SDGs show the way in building up a sustainable and inclusive economy and society.

Trade unions call on the government of Zimbabwe to ensure urgent action to cope with the pandemic crisis, in line with the SDGs, through the following measures:

- Improve the functioning of the national SDG multi-stakeholder dialogue platform and include discussions on the SDGs on the agenda of the national social dialogue platform (TNF).
- Shift from implementing top-down, neoliberal macroeconomic policies and austerity measures which undermine social investments and worsen poverty.
- Allocate meaningful resources to the implementation of the SDGs, including by fully financing the Zimbabwe Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP).
- Reprioritise and improve efficiency of government expenditures in order to create fiscal space to fight the pandemic and revise the national budget with a redistributive approach which takes into consideration the gender impacts of Covid-19.
- Implement robust social protection policies and systems and extend coverage.
- Ensure swift allocation and distribution of the Covid-19 stimulus packages anchored by inclusivity, transparency and accountability.
- Develop and implement policies through social dialogue that promote inclusive decent work-rich recovery and sustainable development.
- Improve and strengthen social dialogue structures so that stakeholders can make proactive and meaningful contributions towards Covid-19 responses.



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