



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC



A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2019



Photo: Eskinder Debebe / UN Photo

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The SDGs have been incorporated into the Recovery and Peace Consolidation Plan for Central Africa (RPCA) for 2017-2021, although the government of CAR has only done so retrospectively in February 2019. In addition, a National Coordination Mechanism for monitoring the implementation of Agenda 2030 was established in 2018.

The Ministry of the Economy, Planning and International Cooperation oversees the implementation of the SDGs. However, as Agenda 2030 cuts across multiple policy areas, nearly all ministries are involved in its implementation. Work on the SDGs is organised in four clusters: people (SDGs 1-6), prosperity (SDGs 7-11), planet (SDGs 12-15) and peace (SDG 16).

The planning of the implementation of the SDGs is decided unilaterally by the government. While civil society is occasionally invited to information and consultation sessions to provide input towards these efforts, there is no transparency in how organisations invited to these sessions are chosen.

There is currently a deficit in social dialogue within CAR. While the ILO secretariat had organised a workshop and issued a recommendations on setting one up in 2016, these have not been followed up by the government.

Trade unions report that the resources allocated by the government of CAR towards the implementation of the SDGs are insufficient.

TRANSPARENCY



Irregular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



information sessions but no consultation

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



There is no involvement of social partners by the national government on an SDG national plan definition and implementation





IS THE (DECENT) WORK BEING DONE?

Given its placement as the country with the lowest human development index in the world (HDI of 0.367 in 2018, 188th place), enormous challenges are in the way of CAR reaching the SDGs.

In 2018, 75 per cent of the population was living in poverty in CAR, with the situation especially dire in rural areas – indicating that **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)** was dramatically far from being reached. CAR is fifth on the list of least wealth-producing countries globally, with a GDP of US\$440 per person per year.

The expenses allocated by the government of CAR towards social protection, excluding health, constituted 6.9 per cent of government spending in 2010. However, the ILO estimated that only 1 per cent of children in CAR were covered by social protection services in 2017, suggesting that reaching **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures)** is far off the mark.

While exact data on women's employment is not available, around a third of women in CAR are engaged in remunerated work, primarily in agriculture and commerce. At the same time, they are expected to take on a large part of unpaid and reproductive labour, such as fetching the water from the well during the dry season. There is, therefore, a need for significant improvement to achieve **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)**, between 2010 and 2017 only 13.2 per cent of women above 25 years of age had achieved secondary education. The situation is particularly concerning in rural areas, where 80 per cent of women between the ages of 15 to 49 had never accessed any education.

There are serious concerns about CAR meeting the targets set by **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)**, as despite having approved a new

national employment policy in 2017, the government has not allocated budgetary resources to its implementation. Performance on **target 8.3 (support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of MSMEs)** is worrying, with only 63.6 per cent of the population classified as employed and 19 per cent as underemployed, while the unemployment rate is 6 per cent. In addition, of the employed population, 74 per cent were self-employed and 16 per cent were family workers; 62.7 per cent of all workers were categorised as vulnerable in 2017. Achieving **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)** is still far off, as youth underemployment remains a problem: 23 per cent of young women and 21 per cent of young men are underemployed. These issues are more pronounced in the impoverished rural or peri-urban areas. Instances of modern slavery still affect indigenous and autochthonous peoples, with an estimated 2.23 per cent of the population working in slave conditions – undermining **target 8.7 (eradicate forced labour and the worst forms of child labour)**. With 12 violations of labour rights noted in 2016, including restrictions on the freedom of association and the right to strike, **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)** requires additional efforts to be met. Trade union density has dropped to 28 per cent in the private sector and 32 per cent in the public sector as a result of reoccurring politico-military crises which have led to the flight of business.

Progress remains to be made for CAR to reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)**. As in 2008, the share of the top 10 per cent of income earners accounted for 46.2 per cent of GDP, while the bottom 20 per cent of income earners accounted for 3.3 per cent of GDP.

Trade unions face attacks from armed groups, which the government is unable to prevent, a failure to meet **target 16.10 (ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements)**.

WHERE TO NEXT?

TRADE UNION RECIPE TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The Confédération Syndicale des Travailleurs de Centrafrique (CSTC) calls on the CAR government to:

- Include the three most representative trade unions (USTC, CSTC and CNTC) into the consultations on the planning on and implementation of Agenda 2030.
- Establish a representative body to monitor the progress in reaching the SDG targets and the impact of the associated policies.
- Strengthen data collection and management to support effective and informed decision-making.



This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of TUDCN/ITUC and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.