



ZIMBABWE



A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2017



ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The government of Zimbabwe has integrated the SDGs into its National SDG Position Paper and its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for 2016-2018.

The government agency in charge of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is the Ministry of Macroeconomic Planning and Investment Promotion. The ministry has institutionalised multi-stakeholder committees as platforms to consult civil society, including trade unions, as well as other actors on the implementation of the SDGs.

The effective involvement of trade unions only occurred recently through their participating in the VNR consultations and the VNR validation meeting that took place in June 2017.

The government has only recently begun to report on SDGs implementation at the national level. According to Zimbabwean trade unions, the reporting mechanisms in place are not yet adequate and broader inclusion of civil society is needed. In addition, the budget allocated for the implementation of the SDGs is insufficient.



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 GETTING DONE?

Out of the trade union priority SDGs, the government of Zimbabwe has prioritised implementation of **SDGs 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth) and 13 (climate action)**. Trade unions stress the need to also prioritise **SDGs 1 (eradicating poverty), 10 (reduced inequalities) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions)**.

While the Zimbabwean government has succeeded in halving the population living in extreme poverty from 44% in 1995 to 22% in 2012, demonstrating progress on **target 1.1 (eradicating extreme poverty)**, it is concerning that the general poverty rate has remained above 70%. The main contributor to increasing poverty levels has been the deteriorating macro-economic environment resulting in company closures, massive job losses and the informalisation of the economy. Informalisation, which is correlated to high vulnerability to poverty, grew from 84.2% in 2011 to 94.5% in 2014.

Zimbabwean trade unions underscore the importance of **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)** in light of the increasing rate of feminisation of the informal economy, which suggests a deficit in the availability of decent work for women.

According to trade union sources, the official broad unemployment rate of 11.3% (2014) does not reflect the true rate of unemployment, which suggests challenges in fulfilling **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men)**. Unemployment is unofficially estimated to

be above 80%. Statistics, including the official data, show that both unemployment and underemployment is higher among women. On average, women earn around two thirds of men's income largely because they are overrepresented in low remuneration sectors and occupations with high levels of precariousness. Moreover, a 2015 trade union study entitled *Wage Theft* revealed that, among 442 companies surveyed, over 82,000 workers were affected by non-payment of wages and salaries. Non-payment of wages and salaries averaged between 3 and 25 months across sectors. This clearly indicates high levels of violation of ILO Conventions.

The Zimbabwean government has passed a number of policies in order to meet **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning)**, including a National Response Strategy on Climate Change (2015) and a National Climate Change Policy (2017). However, the insufficient allocation of financial resources is likely to limit the implementation of these policies.

Trade unions report a number of challenges to their work, which suggest that the implementation of **target 16.10 (ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms)** is inadequate. Instances of seizing funds from trade unions, intimidation, violence and arrests of trade union activists and strikers indicate that serious limitations on the freedom of association persist in the country. Freedom of the press is also under attack, as evidenced by an arrest of five journalists reporting on an industrial action by public sector employees in 2016.

WHERE TO NEXT?

TRADE UNION RECIPE TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The government of Zimbabwe must prioritise the following objectives: remove the salary disparity between women and men; tackle the increasing informalisation of the economy; and secure the freedom of association and collective bargaining and freedom of the press.

To ensure the effective implementation of these objectives, the Zimbabwean government should:

- Ensure the continuous and effective participation of all stakeholders, including labour representatives and national authorities, in the multi-stakeholder SDG platforms. The platform should allow CSOs and trade unions to input into the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDG objectives.
- Ensure adequate resourcing (human and financial) of each of the selected SDG objectives and prioritise the budgetary allocations to relevant ministries, e.g. Ministry of Health and Child Care, Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development, among others.
- Ensure the effective implementation of the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for 2016-2018.
- Commit to implementing the African Instruments to which Zimbabwe is a party, in particular the Maputo Declaration (allocating 10% of the budget towards agriculture and food security), the Abuja Declaration (allocating 15% of the national budget towards the health sector) and the Dakar Declaration (allocating 20% of the national budget towards education).
- Commit to the continuous education and training of all citizens on the SDG process.



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