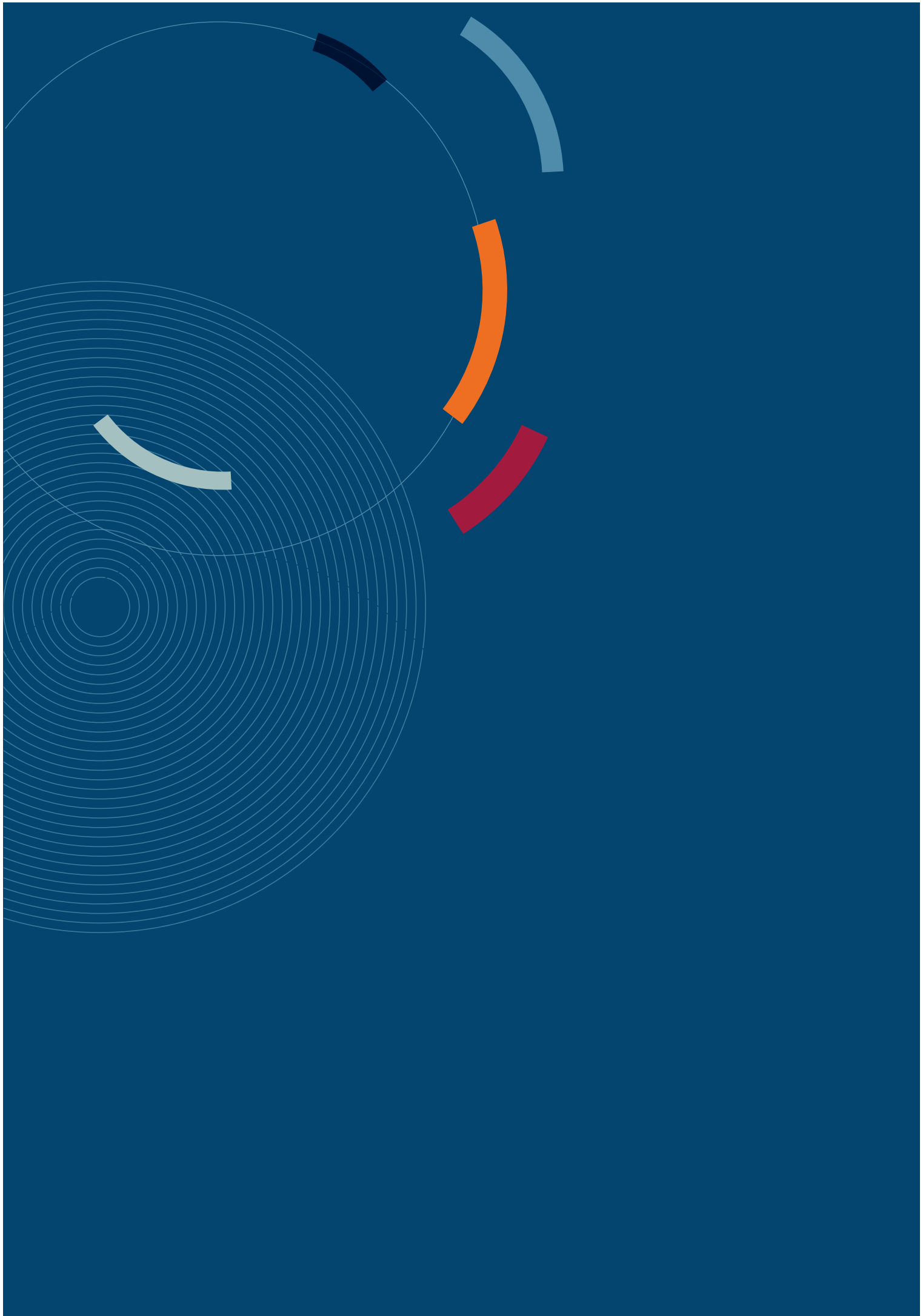




# A TRADE UNION TAKE ON THE SDGs







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# INTRODUCTION

The 2022 edition of *A Trade Union Take on the SDGs* gives an independent workers' perspective on how governments are delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Against a backdrop of existing structural, social, economic and environmental challenges, countries face an uncertain recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

In this context, trade unions call for a New Social Contract, with SDG 8 at its core, that responds to workers' demands for decent, climate-friendly jobs with just transition; rights for all workers; minimum living wages and equal pay; universal social protection for all; equality to end all discrimination; and inclusion of all countries in decision-making processes to build a rights-based development model that is aligned with the SDGs and empowers developing countries.

***Jobs, jobs and jobs! Full employment must sit at the heart of recovery and resilience. A New Social Contract with decent, climate-friendly jobs, rights, just wages, social protection and equality is central to realising Goal 8. Multilateral action with social dialogue is critical for success.***

*Sharan Burrow, secretary general of the ITUC*

*A Trade Union Take on the SDGs* compiles findings and analysis of the SDG country reports produced by trade union organisations in 13 countries in 2022. These reports focus on whether governments are transparent and make use of consultations and social dialogue to involve trade unions in the drafting and implementation of SDG national plans. They also map the efforts of countries to reach key SDG targets. This work is an essential contribution of the labour movement to the SDGs Decade of Action.

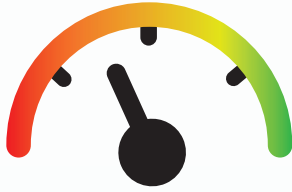
The economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has had a severe impact on jobs and income. Informal workers, women and young people were disproportionately affected. While economies began to recover in 2021, countries still face an uncertain recovery as they deal with the convergence of multiple crises, including the pandemic, increasing global inequality, increasing environmental degradation and rising number of conflicts.

Although the SDGs are increasingly integrated into national plans, resources to implement them are insufficient. The pandemic has shown the importance of guaranteeing income to cover basic needs and provide universal access to social protection and essential services, such as healthcare and education. It is imperative to focus on a human-centred recovery and resilience measures funded through debt relief, development assistance and international tax measures.

Strong social dialogue structures are necessary to ensure the full engagement of social partners in implementing the SDGs at the national level. Many trade unions report that governments are not including them in the design and implementation of development plans. The full participation of trade unions is crucial to building trust and developing equitable policies, within and between countries, to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

# ASSESSING PROGRESS

## TRANSPARENCY



## CONSULTATION



## SOCIAL DIALOGUE



### TRANSPARENCY

Trade unions assessed the transparency of the SDG implementation process within their countries based on two indicators: (1) their ability to access information on the decision-making process, including consultation meetings, policy documents, officials or institutions in charge and (2) the existence of adequate reporting mechanisms.

The input provided by trade unions exposed clear limitations regarding transparency, with trade unions in 12 out of the 13 countries reporting some degree of limited access to information in the SDG implementation process. In many cases, authorities provided little information, or they did so only when requested. In addition, reporting mechanisms were often unclear. Only in the Netherlands did unions report that they had complete access to information; by contrast, unions in Venezuela denounced a complete lack of access.

