



COLOMBIA



TRADE UNION TAKE ON SDG IMPLEMENTATION

#HLPF2018



ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The Colombian government is implementing the 2030 Agenda through two legal frameworks: the National Development Plan for 2014-2018 and the 2015 decree creating the High-Level Inter-institutional Committee for the preparation and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

The High-Level Inter-institutional Committee is chaired by the director of the National Planning Department. It 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. The priority of the High-Level Committee has been the preparation of Colombia's 2018 Voluntary National Report (VNR).

No consultations have been organised with civil society or trade unions on the 2030 Agenda or the VNR development process; 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 included in the High-Level Committee is also concerning to trade unions, as they see this as a failure to prioritise workers' concerns in the 2030 Agenda process.

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

TRANSPARENCY



Regular 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 BEING DONE?

It is not yet clear which SDGs will be prioritised by the Colombian government and if these will include those that are key to trade unions. Nonetheless, the Central Union of Workers (CUT) highlights several focus areas for improvement to ensure a successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

With regard to **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)**, 2017 data indicate that 26.9% of the Colombian population is living in poverty. Rural inhabitants are at much higher risk, with the rate standing at 36% for rural areas compared to 24.2% in urban settings. In addition, 2014 indicators showed that 19% of Colombian workers were living in poverty, with 31% of rural workers and 16% of those in cities affected. Indicators on **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures)** are extremely worrying, showing that in 2017, 65.9% of workers were not covered by basic social security systems (health insurance, pension and insurance for occupational risks). In 2016, only 4.5% of the unemployed population was provided with unemployment assistance. Government spending on social programmes was low, with only 4.9% of GNP being spent on healthcare and 4.6% of GNP on education in 2015.

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 (6h35) and men (2h); this discrepancy is further pronounced in rural areas. With regard to **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels)**, in 2016 only 43.8% of the people enrolled in higher education were women.

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)**, 2017 data shows that 65.9% of employment is informal. The sectors of the economy most susceptible to informal employment are agriculture, fishing, livestock production, hunting and forestry (90.7% of informal workers); commerce, hotels and restaurants (78.2%); construction (74.1%); and transport,

storage and telecommunications (64.4%). The working population classified as precarious workers in 2016 stood at 73.8%. **Target 8.5 (achieve full and productive employment and decent work)** shows that while the 2017 unemployment rate for men stood at 7.2%, 12.3% of women were unemployed; the situation is even worse among young people (14–28 years old), whose overall unemployment rate stood at 16.1%: a dismal 21.2% for young women and 12.2% of young men. In addition, 9.7% of Colombian workers are underemployed. NEET indicators for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** stood at 20.8% for youth in 2017, an increase on the 2016 number of 20.1%. The challenge is greater for young women of whom 29.7% are NEETs, compared to 12% of young men. Progress remains to be made to reach **target 8.7 (end child labour in all its forms)**, as the 2017 indicators showed that 7.3% of children (5–17 years old) were engaged in child labour (the expanded child labour rate was 11.4%), primarily in the sectors of agriculture, fishing, livestock production, hunting and forestry (44.4%) and commerce, hotels and restaurants (30.1%). Of these children, 54% were not remunerated for their work.

Significant progress remains to be made for Colombia to reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies)**, as the share of the top 10% of income earners accounts for 40% of overall GDP, while the share of the bottom 20% of income earners accounts for only 3.9% of GDP. Labour share of GDP (wages and social protection transfers) is low, at 33.5% in 2015. In 2016, the earnings of 62.3% of workers were below the average national wage.

With regard to meeting **target 16.10 (protect fundamental freedoms)**, the chief obstacle is the persisting impunity for grave violations of the rights to life and liberty of trade union activists, 143 of whom have been killed in the past six years. In 2017, trade unions registered 198 cases of violations against trade unionists: 19 killings, 125 cases of threats, 24 cases of harassment, 16 physical attacks, nine arbitrary detentions, two illegal searches, one case of torture and one of forced disappearance.

WHERE TO NEXT?

TRADE UNION RECIPE TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Colombian trade unions call on their government to ensure the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda 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 Inter-institutional Committee on the SDGs.



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