



COLOMBIA



A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGS

#HLPF2019



ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The Colombian government is implementing Agenda 2030 through two legal frameworks: the National Development Plans (the current one for 2018-2022 is called "Pact for Colombia, Pact for Equity"), and the 2015 decree creating the High-Level Interinstitutional Committee for the preparation and effective implementation of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. The High-Level Interinstitutional Committee 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. One of the main objectives of the Committee has been to prepare the Colombia's Voluntary National Report, which was presented at the UN High Level Political Forum in 2018.

Like the year before, in 2018, no consultations were organised with either civil society or trade unions on Agenda 2030 on its implementation in the country; trade unions point out that the government does not see them as partners in the implementation of the SDGs. The fact that the Ministry of Labour has not been involved in the work of the High-Level Committee is also concerning to trade unions, as they see this as proof that SDG 8 (decent work) has not been taken up as a priority for the government.

Trade unions are not aware of any additional resources having been allocated to the implementation of activities related to Agenda 2030 by the Colombian government.

TRANSPARENCY



Irregular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



There is no consultation process at all

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 GETTING DONE?

Colombian trade unions highlight several focus areas for improvement to ensure Agenda 2030 implementation in the country.

With regard to **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)**, 2017 data indicate that 26.9 per cent of the Colombian population is living in poverty and 39.9 per cent is vulnerable to dropping below the poverty threshold; in 2016, 4.5 per cent of the population lived on less than US\$1.90 per day. In addition, 2018 indicators showed that 5.3 per cent of Colombian workers were living on between US\$1.90 and US\$3.20 per day. Indicators on **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures)** continue to be extremely worrying, showing that in 2018, only 65.7 per cent of workers were not covered by basic social security systems (health insurance, pension and insurance for occupational risks). In 2017, only 7.2 per cent of the unemployed population was provided with unemployment assistance, although this was an improvement on 2016, when the number was 4.5 per cent. Government spending on social programmes was low, with only the equivalent of 6.12 per cent of GDP being spent on education and healthcare in 2016.

There is a need for improvement to achieve progress on **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)**, where average indicators show a significant discrepancy between daily time spent on unpaid work by women (7h14) and men (3h25); this discrepancy is further pronounced in rural areas. Women between the ages of 25 and 44, who dedicate an average of 9h 15 to it per day, carry the heaviest burden of unpaid labour. With regard to **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels)**, in 2017, Women occupied 41 per cent of the highest management positions in government employment. However, no budget was allocated to the promotion of equality between women and men in the 2018-2022 National Development Plan.

There are serious concerns about Colombia meeting 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 2018 the rate of informal economy workers reached 65.7 per cent. In 2016 (the last available data), 73.8 per cent of workers were classified as precarious

(working without a contract, or with a fixed-term contract or within a temporary employment agency, labour cooperative or collective companies); moreover, in 2018, 46.8 per cent of the working population were classified as being in vulnerable employment (either unpaid family workers or autonomous workers). **Target 8.5 (achieve full and productive employment and decent work)** shows that while the 2018 unemployment rate stood at 9.7 per cent, it was much more likely to affect women (12.7 per cent) than men (7.4 per cent). The situation is even worse among young people (14-28 years old), their overall unemployment rate stood at 16.9 per cent: a dismal 22.3 per cent for young women and 12.9 per cent of young men. In addition, 9.8 per cent of Colombian workers are underemployed. The 'Neither in Employment nor in Education or Training' (NEET) indicators for youth for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** stood at 21.7 per cent in 2018. The challenge is greater for young women of whom 30.8 per cent are NEETs, compared to 12.7 per cent of young men. Progress remains to be made to reach **target 8.7 (end child labour in all its forms)**, as the 2018 indicators showed that 5.9 per cent of children (5-17 years old) were engaged in child labour. The number increases when unpaid domestic labour of 15 hours a week or more is considered – 10.3 per cent, affecting more girls (11 per cent) than boys (9.6 per cent). **Target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)** is far from being met, as in 2018, an average of 336 workplace accidents took place every hour and 573 work-related deaths were registered.

Significant progress remains to be made for Colombia to reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies)**, as the labour share of GDP (wages and social protection transfers) was low, at 33.9 per cent in 2017. In 2017, the earnings of 42.8 per cent of workers were equal to or below the national minimum wage.

With regard to meeting **target 16.10 (protect fundamental freedoms)**, the chief obstacle is the persisting impunity for grave violations to the rights to life and liberty of trade union activists and other human rights defenders. In 2018, trade unions registered 221 cases of attacks against trade unionists, including 33 killings.

WHERE TO NEXT?

TRADE UNION RECIPE TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Colombian trade unions call on their government to ensure the effective implementation of Agenda 2030 by:

- Involving social actors and civil society in the SDG design, planning and implementation process through open and transparent consultations.
- Including the Ministry of Labour in the High-Level Interinstitutional Committee on the SDGs.



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