



# GHANA



## A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2019



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### ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The government of Ghana has integrated the SDGs into its Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policy (CPESDP) for 2017-2024. The CPESDP aims to achieve economic transformation and inclusive growth primarily through agricultural modernisation, industrial diversification and the promotion of youth employment, as well as through other means. Metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies have been encouraged to include the SDGs in their development plans.

The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), together with the Ministries of Planning and Finance, the Ghana Statistical Service and the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research, oversee the implementation of the SDGs. A High-Level Inter-Ministerial Committee, an SDG Implementation and Co-ordination Committee, a Civil Society Platform as well as an SDGs Technical Committee have been set up to streamline efforts on Agenda 2030. The Ghanaian

government has decided to work on all SDGs prioritised by trade unions (SDGs 1, 5, 8, 10, 13, 16).

Trade unions are informed on the implementation of the SDGs through the Civil Society Platform. Work within the platform is organised around the individual SDGs, with TUC Ghana convening the work on SDG 8 (decent work) and participating in working groups on other relevant goals. The NDPC engages with both trade unions and employers' organisations to consult on the SDG implementation process, including the selection of indicators and the validation of reports. Some of the recommendations put forward by trade unions have been taken on board by the government.

Trade unions report that the national budgeting process has been aligned with Agenda 2030, although they have concerns about the allocations.

#### TRANSPARENCY



Complete access to 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 BEING DONE?

Serious challenges towards reaching the SDGs remain to be tackled in Ghana.

23.4 per cent of the Ghanaian population was living under the nationally defined poverty threshold in 2016/17, with rural populations affected by it (39.5 per cent) to a much higher degree than urban ones (7.8 per cent) in 2016/17, indicating that **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)** was far from being reached. Even more concerning, 4.8 per cent of the working population was living below the international poverty threshold in 2016/2017.

In addition, the levels of social protection coverage are low, with only 11.5 per cent of the working population having access to a state pension. Over 11 million working people, mainly those in the informal economy, do not have access to social security – suggesting that the achievement of **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures)** is still far off. While the Ghanaian government has significantly increased its spending on education, which accounts for 16.3 per cent of the 2019 budget, allocations to health (7.7 per cent) and social protection (5.1 per cent) remain low.

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)**, 2012-13 data shows that women spend more time than men on all unpaid domestic activities. They are also more likely to be employed in the informal economy than men, having represented 54.9 per cent of the informal labour force in 2015. Much progress remains to be made 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)**; between 2010-2017, only 54.6 per cent of women over 25 years and older had completed at least some form of secondary education, compared to 70.4 per cent of men.

There are serious concerns about Ghana being able to meet the targets set by **SDG**

**8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)**, with numerous indicators showing signs of deterioration in past years. **Target 8.3 (support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of MSMEs)** is particularly worrying, as in 2015, 83.2 per cent of the population worked in informal employment outside of agriculture. This means that 66 per cent of work in Ghana can be classified as precarious or vulnerable. While unemployment is relatively low, standing at 4.2 per cent in 2017, it has nearly doubled since 2013, when it stood at 2.2 per cent, suggesting that achieving **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)** is getting further off. Unemployment rates are particularly high for youth aged 15-24, 9.1 per cent (2017) of whom are unemployed, nearly double the 2013 rate of 4.6 per cent. In addition, the 2017 underemployment rate stood at 13.1 per cent. NEET indicators for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** stood at an alarming 30.5 per cent in 2017, nearly triple the 2013 rates, with young women particularly affected (33.3 per cent). Indicators for **target 8.7 (eradicate forced labour and the worst forms of child labour)** show that 17.5 per cent of children were engaged in child labour in 2012. **Target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)** requires attention, as in 2016, 13 cases of violations of labour rights were reported, involving the rights of workers to establish and join trade unions, the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike. Both collective bargaining coverage (16.6 per cent in 2013 and 14.7 per cent in 2016) and trade union density (24 per cent in 2010 and 20.6 per cent in 2016) went down over the years.

Wide disparities in wealth distribution are a challenge to reaching **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)**, as in 2016, the share of the top 10 per cent of income earners in Ghana accounted for 32 per cent of overall GDP, while the bottom 20 per cent of income earners accounted for 4.7 per cent of GDP.

## WHERE TO NEXT?

### TRADE UNION RECIPE TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The TUC Ghana calls on the Ghanaian government to:

- Review and strengthen the labour protections afforded by the 2003 Labour Act.
- Set up an SDG desk or focal person specifically for trade union priority SDGs at the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations to coordinate with employers and labour.
- Use the tripartite system to engage employers and labour to discuss the SDGs.
- Ratify ILO Convention 158 on the termination of employment and enforce the ratified ILO Convention 29 on forced labour.
- Ensure a timely and adequate fund disbursement for the implementation of Agenda 2030.



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