### CONSULTATION

SDG 17 recognises multistakeholder partnerships as key to achieving the SDGs and calls on countries to set up multistakeholder monitoring frameworks that support the achievement of the goals.

Indeed, multistakeholder consultations are vital to ensuring a truly participative implementation process. Trade unions and civil society organisations have a key role to play in integrating the needs and priorities of workers and society at large into the policy-making process and in ensuring that the resulting policies leave no one behind.

Trade unions assessed consultation processes available in their countries, with a special focus on the functioning of multistakeholder consultation platforms. Most of these assessments showed that unions were not included in the fora that governments had set up to monitor and implement the 2030 Agenda in their country. Full consultation processes were in place in only three of the countries surveyed (Argentina, Italy and the Netherlands). Most worryingly, three out

of the 13 countries analysed (Senegal, Uruguay and Venezuela) had either no consultation process in place at all or effectively excluded trade unions from participating in it. In other countries, institutional mechanisms were starting to improve as a result of recent legislation, which was often called for by unions. In Argentina, for example, a social participation forum including the social partners was launched at the end of 2021 following trade unions' longstanding advocacy for an institutional space for structured multistakeholder dialogue on the SDGs.

### SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Social dialogue is a fundamental means of implementing the 2030 Agenda<sup>1</sup> as it facilitates consensus building among governments, employers' and workers' organisations on policies that impact on decent work strategies. The ILO considers social dialogue and tripartism "as the most appropriate methods (...) translating economic development into social progress, and social progress into economic development"<sup>2</sup>. In the context of Covid-19, social dialogue has stood out as a key multistakeholder partnership to tackle the impact of the pandemic and to respond to the economic and social crisis.<sup>3</sup>

However, the trade union analysis reveals the insufficient integration of social dialogue into the national planning and implementation process of the SDGs. In three of the 13 countries analysed (Pakistan, Uruguay and Venezuela), social partners are not involved at all in designing and implementing their government's national SDG plan. Workers and employers are still too rarely consulted: tripartite consultation has been the case in only two of the 13 countries surveyed (Argentina and the Netherlands). In these cases, social dialogue has helped to design policies on climate and energy transition and on education and jobs for the future. It also has helped to develop a work plan to localise the SDGs.

In nearly all cases, trade unions report that the discussions tend to have a limited scope, focusing only on the implementation of SDG 8 rather than on the links between decent work and the 2030 Agenda as a whole.

<sup>1</sup> See [Social dialogue as a driver and governance instrument for sustainable development; The contribution of social dialogue to the 2030 Agenda: Formalising the informal economy; The contribution of social dialogue to the 2030 Agenda - Promoting a Just Transition towards sustainable economies and societies for all.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [ILO Social dialogue report 2022.](#)

# ASSESSING PROGRESS

## WHERE ARE WE AT WITH...

### SHARED ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

Shared economic well-being is about if and how economic progress is fairly distributed in a society. Concerningly, growing inequality in wealth distribution is a recurring problem in all the countries covered in this report.

South America is one of the most unequal regions of the world. Uruguay has a Gini coefficient of 40.2, the best of the subcontinent; in Argentina, the share of wage earners in national income has decreased sharply to 40% in 2021 despite an increase in GDP; and Venezuela still faces major challenges as the country continues to be in a state of economic, social and political collapse. Serious inequalities are also reported in Pakistan, the Philippines and the four sub-Saharan African countries of the report (Botswana, Mali, Senegal and Somalia), though poverty rates have fallen significantly in most of these countries in the past decade.

The trend towards growing inequality also appears in the three high-income EU countries included in the report. Despite their high level of human development, the trade union analysis reveals that a significant part of their population has an income below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold: 13.4% in the Netherlands, 20% in Italy, and 21.6% in Latvia in 2020.

### QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT

Tackling unemployment and working poverty while promoting productive employment and labour income share are important aspects of employment quality. In many of the countries surveyed in this report, employment rates are starting to recover. However, unemployment remains a significant challenge in countries as diverse as Botswana, Italy, Senegal, Somalia and Venezuela.

Women and youth have been particularly affected by the labour market disruptions caused by the pandemic. In the 13 countries analysed, women's participation in the labour force is lower than men's. The analysis also shows that women do more unpaid care and domestic work and that they tend to be overrepresented in low-paid jobs. Worryingly, all country reports confirm the structural persistence of the gender pay gap.

In most countries, trade unions report that the minimum wage is insufficient, especially in view of the rising cost of living. Low-paid work and the number of working poor are increasing in some high-income countries such as Greece and Italy, which do not have a legal minimum wage.

### LABOUR VULNERABILITY

Labour vulnerability reflects the exposure of workers to risks and under-protection. Concerningly, informal, precarious and vulnerable work is growing or remains a significant challenge in all of the countries surveyed. This type of work characterises the vast majority of jobs in lower-income countries. Women tend to be overrepresented in the informal economy, and migrants are particularly vulnerable.

Trade unions also report high proportions of youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) in each country, with the exceptions of the Netherlands and Latvia. Moreover, young women are more likely to be NEET in Mali, Pakistan, the Philippines, Senegal, Somalia and Uruguay.

Social protection is crucial for economic recovery and resilient societies. However, even in high-income countries with near-universal social protection schemes, unions report regional differences (Italy) and underinvestment in public services (Latvia). In lower-income countries, poverty reduction programmes are in place, but social protection coverage remains partial and fragmented.

### LABOUR RIGHTS

The protection of labour rights varies considerably between countries and was negatively affected by the pandemic. Systemic violations were reported in Greece, Argentina, Venezuela, Pakistan, the Philippines and Somalia. The labour inspectorate is understaffed in most of the countries surveyed, jeopardising implementation.

Several countries still report cases of forced labour or trafficking, including Latvia, Greece, Italy, Argentina, Venezuela and Somalia. Child labour is of concern in Mali, Senegal, Somalia, Pakistan and the Philippines. Given that "92% of all the SDGs are linked to human rights and labour standards"<sup>4</sup>, the reported violations of workers' rights seriously compromise the achievement of SDG 8 and the whole of Agenda 2030.

<sup>4</sup> UN Secretary General, *Our Common Agenda* Report, September 2021, p. 32.

