



MEXICO

A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2021

COVID-19: WORKERS NEED SDG-DRIVEN RESPONSES TO THE CRISIS

Trade unions report that the Mexican government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been inadequate. The only social protection measure implemented was advancing the payment of programmes for the elderly and people with disabilities in March and June 2020 and the provision of financial support for the funeral expenses of people who died from COVID-19. There has been nearly no financial support provided for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and none for larger companies. Support for family microenterprises and freelance workers has come in the shape of a programme facilitating the provision of loans; however, access to this programme is overly bureaucratic. The government has also introduced a 'Solidarity Market', a virtual platform for MSMEs, artisans and providers of non-essential services to find potential consumers for their products and services.

Trade unions call on the Mexican government to respond to the crisis caused by the pandemic by ensuring wage protection, universal social protection and implementing moratoriums on the payment of mortgages, rents and loans.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

Mexico's National Development Plan 2019-2024 links federal policies to the SDGs and budgetary programmes. The progress of SDG implementation can thus be evaluated through performance evaluation indicators within the national planning system. To facilitate access to the indicators set and the progress achieved under them, the government created a website with open access data. However, trade unions report that there is currently no access to up-to-date official information reflecting the situation under the pandemic.

The implementation of the SDGs is overseen by a technical committee within the Office of the Presidency of the Republic, which coordinates efforts of all 29 units of the federal government. In addition, a National Council for Agenda 2030 was created, and a working group for the legislative follow-up on the SDGs formed in the Senate; over the last two years, SDG monitoring and implementation bodies have been created at state and municipal level.

The Mexican government works on all 17 SDGs, integrating them through the work of four multisectoral committees: healthy, safe and free people; prepared, productive and innovative people; people committed to cities, nature and the environment; and united people working to leave no one behind.

While a consultation and monitoring mechanism exists, there is no effective participation of different actors, including trade unions. Trade unions report that there is also no genuine and structured social dialogue and that they have few opportunities to interact with government representatives outside of ad hoc presentations from the state on planned labour law reforms. Despite this, trade unions have made contributions on key SDGs and topics: gender equality, regulation of remote work, elimination of outsourcing and fair profit sharing.

Trade unions report that the budgetary allocation towards the implementation of the SDGs in Mexico is not sufficient.

TRANSPARENCY



Irregular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



Informal or ad hoc consultation

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners contribute individually to the government's SDG national plan



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

In 2018, 41.9 per cent of the Mexican population lived under the national poverty line, a reduction of only 2.5 per cent compared to 2008, which suggests that **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)** is far from being reached. While indicators on extreme poverty have been dropping, the number of people living in poverty has increased, due to overall population growth. This is in stark contrast to the fact that Mexico is classified as a country with a high level of human development (HDI of 0.779 in 2019). The indicators on **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures)** are also far from satisfactory: in 2019, only 54.7 per cent of the population was covered by at least one social protection benefit.

Further efforts are needed to reach **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels)** as between 2010–2018, 54.8 per cent of women and girls in Mexico had achieved at least a secondary level of education, compared to 61.1 per cent for men and boys. Women were hit particularly hard by the pandemic, and their presence in the labour market dropped from 45 per cent to 39 per cent in that period, primarily due to their overrepresentation in the 'non-essential' sectors of the service industry.

Target 8.3 (promote policies that support productive activities, decent job creation) in Mexico remains far off being met, as the proportion of informal employment stood at 56.8 per cent in 2018. In 2019, the share of low paid work stood at 17.1 per cent, with women more likely to be in low paid work (22 per cent) than men (14.6 per cent). In 2018, 26.9 per cent of work was classified as precarious. As for **target 8.5 (achieve full and productive employment and decent work)**, the total unemployment rate stood at 3.5 per cent in 2019 but was significantly higher for the 15–24 age group: 7.2 per cent; in 2020, underemployment stood at 11.6 per cent. The number of NEETs mentioned in **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** stood at 18.3 per cent in 2019, with a substantial disparity between the sexes: 27.7 per cent of young women compared to 8.9 per cent of young men were NEET in Mexico. **Target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)** requires additional

efforts to be met, as both the collective bargaining coverage (9.9 per cent) and trade union density (12 per cent) are low and there are constant attacks on collective bargaining agreements and labour rights. Mexico has made efforts to meet **target 8.b (develop and operationalise a global strategy for youth employment)** by implementing a programme which allows people between 18–29 who are NEET to gain technical skills and experience working for companies for up to a year, supported by the government through a monthly stipend and health and labour insurance. However, trade unions report that this programme faces challenges in implementation.

Mexico is one of the world's largest economies based on its GDP. However, this wealth is not evenly distributed, as the country has one of the highest inequality rates in the world. Indicators on **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies and progressively achieve greater equality)** show that in 2018 the top 10 per cent of income earners had a 36.4 per cent share of GDP, with the bottom 20 per cent of income earners holding a 5.4 per cent share in 2018.

To reach the objectives of **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning)**, the government adopted five priority objectives to combat climate change through awareness raising, improving the implementation of existing policies, increasing capacity, facilitating access to information and strengthening the national compliance to international commitments. Consultations with civil society and relevant sectors on these topics had been held before 2020.

Mexico is implementing labour law reforms which are directly relevant to **target 16.10 (protect fundamental freedoms)** as they secure the right to exercise the freedom of association and unionisation and set up labour dispute courts. Trade unions however signal that the process of adoption of this reform has been slow and that the timeline for the creation of the courts risks delaying the process even further.

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

To ensure an SDG-led recovery and resilience from the crisis, trade unions urge the government to:

- Strengthen social protection systems and health care services.
- Provide financial support to MSMEs at risk.
- Invest in jobs and sustainable economic growth and ensure adequate budgetary provision for the implementation of the SDGs.
- Strengthen and promote a genuine tripartite social dialogue mechanism, meeting on a regular basis and discussing all relevant policy topics.
- Establish a genuine consultation on the implementation of the SDGs, with the participation of social partners.
- Strengthen the Working Committees of the National Council for the 2030 Agenda 2030, the State Councils on the 2030 Agenda, and the Specialised Technical Committee on the SDGs.
- Support legislatures in creating sustainable laws and ensure that sectoral programmes integrate the vision of the 2030 Agenda.
- Maintain a territorial approach and ensure SDG implementation at municipality level.
- Implement institutional and communication programmes to promote the 2030 Agenda.



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