



ARGENTINA

A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGS

#HLPF2022

WORKERS DEMAND A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

COVID-19: WORKERS NEED DURABLE RESPONSES TO THE CRISIS

The government of Argentina adopted a range of measures to address the Covid-19 pandemic and alleviate its social and economic consequences. It extended support through existing universal social protection schemes, with targeted support for the most vulnerable and workers in sectors most impacted by the pandemic (including healthcare, tourism, and culture). Informal workers received a one-off payment through the Emergency Family Income (IFE) and formal workers through Assistance to Work and Production (ATP). Extra payments were made to recipients of child grants, maternity allowances and food aid. Tax relief measures and a short-term moratorium on dismissals and suspensions were implemented. The government also provided financial assistance to SMEs and larger companies.

The government revised its SDG monitoring matrix, targets and indicators to take into account the new context of vulnerabilities and policy priorities in the 2020-21 period. New SDG targets and indicators were incorporated, in line with the indivisible and cross-cutting nature of the goals and their relations with the principles of universality, inclusion, equity and human rights.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The UN Strategic Development Cooperation Framework with Argentina for 2021-2025 (MECNUD) recognises the importance of the SDGs in public policies. The National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies (CNCPS) coordinates and monitors SDG implementation. The CNCPS works closely with national, provincial and municipal governments and agencies to develop SDG plans. It coordinates a National Inter-institutional Commission to build consensus and provide input. The CNCPS develops actions with the private, academic and civil society sectors through platforms including PAMPA 2030. At the end of 2021, it launched the Social Participation Forum for the Implementation and Monitoring of the 2030 Agenda (FPSISA), which brings together civil society organisations.

In 2021 the government set up the Economic and Social Council (CES), which brings together worker, employer, academic research and civil society

representatives to debate and build consensus on strategic policy priorities for Argentina. Tripartite social dialogue also takes place through the ILO Decent Work Country Programme; Argentina became the first country to sign up to its fourth programme in May 2022.

Despite all this, the government did not include indicator 17.17 (effective partnerships) in its revised SDG priorities presented in December 2021, possibly due to a lack of communication between the CNCPS and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Trade unions are also concerned that recent agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the restructuring of debt repayments, now approved by the National Congress, will have negative repercussions in terms of loss of national autonomy and capacity for achieving the SDGs, as will opposition parties blocking the adoption of the annual budget 2021-22.

TRANSPARENCY



Regular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



Structured consultation via multistakeholder platform

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Tripartite bodies exist to implement and monitor SDGs



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

While Argentina has met **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)** in terms of those earning less than US\$1.90 per day, challenges remain: 42 per cent of the population were living under the national poverty line in 2020. GDP increased in 2021 as the economy started to recover from the pandemic. Argentina has a “very high” level of human development (UN HDI of 0.845 in 2019). 49.8 per cent of its budget went to social security in 2020, with a relatively comprehensive system under **target 1.3 (appropriate social protection systems and measures)** and targeted programmes to reach the most vulnerable. While 94.6 per cent of children and 91.8 per cent of the elderly are covered, the minimum retirement benefit corresponds to only half of the income needed to avoid poverty.

The creation of the Ministry for Women, Gender and Diversity has strengthened gender rights, and part of the 2021 national budget is earmarked for several plans and programmes, including to tackle gender-based violence, which remains a problem, with 288 femicides reported in 2021. Women are still overrepresented in unpaid care and informal work under **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)**. On **target 5.5 (ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels)**, a 2017 law on gender parity is starting to take effect: 45 per cent of seats in the national parliament are currently held by women. However, women occupy only 33 per cent of middle and senior management roles.

Major challenges remain under SDG 8. Under **target 8.3 (formalization)**, 33 per cent of the Argentine population are in informal employment and 23 per cent of employment was classed as vulnerable in 2019. Regarding **target 8.5 (achieve full and productive employment and decent work)**, unemployment is now falling and stood at 8.2 per cent in Q3 2021. There are programmes to train people for the knowledge economy, and there also programmes for unemployed people with disabilities. The **proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (target 8.6)** climbed to 22.3 per cent in 2020. The government has put in place youth employment,

training, scholarship and social inclusion programmes to meet **target 8.b (strategy for youth employment)**. Progress is required on human trafficking and forced labour under **target 8.7 (end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour)**, although the prevalence of modern slavery in Argentina is low. A small pilot programme to strengthen the labour rights and skills of female trafficking victims is now underway, as is a multi-stakeholder programme to develop and strengthen child labour interventions. Under **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**, 47.4 per cent of workers were covered by collective bargaining agreements in 2019, and trade union density stood at 27.7 per cent in 2021. An occupational health observatory and national prevention programmes exist. ILO Convention 190 on harassment and violence at work recently came into force; adequate policies for its implementation in all areas still need to be developed. Twenty-seven labour rights violations were recorded in 2017.

Argentina faces major challenges to meeting **target 10.4 (achieve greater equality)**, as the share of wage earners in national income declined sharply to 40 per cent in Q3 2021. The minimum wage was 65 per cent of the average wage in Q3 2021, with workers face rising living costs. With regard to **target 10.7 (orderly and safe migration)**, a recent survey showed that 37 per cent of migrants are in unstable employment or unemployed.

Climate change measures have been integrated into national plans under **target 13.2**, overseen by the National Climate Change Cabinet (GNCC). However, more action is needed at the level of the provinces.

Rights are protected by law, and legal aid and labour tribunals exist in line with **target 16.3 (promote the rule of law and equal access to justice)**. Trade unions report violations under **target 16.10 (access to information, protect fundamental freedoms)**.

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

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

- Federalise the 2030 Agenda in the 24 provinces.
- Increase coordination between government agencies and social partners on the 2030 Agenda. Continue to ensure systematic trade union participation in agenda setting, effective dialogue, joint implementation and effective monitoring. Adopt target 17.17 on Inclusive Partnerships as a priority.
- Develop a comprehensive care system with tripartite participation and a specific target for older people.
- Implement cross-cutting, intersectional policies to eradicate structural violence and discrimination. Reduce gender gaps in the world of work and in leadership and political positions.
- Strengthen state strategies and plans, from the local to the national level, for the protection and preservation of ecosystems. Start work early on just transition mechanisms, with the involvement of social partners.

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