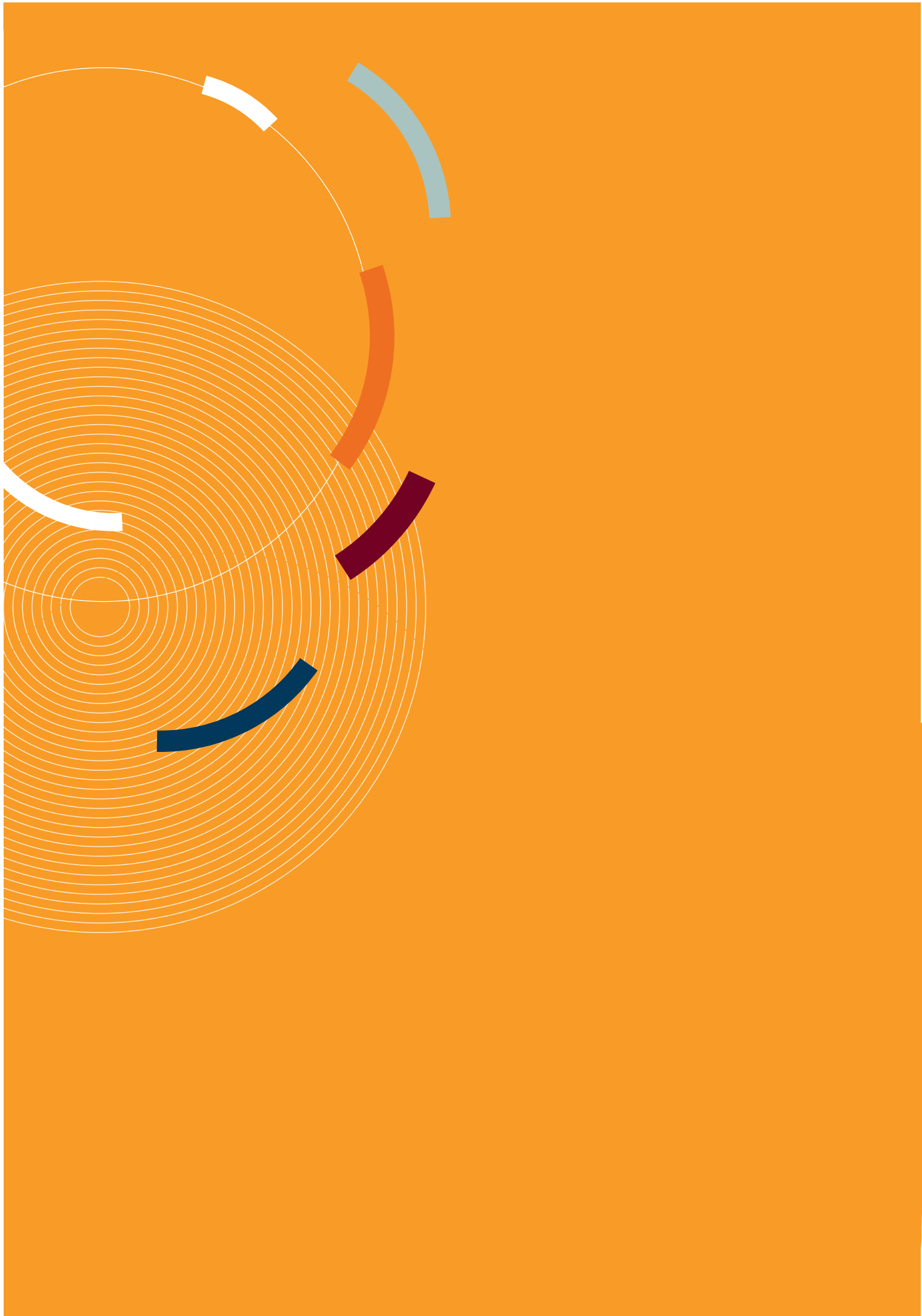
# RECOMMENDATIONS

The world faces multiple challenges as it emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic. As expressed by UN Secretary-General António Guterres,<sup>5</sup> now is the time to re-embrace global solidarity and renew the social contract in order to achieve the SDGs.

A human-centred recovery and resilience requires:

- Effective **mainstreaming of the SDGs** into national development plans and related budgets, with adequate financial resources, including progressive taxation and Official Development Assistance (ODA) to support sustainable development efforts.
- **Jobs**: investment in the creation of decent and climate-friendly jobs, accompanied by just transition plans involving the social partners, along with implementation of the UN Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions.
- **Decent working conditions**: ensuring respect for labour rights, implementing a labour protection floor for all, and establishing minimum living wages and equal pay for work of equal value.
- Universal access to **social protection**, including through the support of a Global Social Protection Fund.
- **Upholding equality and fighting vulnerability** through inclusive labour market policies and redistributive public policies to ensure a workplace free of all forms of discrimination based on gender, class, ethnicity, age, ideology, religion and sexual orientation.
- **Inclusive governance and social dialogue**: Trade unions stress the need for transparency and effective consultation on SDG-related policies, with parliamentary and civil society oversight. The role of social dialogue as a key means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda must be reinforced and included in all strategies in order to build recovery and resilience from the Covid-19 crisis and so that social partners are effectively involved in SDG implementation and monitoring of progress

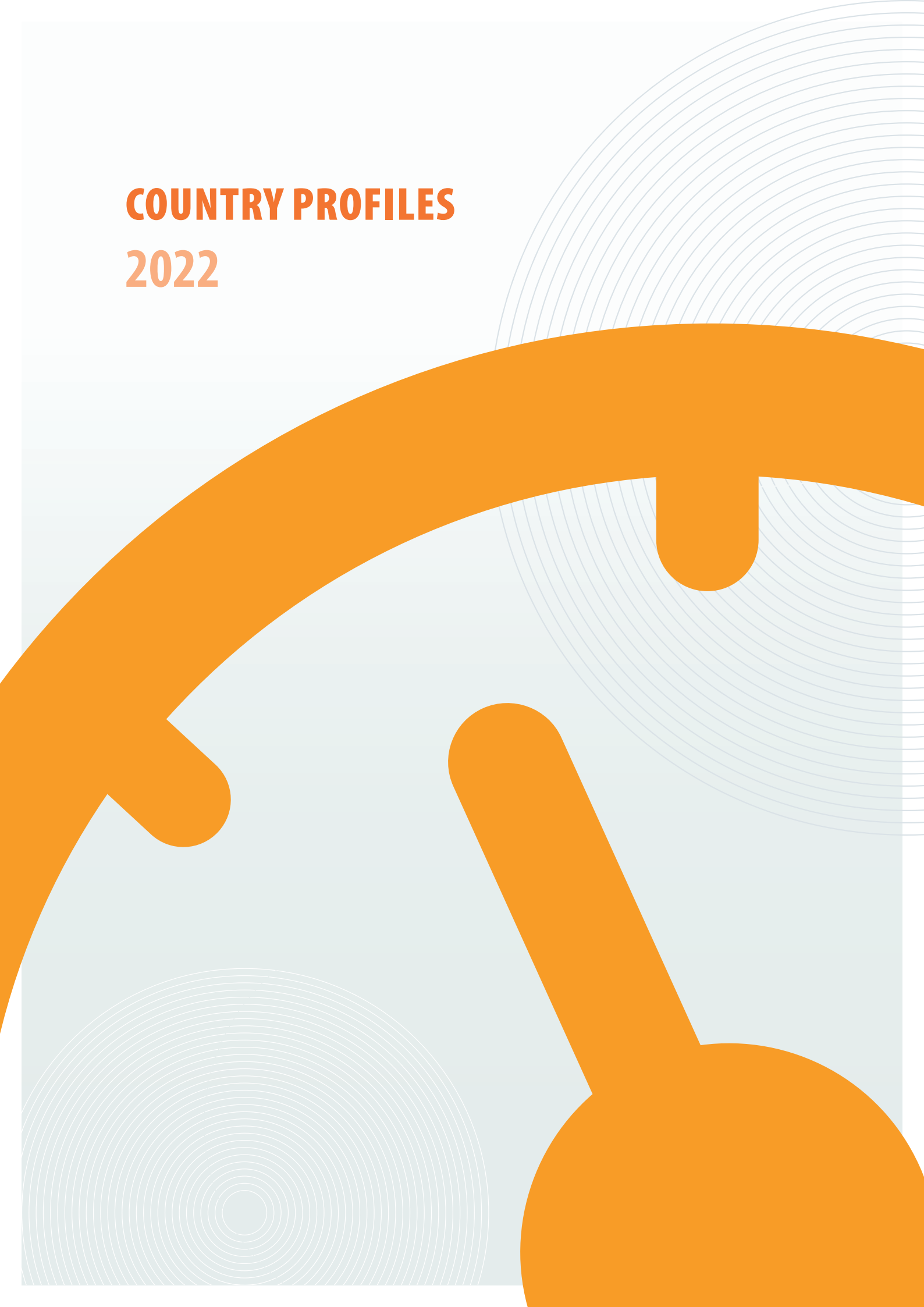
<sup>5</sup> United Nations, *Our Common Agenda*, 2021.





