




NIGERIA

A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2024

WORKERS DEMAND A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT

WORKERS NEED DURABLE RESPONSES TO MULTIPLE CRISES

The Nigerian government is responding to the multiple crises of food and energy prices, climate change and the impact of Covid-19, through its macroeconomic policies in the Economic Sustainability Plan (ESP) and National Development Plan 2021-25 (NDP). Nigeria's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) outlines how the country plans to achieve its climate commitments under the Paris Agreement.

Prices for food and fuel remain high. To mitigate the rising cost of living, and in response to trade union demands, the government has been providing wage awards to public sector workers. Tripartite national minimum wage negotiations had not yet reached agreement in June 2024, however. Trade unions report that social dialogue on policies and their implementation is not working effectively. The National Labour Advisory Council (the statutory framework for discussing labour matters) does not meet regularly, and failure to respect agreements reached with workers on several labour matters often leads to strikes.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The Office of the Senior Special Advisor to the President on SDGs (OSSAP-SDGs) is responsible for coordinating, with line ministries, the integration of the SDGs into national priorities. Trade unions report that SDGs are integrated into the NDP to a certain extent.

Progress on implementation and allocation of resources are significantly hindered by corruption and lack of political will. The Nigerian government has established the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation. However, in April 2024 the Minister in charge was under investigation for the diversion of public funds to private bank accounts.

Transparency is aided by the Freedom of Information Act. The need for better infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, makes reporting on SDG implementation and communicating to the public more difficult.

While there is a multi-stakeholder platform on the SDGs, trade unions are not involved. Dialogue with them is being facilitated by the ILO through the office of the UN Resident Coordinator, however. Unions regularly provide input to the government on SDG targets, but this is only partially taken on board due to bureaucratic bottlenecks and a negative perception of unions due to their criticism of government policies.

Social dialogue is focused primarily on SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) as a means of achieving the other SDGs. Unions work with the UN, ILO and other international partners to hold conferences and capacity-building workshops, helping to expand the ILO Decent Work Country Programme and other governance instruments.

TRANSPARENCY



Irregular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



There are information sessions but no interaction

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Tripartite instances to implement and monitor the SDGs, involving social partners and governments



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Major challenges remain to meet **target 1.1 (eradicating extreme poverty)**. Nigeria's human development index (HDI) has increased in recent years but remains low at 0.548. Latest figures are that 31 per cent of Nigeria's population are living below the international poverty threshold of USD 2.15 a day, with 63 per cent in multidimensional poverty. The proportion of the population covered by **social protection systems (target 1.3)** has increased but remains low at 17 per cent in 2018, with only 1.8 per cent of the vulnerable population receiving cash benefits in 2019 / 10.1 per cent of vulnerable persons covered by social assistance in 2022. Government spending on **essential services (target 1.a.2)** is very low compared to similar countries: in 2021, less than a quarter of the national budget was allocated to education, health and social protection.

On **gender equality**, more work is to be done. For **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)**, recent data are unavailable. On **target 5.5 (women's full and effective participation)**, women made up 57 per cent of middle and senior managers in 2022, but only 3.6 per cent of parliamentarians in 2023. Nigeria is implementing gender budgeting, however a more comprehensive framework would allow greater progress to be made in achieving gender equality targets.

With regard to **target 8.3 (support decent job creation)**, 89 per cent of non-agricultural jobs were deemed informal in Q1 2023, and 84 per cent of employment deemed vulnerable in 2022. There is still some way to go to meet **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)**. The average hourly wage is NGN 1950 (USD 4.47), but this varies widely according to sector and job status. There is a substantial gender pay gap, and women are more likely to be unemployed than men. Underemployment is a significant and more widespread issue than unemployment in Nigeria. On **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)**, the NEET rate for 15- to 24-year-olds was 13.4 per cent in 2022. Nigeria faces serious issues under **target 8.7 (eradicate forced labour and the worst forms of child labour)**: recent estimates vary from a third to a half of Nigerian children being involved in child labour, with a third of children out of school. Also of concern is **target 8.8 (protect**

labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers). Trade unions report that occupational safety regulation and data are poor, and there is a shortage of labour inspectors. Labour rights are systematically violated, with a score of 6.84 (10 being the worst) in 2020. Nigeria has ratified ILO conventions 87 on freedom of association and 98 on collective bargaining.

Much progress is still to be made to achieve **target 10.4 (progressively achieve greater equality)**, although the labour share of GDP increased slightly to 68.2 per cent in 2020. The National Minimum Wage Act came into force in 2019, but a new minimum wage had not been agreed at the time of writing. Social partners are involved in migration policy development in Nigeria under **target 10.7 (migration and mobility)**.

With regard to SDG indicator **13.2 (integrate climate change measures into policies)**, Nigeria is part of the Climate Action for Jobs initiative supported by the ILO, which brings together representatives from government, employers' and workers' organisations, and development partners.

Trade unions report sometimes violent police and government disruption of trade union activity in 2023, indicating that Nigeria is still far from achieving **target 16.10 (protect fundamental freedoms)**.

Similarly, non implementation of agreement reached with Trade Unions across the Country is a major set back in the Nigeria Social dialogue mechanism. There is also an apparent lack of commitment to tripartite by the government is underscored by 2024 Minimum Wage Negotiations. Tripartite meeting were not regular until the Trade unions call for national industrial action, but the new minimum wage is yet to be announced by the federal government. It is not worthy that the 2018 minimum wage elapsed on April, 18, 2024.

Another major setback is the increasing shrinking of democratic space for trade unions to present demands, genuine demands by the trade unions are misconstrued as partisan politics.

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Trade unions call on the government of Nigeria to:

- Consider trade unions as major partners, harnessing their democratic membership of large numbers of workers to help deliver the Goals. This should include more capacity building workshops for trade unions, as well as trade union involvement by the Office of the Senior Special Advisor to the President on SDGs, and in the National Planning Commission.
- Support job creation and increase local production through import substitution policy as a key to sustainable economic growth.
- Create pro-poor social protection programmes that provide benefits to households through public or collective arrangements, to protect against low or declining living standards.
- Immediately canvass for a living minimum wage. The current minimum wage of NGN 30,000 is no longer sustainable in a situation of double digit inflation.
- Immediately ratify ILO gender equality Conventions 100 and 111.
- Improve labour standards and protect workers' rights.
- Promote social dialogue as key to sustainable development, helping to balance competing interests, resolve conflicts, promote tripartism, and positively impact public policy outcomes.



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