

Brussels, June 5, 2019

To the attention of:
Mr. Neven Mimica
Commissioner in charge of International cooperation and Development
European Commission

Subject: United Nations SDGs Summit Political Declaration

Dear Commissioner,

Trade Unions recognise the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an historical landmark to uphold a universal agenda based on rights and encompassing the three dimensions of sustainable development.

The Political Declaration, which will be adopted by UN Member States in September at the SDGs Summit, will be fundamental to recognise the great challenges of today and most importantly to pave the way for the delivery and implementation of sound policies that can really boost acceleration towards sustainable development.

It will be very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve the objectives of the Agenda 2030 in time. As highlighted by the ILO World Employment and Social outlook 2019, “at the current rate of improvement, SDG8 is unlikely to be achieved by 2030. There continue to be major gaps, both across and within countries”.

Therefore, we strongly call on UN Member States to endorse a meaningful Political Declaration, giving credibility to their commitments, to the overall SDGs framework, and eventually to the multilateral UN system as a whole.

In terms of commitments and call to actions (related to part III of the current Zero Draft), trade unions demand the inclusion of the following priorities as a cornerstone of the SDGs Political Declaration:

1. **Leaving no one behind:** we stress the need to commit to a Universal Labour Guarantee that provides a labour protection floor for all workers, which includes fundamental workers' rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining), an adequate living wage, limits on hours of work and ensuring safe and healthy workplaces.
2. **Mobilising adequate and well-directed financing:** we underline the need to include the reference to social protection as a primary way to fight poverty and inequality, as well as, to foster formalisation of the informal economy. Social protection systems should be extended to ensure universal coverage, in line with ILO standards (Convention 102 and Recommendation 202).

3. **Strengthening institutions for more integrated solutions:** social dialogue and tripartism between employers and workers representative organisations with governments need to be recognised as a way to put in place participatory, representative and transparent decision-making processes, and a way to grant accountability at the very heart of the SDGs progress assessment.
4. **Solving challenges through international cooperation and enhancing the global partnership:** we call for a direct reference on private sector adhering to responsible business conduct and due diligence as prescribed by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and through aligning their business models with SDGs.
5. **Harnessing science, technology and innovation with a greater focus on digital transformation for sustainable development:** in the context of climate action and technological shifts governments need to develop systems to support life-long learning, as well as, support the establishment of an international governance system and standard(s) for digital platforms business, as well as, regulations to govern data use.
6. **Strengthening the high-level political forum:** trade unions call for a concrete commitment to reform the follow-up and review mechanisms of the 2030 Agenda, putting in place a truly SDGs supervisory system (HLPF and the Regional Fora), based on meaningful, transparent and participatory dialogue with civil society.

Trade Unions support the SDGs implementation worldwide.

SDG8 highlights the ambition to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Integrating several topics such as growth, employment, and the social dimension, **SDG8 plays a pivotal role within the framework of the 2030 Agenda.**

The abovementioned recommendations at the core of SDG 8. This is why we strongly call for an active engagement in upholding our asks on the lead up to the negotiations of the Political Declaration.

Thank you in advance for your kind consideration.

Sharan Burrow
General Secretary
International Trade Union Confederation



Luca Visentini
General Secretary
European Trade Union Confederation