# COUNTRY PROFILES

## 2022





# 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.

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



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# BOTSWANA

## 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 Botswana's initial response to the crisis included a short-term economic and humanitarian relief package in the months of April to May in 2020. State of emergency regulations barred industrial action for 18 months and placed a moratorium on retrenchments; employment adjustments and cuts still occurred during this period. In October 2020, Botswana's Economic Recovery and Transformation Plan (ERTP) was approved by Parliament. It encompasses a range of measures for a more sustainable and diverse economy following the Covid-19 pandemic. The ERTP extends wage protection in sectors particularly affected by the crisis, as well as support to enterprises and employers, including tax breaks and guaranteed loans.

Trade unions call on the government of Botswana to further protect jobs and income through the implementation of an employment insurance fund as part of national employment policies. National health insurance should be established to increase medical aid coverage, in dialogue with social partners. Trade unions ask for a human-centred approach to be prioritised in line with the ILO Centenary Declaration. The crisis has also underscored the need for statutory entitlements during termination, which should be treated differently from conflictual disputes in the courts.

### ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

Botswana's National Development Plan (NDP 11), and Vision 2036 for sustainable economic development are aligned to the SDGs. All 17 SDGs have been adopted, and targets are being monitored through domestic indicator frameworks. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MFED) is responsible for SDG implementation.

Overall, more resources are required for SDG implementation, including to meet the data requirements. Trade unions would welcome a more structured approach to consultation across all ministries responsible

for policies and programmes linked to SDG implementation. The MFED holds information sessions but does not involve trade unions as social partners. Dialogue with social partners is restricted to the Decent Work Country Programme, led by the Ministry of Employment, Labour Productivity and Skills Development. The recovery plan (ERTP) and National Employment Policy, recently adopted by Parliament, are two recent examples where trade unions submitted workers' input and suggestions but were not fully consulted during policy development.

#### TRANSPARENCY



Regular access to limited information

#### CONSULTATION



Information sessions but no interaction

#### SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners contribute individually to government's SDG national plan





# IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

With regard to **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty)**, the proportion of the population of Botswana living below the international poverty line has been halved since the 1990s, standing at 16 per cent in 2015, but this calculation includes in-kind wages, gifts, school meals and other forms of government aid. Without government aid, the incidence of poverty would stand close to 24 per cent. Unemployment, increasing income inequality, and the rates of working poor remain serious problems. Botswana ranks 100th in the UN HD Index, showing room for improvement. Although all Botswanans are entitled to a pension, the current social security system is fragmented and the percentage of the population covered by at least one social protection instrument stands at 14.7 per cent, leaving much room for progress in order to achieve **target 1.3 (nationally appropriate social protection systems)**.

Botswana has made progress in certain areas related to **gender equality (SDG 5)**, including women's equal access to education, with 89.6 per cent of women having at least some secondary education. However, women remain overrepresented in low-wage jobs. Progress towards achieving **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)** is hampered by lack of data and the fact that the government does not recognise the value of unpaid care and domestic work, which is still characterised by a high incidence of informal arrangements and no social protection policies. The Decent Work Country Programme has initiatives targeted towards improving women's empowerment and equality, and women have recently been appointed to several high-profile positions, but much remains to be done to achieve **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership)**.

Many challenges persist for the achievement of the targets related to **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)** in Botswana. With informal employment at 66.5 per cent in 2020 and vulnerable employment at 25.9 per cent in 2019, the country is far off achieving **target 8.3 (support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of MSMEs)**. The adoption of the second-generation Decent Work Country Programme 2020-2024 and

the adoption of the First National Employment Policy of Botswana constitute positive steps towards achieving **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)**, but the unemployment rate stood at 24.9 per cent in 2020, severely affecting the youth (with a soaring 46.2 per cent of those under 25 unemployed). Trade unions consider these figures to be conservative, as they do not account for discouraged job seekers or those in public works and drought relief programmes. Women earn less in high-paying jobs than men, particularly in the private sector. NEET (not in employment, education or training) indicators for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** stood at 39.3 per cent in 2020. Botswana has ratified international conventions on freedom of association, the right to organise and collective bargaining, in line with **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments)**. However, domestic implementation is insufficient, with too few trained labour inspectors, employers in the private sector continuing to flout laws, and government attempts to curb the right to strike. Organising is more difficult in the informal and private sectors, as employment is more precarious.

Indicators for **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection, to achieve greater equality)** show a bleak picture. Botswana's labour share of GDP was 46.2 per cent in 2017. Due to wage inequalities, a large proportion of this wealth goes to too few people. In 2019, the top 10 per cent of income earners held 59.3 per cent share of GDP, while the bottom 50 per cent of income earners were holding 8.1 per cent. Sluggish wage growth has forced workers to take on higher levels of debt, making them more susceptible to exploitation by employers.

Adverse effects of climate change observed in Botswana include drought, extremely high temperatures, frequent heat waves, and heavy rainfall. To attain **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies)**, Botswana's Climate Change Policy of 2021 was adopted by Parliament. The government has stated it remains committed to reducing national carbon emissions to 15% by 2030, but there has been no engagement with trade unions on just transition to mitigate climate change.

## TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

To ensure an SDG-led recovery and resilience from the crisis, trade unions urge the Botswana government to take the following measures:

- establish a national social dialogue structure that promotes full inclusion of the social partners;
- put in place a comprehensive national social security policy which is integrated, inclusive, and participatory, administered by a single government department;
- establish a living wage (P4000) to ensure workers are able to meet basic human needs and to cover transport, food and housing expenses;
- empower local authorities to build affordable low- and medium-cost, multi-residential, and high-density housing for citizens; accelerate land servicing and allocation to allow citizens to build their own houses;
- improve and expand technical and vocational education, linked to industrial policy. Extend the Human Resource Development Fund for employees affected by technological changes in the workplace;
- review the national youth strategy;
- improve primary health care by building health consciousness in children and young people;
- create an independent Environment Protection Agency;
- make the Industrial Court a court of first instance in labour disputes and establish an Industrial Court of Appeal with combined jurisdiction. Create an independent Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration Authority separate from the Department of Labour; and
- establish an Independent Police Complaints Authority to deal with complaints of police misconduct or dereliction of duty.

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# GREECE

## 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

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Greek government introduced a range of measures to mitigate the economic impact of the lockdowns, including protecting workers through adequate income support and job retention interventions, and supporting businesses to stay afloat. The Greek recovery and resilience plan “Greece 2.0” was agreed in 2021. It mobilises EU funds to further mitigate the economic and social impact of the pandemic; addresses productivity and investment gaps; and enhances growth potential, job creation and economic and social resilience.

Trade unions call on the Greek government to sustain and strengthen the capacity of the under-funded public healthcare system. There is a need to enhance the social protection system and extend the scope of public intervention for those workers whose needs are currently met insufficiently or not at all. The government should also further secure liquidity support for companies, particularly small and medium enterprises, which form the backbone of the Greek economy and are significantly affected by the Covid-19 crisis. Social objectives must constitute the integral guiding principles of the country’s recovery strategy, prioritising closing the employment gap over closing the output and investment gap.

### ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

In 2017, Greece endorsed a set of eight overarching national priorities encompassing all 17 SDGs, in line with the National Growth Strategy adopted in 2018. The strategy aims to reinvigorate the Greek economy, promote social wellbeing and justice without exclusions, ensure environmental protection and safeguard the country’s unique ecological wealth. The Inter-Ministerial Coordination Network coordinates national efforts to achieve the SDGs from a long-term perspective. Line ministries, together with the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) carried out three rounds of consultations and mapping to identify the most adequate indicators for tracking progress at the national level. Resources have been allocated in national plans for SDG implementation by using existing financial tools also coming

from the European Union (European Partnership Agreement 2021-2027, Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, Next Generation EU, etc.).

The government occasionally involves employers and workers’ representatives in SDG implementation. Stakeholder consultation is not mandatory, and no structured participation has been established, at least in terms of trade union involvement. Trade unions stress the essential role of effective and meaningful social dialogue in helping to achieve a broad national consensus on policy, strengthening labour market resilience and achieving the country’s recovery. The government should also ensure the implementation of labour laws and collective agreements.

#### TRANSPARENCY



Irregular access to limited information

#### CONSULTATION



Informal or ad hoc consultation

#### SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners contribute individually to government’s SDG national plan



# IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Even though Greece has a “very high” level of human development (UN Human Development Index of 0.888 in 2019), challenges remain on **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)**. After social transfers, 18.4 per cent of the population aged 18 to 64 and 10 per cent of the employed population are at risk of poverty. A range of measures are in place under **target 1.3 (appropriate social protection systems)**, with 64 per cent of the Greek population covered by at least one benefit. Total expenditure on social protection, including health, is 23.8 per cent of GDP (**target 1a - ensure significant mobilisation of resources**).

Progress is still required to meet target **5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)**. In 2014 (last available data), women were estimated to spend approximately 18 per cent of their time on this work. The government has implemented targeted employment programmes and childcare services for women, and recent legislation provides for shared parental leave regardless of employment status. To help meet **target 5.5 (ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels)**, a quota of 40 per cent for women in local government and parliamentary positions is now in place. In 2018, 27.5 per cent of managerial positions were held by women. Gender mainstreaming is applied in the fields of education, health, and social solidarity, and in public budgets.

Indicators show that significant challenges remain to meet **target 8.3 (formalisation)**. The size of the undeclared economy is commonly estimated to be 25 per cent of GDP. By 2018, the share of low paid work had increased to 16.4 per cent and the share of precarious work remained steady at around one quarter of total employment. Regarding **target 8.5 (achieve full and productive employment and decent work)**, unemployment stands at 12.7 per cent for men and at 18.8 per cent for women. The unemployment and underemployment rates for young people aged 15 to 24 are the highest in the EU (35 per cent and 46.5 per cent respectively); the **proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (target 8.6)** also remains one of the highest in the EU at 13.2 per cent. Further efforts are also needed to meet **target 8.7 (end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour)**: in 2014, it was estimated that some 100,000-150,000 children under the age of 18 work in Greece, and in 2018 an estimated 89 000 adults were living in modern

slavery. There have been setbacks under **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**. Collective bargaining used to take place at national, industry and company level, and the national collective agreement provided a basis from which improvements could be negotiated. However, changes introduced following the 2010 crisis and the provision of IMF and EU financial support fundamentally altered the bargaining structure. Although some of the crisis measures were reversed in 2018, collective bargaining has not yet been completely re-established and the minimum salary is determined by ministerial decision.

Significant challenges remain to meet **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies and progressively achieve greater equality)**. Labour share of GDP decreased to 50.3 per cent in 2017, the share of top and bottom income earners in overall GDP has stagnated, and the statutory minimum wage has decreased.

To meet **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and plans)**, a new climate bill introduced in November 2021 sets quantitative targets to reduce greenhouse emissions, in line with the EU target of aiming for climate neutrality in 2050. Goals will be reviewed every five years and will include seven sectors of the economy: electricity and heat production, transportation, industry, buildings, agriculture and animal husbandry, waste, and land use and forestry. Funds, plans and initiatives are being implemented to achieve a just transition, and social partners are involved in its design under the National General Collective Labour Agreement 2021.

There has been moderate improvement on **SDG 16 (peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all, and effective institutions)**. In the ITUC Global Rights Index 2021, Greece is classified in category 4 - systemic violations of rights (previously category 5).

## TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

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

- ensure all 17 SDGs continue to be prioritised in national planning, in line with national priorities and the National Growth Strategy;
- ensure public consultation on policy development to meet the SDGs, including a structured process of social dialogue; and
- implement policies to meet the SDG targets, ensuring Greek recovery is guided by social objectives.

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



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# ITALY

## 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

In the immediate response to the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2020, the Italian government implemented a series of measures aimed at protecting workers, stimulating the economy and labour demand, and supporting employment and incomes. Specific occupational health and safety protocols were also agreed at the tripartite level to safeguard the health of workers and prevent the spread of the virus. These agreements are still valid in the current period.

Moreover, in December 2021, the three Italian trade union confederations signed a protocol for the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Plan of the European Union (PNRR), which provides for participation and prior discussion with trade unions on investments and reforms. The answer to the pandemic crisis of the Italian government for the upcoming years focuses mainly on three actions: a systemic reform of active labour policies through the Employability Guarantee Program; strengthening job demand and the supply system; and rebuilding the system of employment centres. In addition, the government launched in 2022 a national plan to combat undeclared work, along with a series of initiatives to improve women workers' conditions.

### ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

Approved in 2017, Italy's National Strategy for Sustainable Development is coordinated by the ministry for ecological transition, and it covers five strategic areas corresponding to the "5Ps" of the 2030 Agenda: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. Consultations take place via the Forum for Sustainable Development, and trade unions participate in all five groups of the forum.

dialogue between the government and social partners on the PNRR began at the end of 2021. In December 2021, the unions signed a protocol with the government, which will hopefully finally allow for a full dialogue on achieving a just transition.

The sizeable economic and financial resources in the PNRR are an important means of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The plan has six strategic aims that take the SDGs into account, in line with the EU Green Deal and the 2030 Agenda. Formal

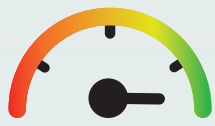
Trade unions recommend greater participation of social partners to ensure the effective implementation of national policies aiming to achieve the SDGs. Indicators for the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) should be used across all public programmes.

#### TRANSPARENCY



Regular access to limited information

#### CONSULTATION



Structured multi-stakeholder platform

#### SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Individual contributions from social partners to the national government





# IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Challenges remain for Italy to meet **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty)**. Rates of absolute poverty have increased since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, affecting 9.4 per cent of the population in 2021, with minors (13.5 per cent) and young adults (11.3 per cent) being the most affected. While there is a higher rate of absolute poverty in the southern regions, northern regions have also experienced a great increase since 2019. In-work poverty is also increasing. Regarding **target 1.3 (appropriate social protection systems)**, according to the last available data (2020), 82 per cent of the Italian population is covered by at least one of the social protection measures. The reason for many being excluded is that benefits are linked to occupational categories. Moreover, there are significant regional differences in access to public services.

Women are over-represented in informal and service jobs and in part-time jobs. The pandemic has affected women disproportionately, further increasing gender inequality in the country. Significant challenges remain to meet **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)**. The proportion of time spent on this type of work in Italy is 13.5 per cent, and childcare services are insufficient. On **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels)**, in 2018 only 23.2 per cent of senior and middle managerial positions were held by women, even though the proportion of women serving on boards and in the national parliament has increased significantly in the past decade as a result of quotas set by legislation.

Progress on **target 8.3 (formalisation)** has declined in the wake of the coronavirus crisis. Irregular employment in Italy is among the highest in the eurozone (12.9 per cent in 2018). The share of vulnerable employment was 16.9 per cent in 2019. Low economic growth has led to more low-wage employees. Italy also faces serious challenges in meeting **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)**. While average hourly earnings are in line with the EU average, GDP has not fully recovered since the 2008 global financial crisis. The employment rate is 62.6 per cent, far from the long-term objective of 78 per cent established by the European Green Deal. Italy also has a high level of precariousness and involuntary part-time work: the general average is 32.9 per cent, but this rate exceeds

36 per cent for women. The number of **young people not in employment, education or training (target 8.6)** is still of serious concern (23.3 per cent in 2021). Regarding **target 8.7 (end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour)**, migrants are particularly vulnerable to modern slavery. A law initiated by trade unions to fight gangmasters, particularly in the agriculture and construction sectors, is now in place. On **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**, 80 per cent of all workers are covered by national collective agreements. Trade union membership stands at around 30 per cent of the workforce. In 2021, the government took action to hire more labour inspectors and reorganise the service.

Significant challenges remain to meet **target 10.4 (policies to achieve greater equality, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies)**. The labour share of GDP has declined over the past ten years and income inequality has increased. Regarding **target 10.7 (orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility)**, Italian law guarantees full freedom of association for all. In 2020, the new Law 173 introduced positive reforms, including a "special protection" permit for migrants with serious humanitarian reasons.

Unions are concerned about slow progress on **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and plans)**. Italy is already seriously affected by climate change. The government still needs to adopt a National Action Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change as foreseen by the European strategy for adaptation adopted in February 2021. Furthermore, the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan (2020) needs to be revised to meet EU targets. The Italian National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) and the Ecological Transition Plan (2021) also fall short in terms of industrial policies and investment required.

There have recently been some improvements under **target 16.3 (promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice)**, including digital transformation for more efficient, transparent, and accountable institutions and services.



## TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

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

- tackle the causes of poverty and define both social and work inclusion pathways to fully take care of those in poverty through targeted measures and services;
- extend social protection systems, and work on improving the current guaranteed minimum income, which currently excludes a large share of those in need;
- introduce legislation to combat precariousness; ensure the NRRP promotes and measures stable, quality employment growth for all;
- counter rising inequality by strengthening national and corporate collective bargaining and, at the same time, ensuring progressive taxation for all incomes;
- strengthen the care system and the integration of social and healthcare systems;
- with an overall youth pact, overhaul national youth policies and ensure adequate resources; take action to improve the education and guidance systems and reduce the school dropout rate;
- extend the use of gender budgeting at all levels of public administration;
- ensure proper policies for workers with arduous and dangerous jobs and a closer relationship between workers' safety representatives and the institutions responsible for prevention and control; and
- implement trade union recommendations for a just transition as set out in the document "Una giusta transizione per il lavoro, il benessere della persona, la giustizia sociale, la salvaguardia del pianeta per una transizione verde dell'economia".



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# LATVIA

## 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

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Latvian government introduced restrictions to contain the spread of the virus, encouraged remote working, and ran mandatory vaccination schemes. Employment-related measures included flexible or reduced working hours, with government support for income security; furlough benefits; and support for the unemployed. Bankruptcy declarations were temporarily suspended, and companies could initiate collective redundancies more quickly. Crisis-affected exporters received grants to compensate for wages.

Trade unions call on the Latvian government to prioritise universal social protection and free access to healthcare, with childcare support for frontline workers. There is a need to improve healthcare services and access to them, in particular the number of medical personnel. The amount and period of unemployment benefits should be extended. Rising living costs require increased minimum wages and an income tax threshold; support and lowered taxes on fuel bills; more affordable housing; and an energy efficiency programme to insulate homes and modernise electricity networks. Businesses require support to reorient international trade and a decreased tax burden on labour to compete with neighbouring markets.

### ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

While the Latvian government is addressing all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), they are not being made a high priority or focus. The introduction to Latvia's 2021-2021 National Development Plan states that it has been developed in line with the SDGs, but there is no further reference to the goals in the text or description of particular goals, and society at large is not aware of them. The government's Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre, under the direct authority of the prime minister, is responsible for integrating the SDGs into national policies.

Trade unions were involved in preparing the National Development

Plan, and, at their initiative, the Voluntary National Review for the UN. They are not included in the Consultative Council for Cooperation on Development. Unions are involved in the National Tripartite Cooperation Council and its sub-councils, which cover all SDGs, although there is no explicit reference to them.

Latvian trade unions are concerned about the insufficient public funding available to implement the SDGs, which translates into a lack of progress, particularly on the SDGs related to health, education, inequality and poverty rates. Reporting mechanisms are adequate given these limited resources.

