



# SENEGAL

## A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGS

#HLPF2022

**WORKERS DEMAND A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT FOR RECOVERY AND RÉSILIENCE**

### COVID-19: WORKERS NEED DURABLE RESPONSES TO THE CRISIS

The government of Senegal adopted an Economic and Social Resilience Programme (ESRP) to mitigate the effects of the pandemic, including the "FORCE Covid-19" fund. Health measures included containing the spread of the virus, an information campaign, a free vaccination programme and improving care. Support to businesses included debt, financial and tax relief to local companies, and there was also direct support to hardest-hit sectors of the economy. The labour market response included a moratorium on redundancies (now lifted); compensation for salary deductions or reduced hours; encouraging telework; an emergency programme for youth employment; and support to farmers. Social protection took the form of food aid and help with utility bills.

Trade unions were involved in implementing and monitoring FORCE Covid-19 and engaged in social dialogue to incorporate support for informal workers into the national recovery plan. Trade unions call for continued support to individuals and businesses, including the informal sector. To ensure a sustainable recovery, social protection coverage should be extended to all, including the most vulnerable and migrants, with sick pay from day one. The government should also guarantee free access to healthcare for all.

### ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The government of Senegal has integrated the SDGs into its Emerging Senegal Plan (PSE), a national policy strategy implemented through five-year priority action plans integrated into individual ministries' sectoral development planning. The Ministry of Economy, Planning and Cooperation oversees SDG implementation through its planning directorate and a harmonised framework for follow-up and evaluation.

National programmes and availability of resources to implement the SDGs have unfortunately been set back by the pandemic. Despite fiscal expansion and consolidation measures taken by the government, Senegal's economy went into recession in 2020. Development programmes, including for rural and agricultural development, are in

place, and resources allocated to services such as health and education in the state budget have increased in recent years. However, more efforts are needed to reduce poverty, create jobs and improve living conditions, especially in rural areas. Access to basic services, including water, sanitation and education, remain major challenges.

Trade unions call for more involvement in national plans and programmes to implement the SDGs. They receive limited information from the government and have only this year been included in governmental reporting processes. There have been no consultations for over two years. Social dialogue is taking place for specific sectors only, and through the High Council for Social Dialogue (HCDS).

#### TRANSPARENCY



Regular access to limited information

#### CONSULTATION



No consultation

#### SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners make individual contributions to national SDG plan



# IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

While poverty and food insecurity in Senegal have come down over the past decade, they increased following the pandemic, and major challenges still remain to meet **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)**. In 2021, 28.9 per cent of the population were living in extreme poverty and 30.1 per cent under the national poverty line. Senegal's HDI value is "low" at 0.512. Currently only 20 per cent of the population benefit from social protection (**target 1.3: appropriate social protection systems and measures**), although programmes to expand access to social protection and healthcare for informal and low-paid workers are now in place.

Gender equality in Senegal is enshrined in law and there have been moderate improvements, although many efforts are still required. Official data under **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)** is lacking, but unions report that women do most unpaid domestic work. 34.3 per cent of women are employed, mostly in informal, low-paid jobs. Under **target 5.5 (full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership)**, 43 per cent of parliamentary seats are now held by women. The number of women in managerial positions, however, is low, since while the lower secondary completion rate has increased to 41 per cent of females, it is only 10.3 per cent in the overall population. Gender budgeting is not yet a reality.

The Senegalese economy is largely informal (88 per cent) and precarious (64.6 per cent), particularly for women and disabled people, so **target 8.3 (formalisation)** is still far from being met. Overall unemployment rose to 20 per cent in 2021, setting back progress under **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work)**. **Target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** is also far off: the proportion was 32.7 per cent in 2019, with more women (44.2 per cent) affected than men (21.6 per cent). A national youth employment scheme is in place, but its impact has not yet been evaluated. Senegal still needs to tackle forced child begging at Koranic schools, domestic servitude, unpaid apprenticeships and mining work in order to attain **target 8.7 (eradicate forced labour, end child labour in**

**all its forms)**. While Senegal has ratified ILO conventions under target 8.8 (labour rights and safe and secure working environments for all), the challenge is to ensure their effective implementation. Workers are often unaware of their rights, unions lack capacity and the legal system is slow. Collective bargaining is not always viewed as a priority and agreements are not always respected, leading to social tensions and frequent strikes. Trade union density was 22.6 per cent in 2015, mainly concentrated in the public sector.

Progress remains for Senegal to reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)**, as in 2018, the share of the top 10 per cent of income earners accounted for 30.5 per cent of overall GDP while the bottom 20 per cent of income earners accounted for 7.1 per cent of GDP, although the large informal sector is not properly captured in estimates. The minimum wage was raised in 2018 but remains insufficient in the face of rising living costs. Freedom of association for migrant workers is protected, but unions call for greater involvement in migration policy under **target 10.7 (migration)**.

Senegal is on track for **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning)** and is implementing programmes under its national adaptation and climate plans, with union involvement.

Regarding **target 16.3 (promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all)**: every region of Senegal has labour courts; however, access remains difficult and costly, procedures are slow and decisions are not systematically executed. The budget for legal aid is insufficient, and many Senegalese are unaware of its existence. Unions report labour rights violations under **target 16.10 (access to information and 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 Senegal to:

- Revise the Emerging Senegal and other plans to make SDGs a priority and ensure their implementation by allocating sufficient resources.
- Adapt the SDGs to national realities and the population's needs.
- Really communicate on SDG programmes, which remain unknown to most Senegalese. Involve more non-state actors, locally elected officials, rural actors and community relays to ensure programmes are adopted by the population and become embedded.
- Emphasise social programmes for a real reduction in poverty and raise the minimum wage. Work towards economic recovery after the pandemic through specific and effective policies for green and decent jobs and social protection for all.
- Pursue a just transition towards environmentally friendly and climate-neutral growth, in close involvement with social partners.



This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of TUDCN/ITUC and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.