

SWEDEN

A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2017



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ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The Swedish government agencies responsible for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda are the Prime Minister's office, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Minister for Development and the Minister for Public Administration are the responsible ministers.

No national implementation plan for Agenda 2030 has yet been decided by the Swedish government. The government commissioned an independent committee, the Delegation for Agenda 2030. It is tasked with assessing the extent to which Sweden fulfils the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda, submitting proposals for an implementation action plan and disseminating information on examples of best practice in the areas of sustainable social, economic and environmental development. In June 2017, the Delegation submitted proposals, based on which the government will formulate a national action plan for the implementation of the SDGs.

Both the government and the Delegation conducted consultations with representatives from the parliament, councils, municipalities and regions, business representatives, trade unions as well as civil society, including academia and youth movements. Trade unions were invited to a round of consultations with the Delegation in early 2017, where they were able to provide input towards the national action plan.

No additional resources have yet been allocated to the implementation of the SDGs. The government's argument is that, by putting the focus on policy coherence, better administration and governance, existing resources will contribute to its implementation.



TRANSPARENCY

access to key documents on SDGs programming and/or implementation



CONSULTATION

existence of an official multi-stakeholder platform on the SDGs



SOCIAL DIALOGUE

dialogue among worker, employer and government representatives on SDG implementation



IS THE (DECENT) WORK BEING DONE?

The Swedish Government plans to integrate the Global Deal initiative as an important pillar for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Global Deal aims to develop and support social dialogue, as a tool towards the realisation of **SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth)** as well as other goals, including **SDG 10 (reducing inequalities within and among countries)**. The Swedish government plans to focus on two additional areas particularly relevant to trade unions: gender equality, women's rights and a feminist foreign policy (**SDG 5**) and international climate action support (**SDG 13**).

Trade unions highlight that indicators related to **target 1.1 (eradicating extreme poverty)** demonstrate that the number of people at risk of poverty has increased in Sweden over the last few years, growing from 12% in 2008 to 14.5% in 2015.

With regards to **target 5.4 (on unpaid care and domestic work)**, trade unions highlight that women still do a larger part of unpaid domestic work. National statistics from 2010 show that women work 4 hours a week, while men work 3 hours and 15 minutes a week. This has a detrimental effect on women's career opportunities, which has consequences on their pensions and overall welfare.

Progress must still be made on **targets 8.3 (policies supporting productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and**

innovation) and **8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men)**. In 2011, Swedish women earned 14% less than men, a slightly lower pay gap than the OECD average (15%), and higher than in many countries with comparable female employment rates. The pay gap is even larger (21%) among parents. Lower pay not only deprives women of higher earnings in the short term but it also exposes them to higher poverty risk after retirement. Due to lower pension contributions over the course of their lives as well as to longer life expectancy, the incidence of poverty among retired women (11%) is much higher than among retired men (5%).

Swedish performance on **target 8.8 (protecting labour rights and promoting safe and secure working environments)** is good, with low numbers of occupational injuries, 0.5 trained labour inspectors per 10,000 employees, complete ratification of ILO conventions, 89% collective bargaining coverage and a trade union density rate of around 70%.

Performance on **target 10.4 (progressive achievement of greater equality)** shows that in 2012, the GDP share held by the highest 10% of income earners was 21.5% while the share held by the lowest 10% of income earners was 3.17%. Economic inequality has been on the rise in Sweden over the last 30 years, and is growing faster than in other OECD countries, leading to poorer health outcomes and social problems.

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

The government of Sweden must prioritise the following objectives: sustainability of the national pension funds, strengthen efforts against tax evasion and ensure the respect of human rights in global supply chains.

To ensure the effective implementation of these objectives, the Swedish Government should:

- Establish a national action plan and ensure political will for its implementation by passing it through parliament.
- Ensure that the action plan indicates how the continued dialogue with different stakeholders should be conducted, and which reference groups should be appointed to the various goals.
- Further formalise the dialogue and cooperation structures with trade unions, with clear communication and timelines to improve planning and transparency.
- Strengthen policy coherence and integration of the SDGs into the work of government agencies.
- Connect the national budget and financial steering mechanisms to a new set of welfare indicators.
- Provide additional resources for a public information campaign on the SDGs.



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