

# JAPAN

## A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2018



### ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The government of Japan has committed to implementing all 17 SDGs. In December 2016, it established the SDGs Promotion Headquarters and published Guiding Principles for SDG Implementation. The SDGs Promotion Headquarters is coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but all ministries are involved in its implementation.

In December 2017, the government published its 2018 SDG Action Plan, which streamlines the 17 SDGs into eight thematic lines within the Guiding Principles. The Trade Union Priority SDGs (SDG 1, 5, 8, 10, 13, 16) are grouped according to the following thematic lines: 1) Empowerment of All People (SDGs 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, and 12): work related reforms, gender equality and women's empowerment, promotion of a barrier-free society and international cooperation for youth and

women; 3) Creating Market Growth, Revitalisation of Rural Areas, and Promoting Technical Innovation (SDGs 2, 8, 9, and 11): SDG model project for municipalities; 5) Energy Conservation, Renewable Energy, Climate Change Countermeasures, and Round Material-Cycle Society (SDGs 7, 12, and 13): renewable energy and energy saving; 7) Achieving Peaceful, Safe and Secure Societies (Goal 16): preventing the sexual exploitation of children, elimination of violence against women, international cooperation for the promotion of the rule of law, and capacity building for peace.

It is not clear what resources have been allocated to the implementation of the 2018 SDG Action Plan.

#### 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



As part of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters, the Japanese government has established a Round Table Meeting, where a wide variety of stakeholders, such as NGOs, non-profits, experts, private sector representatives and international organisations can gather to access information, discuss concerns and provide

input to the government. JTUC-RENGO represents workers' interests in this forum. There is no specific dialogue between the government and social partners on policy reforms linked to the implementation of the SDGs.

## IS THE (DECENT) WORK BEING DONE?

JTUC-RENGO highlights shortcomings in meeting **target 1.3 (implement appropriate social protection systems)** due to low levels of public social expenditure as a percentage of GDP, which in 2013 stood at 25.4%.

Progress on **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies)**, is impeded by the fact that unpaid household and child-care work is predominantly seen as the responsibility of women. This is reflected in statistics demonstrating that, while women in Japan spend only 5.5 hours per day on paid work, they perform over three hours of supplementary, unpaid work in the same period. **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)** is far from being met, with the female share of employment in managerial positions remaining low, at 13% in 2016.

The wage gap between full time regular workers and non-regular workers or part-time workers stood at 13.5% in 2015, posing a challenge in reaching **target 8.3 (promote policies that support productive activities, decent job creation)**. Japan remains in violation of eight ILO Conventions - primarily related to the right to strike, to collective bargaining and to establish and join trade

union organisations - despite trade union calls to address these issues, impeding fulfilment of **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**. Meanwhile, trade union density remains relatively low, at 17.8% by 2013 estimates, and has been declining, which can at least in part be attributed to the increasing numbers of non-regular workers who, unlike regular workers, do not automatically become unionised when hired.

There is a lack of progress towards achieving **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)** as the labour share of the GDP stood at 53.6% in 2017 and has been in decline over the years, due in part to the lack of improvement of non-regular workers' working conditions and wages. In addition, in 2008 the bottom 20% of income earners accounted for only 7.4% of GDP, while the share of the top 10% income earners stood at 24.8%.

JTUC-RENGO has been strongly promoting policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and balance environmental protection with economic growth (**target 13.2 integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning**).

## WHERE TO NEXT?

### TRADE UNION RECIPE TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The JTUC-RENGO priority recommendation for the Japanese government is to promote a social dialogue based on a firm commitment to workers' rights such as freedom of association and collective bargaining.

To ensure this, trade unions call for:

- The implementation of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda through job creation, ensuring the respect of workers' rights, social protection and social dialogue, and the promotion of gender equality;
- The promotion of strict adherence to international rules for all business activities;
- The implementation of the 2018 SDG Action Plan in consultation with a diversity of stakeholders, including trade unions and economic organisations.



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