#### TRANSPARENCY



Irregular access to limited information

#### CONSULTATION



Informal or ad hoc consultation

#### SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Individual contributions to national government



# IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Indicators for **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty)** show that while only 0.2 per cent of the population were living in extreme poverty in 2019, in 2020 22.4 per cent of the population were under the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, with pensioners particularly at risk. Latvia has a “very high” Human Development Index of 0.866 that has increased in recent decades but is still one of the lowest in the EU and Baltic states. Nearly all Latvians (96.5 per cent) are covered by at least one social protection benefit under **target 1.3 (appropriate social protection systems)**. However, trade unions are concerned about **target 1a (mobilisation of resources)**. The proportion of total government spending on essential services in 2022 is estimated at 12.8 per cent for healthcare and 7.3 per cent for education, lower than what would be expected for the level of fiscal capacity. Public spending and social dialogue within the healthcare and education sectors are insufficient and staff salaries are too low.

Evaluating progress under **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)** is hampered by a lack of gender-disaggregated data. Progress has been made under **target 5.5 (ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels)**: women hold 45 per cent of managerial positions and 25 per cent of seats in the national parliament. There is 100 per cent equality in terms of lower secondary education.

Progress on **target 8.3 (formalisation)** is mixed. Recent studies show that Latvia’s informal economy has grown to 25 per cent of GDP, or 10.9 per cent of employees employed without a contract. The share of low-paid work is 21.9 per cent; vulnerable work has decreased and stands at 7.1 per cent. Indicators under **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)** also present a mixed picture. Latvia has succeeded in lowering unemployment to 7.3 per cent, although there is a lack of qualified labour due to high emigration. The gender wage gap in Latvia is 22.3 per cent, one of the highest in the EU. The proportion of **young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) (target 8.6)** is 11 per cent, which is close to the EU average. Latvia has implemented programmes to decrease NEET numbers in recent years, supported by EU structural funds. Under **target 8.7 (end**

**forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour)**, 8,000 people were estimated to be living in modern slavery in 2018, with a growing number of immigrants trafficked for labour exploitation. No child labour data are available. Latvia generally meets **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**. As labour rights and wages are mainly regulated by law, trade unions are actively trying to increase and improve collective bargaining. Trade union density has decreased to 8.8 per cent.

Latvia still has one the highest rates of income inequality in the EU, although it has made some progress on **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies and progressively achieve greater equality)**: the labour income share of GDP has grown in the last decade to 54.4 per cent, with 26.9 per cent of wealth held by the top 10 per cent of income earners compared to 7 per cent for the bottom 20 per cent. The minimum wage is the lowest in the Baltics. Latvia protects migrant rights under **target 10.7 (orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility)**.

Latvia has a National Energy and Climate Plan 2021–2030 in line with **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and plans)** and EU requirements. Still, the country’s CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have increased over the past decade. Moreover, even though the plan addresses energy poverty, LBAS is concerned that the volatility of energy prices over the last year and the effect of this on overall inflation could worsen the effects of energy poverty on lower-income households. Policy reforms for more effective housing insulation are also needed.

Regarding **target 16.3 (promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice)**, labour courts and legal aid are available. Under **target 16.10 (ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms)**, certain labour rights have come under repeated attacks by the government.



## TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

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

- Focus on decent work in the context of SDG 8 because human capital to improve services and stem emigration is required to meet all other SDGs in Latvia. Take measures to tackle low pay and long working hours in the public sector, particularly in health and education.
- Ensure transparency of remuneration systems. Develop regulation for a reliable, stable minimum wage and a non-taxable minimum that ensures a sufficient income level.
- Work on wage and social protection policies aimed at reducing inequalities between regions.
- Develop a policy and legal framework for the arrangement of new forms of employment and the introduction of control mechanisms, balancing the tax burden for various forms of employment and reducing it for the labour force. Reduce the informal economy, in particular “envelope wages” and undeclared workers.
- Strengthen tripartite social dialogue and promote the further development and improvement of the collective bargaining system, especially at sectoral level. Strengthen the implementation of trade union rights in practice.
- Make health insurance and services accessible to all and improve care policies for the elderly.
- Increase the state budget for research and development in line with the EU average. Promote cooperation between research institutions and companies.
- Improve professional development and support for teachers, especially for teaching children with special needs.



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# MALI

## 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

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Malian government introduced measures to reduce transmission of the virus, acquire the necessary health equipment and vaccinate the population. A special fund to combat the virus is still in place. Income protection and tax relief measures were introduced to mitigate the economic effects of the pandemic and help preserve jobs. Additional social support measures included payment of bills for certain segments of the population and the cancellation of VAT on water and electricity bills.

Trade unions call on the government of Mali to better equip local health structures to improve care and access to Covid-19 vaccines and strengthen scientific research. Measures are needed to ensure that workers benefit from the easing of tax and customs granted to companies and to protect workers' rights in those sectors hardest hit by the pandemic. In terms of social support, the government must accelerate the implementation of the Universal Health Insurance Scheme (RAMU) and implement mortgage, rent and loan relief for the most vulnerable. Adopting an ambitious and effective agricultural policy to improve domestic agricultural productivity should be a priority.

### ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The government of Mali has committed to implementing all the SDGs. These were integrated into national plans through the Strategic Framework for Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development (CREDD 2019-2023), the Transition Government Action Plan 2021-22, and other national and local government policy documents. The institutional mechanism for steering and monitoring SDG implementation was established by decree in 2018, and formal consultations are held with stakeholders.

The Ministry of Economy and Finance is the leading actor responsible for implementation and funding, and a sustainable development fund is in place to respond quickly to priorities. While resources increase year

on year, they remain insufficient due to the scale of challenges faced by Mali.

Trade unions are invited to some validation sessions but call for the reporting mechanism to be formalised to involve all stakeholders. Trade union contributions that have been taken into account have led to increased state budget allocations to address climate change, social protection, the universal health insurance scheme, and construction of social housing. Unions continue to advocate on issues directly related to the SDGs, including decent work, migration, environmental protection, and education.

#### TRANSPARENCY



Regular access to limited information

#### CONSULTATION



Ad hoc informal consultation

#### SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Individual contributions from social partners to the national government





# IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Mali continues to face significant challenges in terms of achieving the SDGs. Poverty remains high, with 42.1 per cent of the population living below the national poverty line in 2019. The Covid-19 crisis and continuing instability and conflict have contributed to stagnating progress on **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)**. While Mali's level of human development has increased steadily since the 1990s, it remains amongst the lowest in the world (UN HDI of 0.434 in 2019). Under **target 1.3 (appropriate social protection systems)**, the proportion of the population benefiting from at least one social protection instrument in 2020 was at a mere 9.3 per cent.

