



FRANCE



A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2019



Photo: Anne Bruel/Infocom CFDT

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The French government is currently drafting its national SDG roadmap, to be finalised in 2019. It is to be structured around four sections: the vision for the 2030 Agenda, the approaches to each SDG, stakeholder mobilisation, and monitoring and implementation. A steering committee, co-chaired by the Ministry for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, has been set up for this purpose, along with multi-stakeholder working groups. The trade unions, which have been invited to take part in this process, have contributed to the discussions and will closely monitor the subsequent action taken and the outcomes obtained. For the Cfdt, this monitoring is crucial, especially in light of the lack of transparency in decision-making processes and the risk that the inputs of the stakeholders consulted will not be taken on board. The union centre has

noted, for example, that the indicator framework established to monitor France's implementation of the SDGs is not ambitious enough and does not include highly relevant indicators proposed by stakeholders such as trade unions and associations. It is also critical of the fact that the reports on the national implementation of the SDGs often seem more like PR tools and are not sufficiently based on genuine evaluation and monitoring exercises to track progress and to identify where improvements can be made.

There is no tripartite social dialogue (state, employers, and workers) on the 2030 Agenda.

TRANSPARENCY



Regular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



There is a structured consultation/
multi-stakeholder platform

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



There are individual contributions from social partners to the national government



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

The French trade unions stress that even though France's human development index value in 2017 was 0.901, placing it in 24th place globally, improvements on several key indicators are needed for the country to achieve the SDGs.

Indicators on **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty)** show that, in 2016, 14 per cent of people lived under the national poverty threshold (defined as 60 per cent of the national median income). While this is a relatively low level for Europe, it is particularly high among certain population groups, such as young people (21.1 per cent per cent of women and 19.1 per cent of men in the 18-29 age category). The relatively low poverty rate is maintained thanks to social protection covering key areas (health, old age, disability, family, accommodation, unemployment), as well as the guaranteed minimum income and pension. It should, however, be pointed out that the current 'social minimums' are not, in themselves, enough to enable people to escape poverty. France allocates 32 per cent of GDP to social protection, the highest rate in Europe, enabling it to perform relatively well on **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors)**, as compared with other countries (although its performance could be improved).

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 to 2010, women spent nearly twice as much time (4 hours 1 minute) than 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)**, 7.6 per cent of jobs were estimated to be precarious in 2017. And although 85 per cent of jobs

are based on permanent contracts, 90 per cent of new hires are on fixed-term contracts, which can be as short as a few days. Furthermore, 7.1 per cent of workers are poor (earning below 50 per cent of the median wage). On **target 8.5 (achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all)**, a gender pay gap of 24 per cent persists. Unemployment stood at 8.7 per cent in the first quarter of 2019, and young people aged between 15 and 24 are the worst affected. The NEET (young people not in education, employment or training) indicator for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** was 11.5 per cent in 2017; the young people most likely to be NEET tend to have lower levels of education and come from lower socio-economic backgrounds. 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 fact that major decisions have been taken regarding the labour legislation, in recent years, without proper consultation with the social partners, resulting in a lowering of labour protections.

Progress remains to be made to reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)**, as the share of the top 10 per cent income earners in overall GDP in 2015 was 26.6 per cent while the bottom 20 per cent of income earners accounted for 7.9 per cent of GDP. In addition, the evolution of the Gini coefficient (0.288 in 2016) shows that, after a sharp increase, inequalities in living standards seem to be stabilising, but are still wider than around twenty years ago.

On **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 detained without a sentence was 27 per cent in 2014.

WHERE TO NEXT? TRADE UNION RECIPE TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The CFTD calls on the French government to integrate the SDGs into national policies (including their local and international dimensions) in an effective manner, to ensure that all policies are in line with the SDGs, and to make a critical appraisal of their implementation. It would recommend, in this respect, that supplementary indicators be defined for the purposes of monitoring the national implementation of the SDGs, with regard to goals such as:

- SDG 2 (eliminate hunger, ensure food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture) to ensure transparency on the management of public and private stocks of agricultural goods and foodstuffs.
- SDG 3 (good health and well-being) to address the high number of pollution-related deaths.
- SDG 6 (ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all) to fight against water pollution and make water resources more accessible.
- SDG 7 (ensure access for all to reliable, durable and modern energy resources, at an affordable cost) to address energy poverty.



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