



BURKINA FASO

A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGS

#HLPF2023

WORKERS DEMAND A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

WORKERS NEED SUSTAINABLE RESPONSES TO MULTIPLE CRISES

Burkina Faso faces a particularly difficult internal situation, which is having a significant impact on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In 2022, the country experienced two coups d'état, one in January and one in September. In addition, continued terrorist attacks by jihadists linked to al-Qaida and Islamic State continue to destroy public and private infrastructure in the country. As a result, several public investment and development projects have been discontinued, the country has suffered from social tensions, and over 1.7 million people have been internally displaced in the Sahel and Centre-North regions.

In addition, the global context, including the impact of the Russian aggression on Ukraine and China's zero-Covid policies, has hampered the country's economic progress. Burkina Faso's GDP growth amounted to 2.7% in 2022, a significant drop from 2021, when it stood at 6.9%. Year-on-year inflation came in at 13.5% in October 2022, compared to 3.3% in October 2021. The cost of food products has been particularly impacted, with inflation at 22.8% for this category. To combat the cost-of-living crisis, the government intends to strengthen the national food security stock and control food prices.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The government of Burkina Faso integrated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its National Programme for Economic and Social Development II (PNDES II) for 2021-2025, which entered into force in July 2021. PNDES II builds on the previous development plan by focusing on four main areas: consolidating resilience, security, social cohesion and peace; deepening institutional reforms and modernising public administration; consolidating the development of human capital and national solidarity; and investing in growth-oriented industries to boost the economy and job creation. The implementation of the SDGs is overseen by the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Development.

However, the SDG implementation process has been interrupted by a succession of coups d'état, the first of which took place in January 2022, overthrowing the democratically-elected president. The new military

regime adopted a Transition Action Plan, which retained the axes of PNDES II. However, a second coup d'état in September 2022 interrupted the implementation of this plan. The authorities currently in power have adopted their own Transition Action Plan.

Trade unions report that the budgetary resources at the government's disposal are not sufficient to implement PNDES II or its successors, as 28% of the costs are not budgeted for through own or external resources.

Trade unions are being consulted by the government on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in sectoral dialogues and annual reviews. They have also been consulted on the development of PNDES II, alongside other social partners. While the SDGs are not discussed within the framework of social dialogue as such, input from trade unions is accepted on an informal basis. Discussions within this framework focus on the implementation of SDG 8.

TRANSPARENCY



Regular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



Informal or ad hoc consultation

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners jointly agree and submit contributions to the national government



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Burkina Faso's progress on reaching the SDGs has stalled and requires urgent improvements.

With regards to **SDG 1**, indicators for **target 1.1 (eradicating extreme poverty)** show that in 2018, 30.5% of the Burkinabe population lived below the international poverty line. 36% of workers were under the poverty line, with rural areas being more affected – 43.7% in rural versus 11.7% in urban areas. With a human development index of 0.449, Burkina Faso was one of the least developed countries (184 out of 191) in the world in 2021, having registered a decline from its 2019 development indicators. With regards to **target 1.3 (nationally appropriate social protection systems)**, in 2020, only 9.9% of the population benefitted from any type of social security benefit. While social security has been opened to informal workers on a voluntary basis, coverage remains marginal. Since 2018, the country has been putting a universal healthcare insurance scheme into operation.

On **SDG 5**, further efforts are required to reach the objective set by **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)**, as 51.8% of women who were inactive on the labour market reported this as due to domestic obligations. However, with regards to **target 5.5 (women's full and effective participation)**, in 2015, women were the majority of those active on the labour market (52.6%), although men still represent the majority (two thirds) of civil servants. Working-age women in Burkina Faso are especially disadvantaged in terms of access to education: 76.8% of women aged 16 to 64 do not have primary education, compared to 53% for men; around 20% of working-age men have at least secondary education, compared to 13.8% of women. While the proportion of seats held by women in parliament increased from 8.1% in 2000 to 13.4% in 2020, it remains low.

Significant improvements remain to be made on **SDG 8**. Progress on **target 8.3 (support decent job creation)** is urgently needed, as 94.3% of workers were in informal employment in 2018; additionally, the rate of vulnerable employment stood at 89.7% – 93.8% among women, 84.9% among men and 89.2% for young people. On **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for**

all), the unemployment rate grew from 2.8% in 2003 to 4.7% in 2018. In addition, underemployment stood at 5.5% in 2019. NEET indicators for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** stood at 41% in 2018 – 49% for women and 30.4% for men. Indicators for **target 8.7 (eradicate forced labour and the worst forms of child labour)** are highly concerning, showing that 40.6% of children engaged in child labour in 2014. With regards to **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**, 1,659 workplace accidents were reported in 2021, a number which trade unions say underestimates the true scale due to failures to register workers and declare such accidents by employers. In 2020, the level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) stood at 0.7, a decline from 0.9 in 2018.

Progress is still needed on **SDG 10**. On **target 10.4 (progressively achieve greater equality)**, in 2018, 10% of the highest income earners controlled 37.5% of GDP, while the lowest 20% controlled 5.5% of GDP. The labour share of GDP stood at 46.4% in 2019, a decline from 51% in 2004.

On **SDG 13** and **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning)**, dialogue with trade unions on achieving a just transition is lacking.

There are grave concerns in relation to **SDG 16**. Reaching **target 16.10 (protect fundamental freedoms)** is far off, as killings, kidnappings, enforced disappearances and the arbitrary detention of ordinary citizens by terrorists and vigilante groups continue. Journalists are often threatened. In April 2021, two Spanish reporters were shot dead by suspected jihadists. This context undermines the freedom of expression and that of the press.

TRADE UNIONS ASK THAT NO-ONE IS LEFT BEHIND

Trade unions call on the authorities of Burkina Faso to:

- Engage trade unions in consultations on the development of the successor plan to PNDES II.
- Boost decent job creation:
 - Combat tax and customs fraud.
 - Prohibit the import of certain products to protect local production and jobs.
 - Ratify ILO Conventions No. 94 on public procurement, No. 189 on domestic labour, and No. 181 on subcontracting.
 - Link the granting of public contracts to the creation of decent jobs.
 - Raise the minimum wage.
- Improve social protection:
 - Ratify ILO Convention No. 102 on social security.
 - Extend social coverage to all segments of the population, including informal and self-employed workers.
 - Extend the range of pension benefits.
 - Put in place universal health coverage.
- Improve labour rights:
 - Consult social partners on a more comprehensive and protective labour code.
 - Harmonise the salaries of public officials.
- Improve social dialogue:
 - Strengthen the High Council for Social Dialogue, and instruct it to produce an annual socio-economic barometric study as a basis for discussion.
 - Ratify ILO Convention No. 151 on the employment relationship in the public service and Convention No. 154 on collective bargaining.



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