Gender equality is a priority for the Malian government, but much work still needs to be done in this area. Regarding **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)**, women still do the lion's share of unpaid care and domestic work. Under **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership)**, 40.2 per cent of management positions and 25.3 per cent of seats in local government were held by women in 2018. The proportion of parliamentary seats held by women fell to 9.5 per cent in 2020, despite a 2015 law that sets a quota of 30 per cent of either sex in public office. Progress on women's education is stagnating: only 7.3 per cent of women had at least some secondary education in 2019. Gender budgeting is integrated in policies and development plans, but there is a pressing need to accelerate implementation.

Mali is far from meeting **target 8.3 (support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of MSMEs)**, as more than nine out of ten people are in informal employment and the proportion of vulnerable jobs was 81 per cent in 2019. Regarding target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all), the gender wage gap has increased in the last few years and was at 61.2 per cent in 2018. The underemployment rate was 14 per cent in 2020 and is higher in urban than rural areas. The **proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (target 8.6)** has decreased but is still at a high 26.71 per cent, and more than twice as high for women than for men (15 per cent for men and 36.9 per cent for women in 2018). Further efforts are also needed to meet

**target 8.7 (end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour)**, as a high rate of 11.8 per cent of children were economically active in Mali in 2017. Under **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**, Mali has signed international conventions and recognises the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining in its constitution. However, collective bargaining is not promoted, and employers are not obliged to engage in it under the Labour Code. While the right to strike is enshrined in the Constitution and strictly regulated by law, it is restricted for a discretionary list of "essential services". Similarly, the law prohibits anti-union discrimination but does not provide adequate protection against it. Violations of rights occur but there is a lack of data. Tripartite bodies are functioning, but unions call for a better climate of dialogue whereby the government respects its commitments.

Significant challenges remain to meet target **10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies and progressively achieve greater equality)**. The labour share of GDP has stayed steady at around 50 per cent. Regarding **target 10.7 (migration and mobility)**, a national migration policy is in place since 2015, and unions are involved in its development and implementation.

Climate change, drought and deforestation are serious issues for Mali. In response to **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures)**, the government has adopted a national strategy, policy and action plan, with an Agency for the Environment and Sustainable Development and a Green Fund. Mali has reduced its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, but no dialogue with social partners to achieve a just transition is in place.

Progress is being made under **target 16.3 (promote rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all)**: legal aid exists in Mali and is prescribed in the Malian penal code, and justice sector reforms aim to ensure a labour court in each administrative region.

## 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 Mali to:

- strengthen the social protection system by accelerating the implementation of the universal health insurance scheme (RAMU);
- improve the accessibility to Covid-19 vaccines;
- put in place specific measures to create decent jobs and promote the protection of workers' rights, and adopt fiscal measures to support workers;
- adopt an ambitious and effective agricultural policy to improve internal agriculture productivity;
- facilitate the formalisation of the informal economy and its inclusion in the social protection system;
- strengthen social dialogue structures to maintain a peaceful social climate;
- undertake more rigorous monitoring of the SDGs, involving all stakeholders; and
- revise Decree No. 2018- 0623/PM- RM of 08 August 2018 by including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the SDG steering committee.

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# NETHERLANDS

## 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

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Dutch government launched various temporary programmes for income and job support for households, employers and independent entrepreneurs without personnel. Companies could also receive financial support for fixed costs. The Ministry of Social Affairs coordinated and consulted with trade unions from the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis. Despite all this, many health workers – who lacked adequate protective masks and clothing and were considered heroes in the first period of the pandemic – now face dismissal because of the consequences of “long Covid”. So far, the Dutch government refuses to take additional measures.

Trade unions call on the Dutch government and employers to be better prepared for future pandemics by taking sufficient protective measures, including the provision of protective equipment. This applies particularly to crucial professions in the care, health, safety, and education sectors. Pay in these sectors should also be reviewed and adjusted, and excessive workloads in all workplaces should be addressed. Social security regulations should be adapted to those suffering from “long Covid”. The government should also put in place better assistance for more vulnerable workers, including better income protection for those on flexible temporary contracts and better social protection for freelancers.

### ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

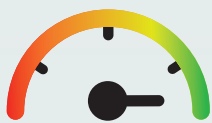
The Netherlands has incorporated the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its overall policy process. An action plan to implement the SDGs was sent to the parliament in September 2016. A national report on progress, the “Monitor of Well-Being and SDGs”, is compiled by Statistics Netherlands and submitted to the parliament annually. However, the SDGs tend to be integrated into existing national policies and priorities, rather than being taken as the starting point.

There is a government-appointed national SDG coordinator, who works closely with other ministries and organisations working towards SDG implementation. Trade unions participate in some of the consultations and multistakeholder meetings organised by the

national SDG coordinator. They have provided input on the themes of energy transition, circular economy, inclusive societies, and global responsibility. There is no structured tripartite or bipartite dialogue on SDG implementation, however.

The Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER) is the main policy advisory body representing employers and workers through which trade unions participate indirectly in certain SDG groups. There is a need to establish an SDG platform at the SER; this would also help private parties and trade unions consider each other as partners in SDG implementation. Trade unions call for more explicit attention to the SDG implementation plan in the SER.

#### TRANSPARENCY



Complete access to information

#### CONSULTATION



Structured multi-stakeholder platform

#### SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Social partners jointly agree and submit contributions to national government



# IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

While **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty)** has been achieved, poverty still exists: in 2018, 13.3 per cent of the population had an income below the risk-of-poverty threshold (60 per cent of median income) and 16.7 per cent of the population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion. **Target 1.3 (appropriate social protection systems)** has been achieved. The Netherlands ranks 8th in the world on the UN Human Development Index.

Progress is still required to meet **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)**. Women in the Netherlands spend a third more time (14.7 per cent) on unpaid domestic and care work than men (9.2 per cent). The Netherlands has not yet ratified ILO Convention 189. Domestic work is not formalised, except for the Household Services Act. However, this act exempts domestic workers who work three days or less for the same household from certain forms of social security. More efforts are also needed on **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels)**. The proportion of women in managerial positions remains at about one quarter (25.7 per cent in 2018); the number of seats held by women in the national parliament declined to 33 per cent in 2020 (target of 50 per cent). Equality in terms of secondary education is on track. However, trade unions stress that the Netherlands does not currently use gender budgeting to work towards greater gender equality, and highlight a general deterioration in literacy and numeracy of pupils.

More efforts are needed on **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)**. In a context of low wage growth over the past decade, the gender pay gap persists with a corrected pay gap of 4 per cent in the public sector and 7 per cent in the private sector in 2020. The underemployment rate has decreased over the years, with particularly marked improvements for women and young people. The Netherlands performs well in terms of the percentage share of **young people not in employment, education or training (target 8.6)**, which is the lowest in the EU. With regard to **target 8.7 (end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour)**, although the proportion of the population living in modern slavery is low by global standards (1.77/1000), the Netherlands Court of Audit reported in 2021 that enforcement efforts remain ineffective. Trade unions also highlight some areas of concern under **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**. Fatal occupational injuries

are rare, but there has been a considerable increase in non-fatal injuries. The level of national compliance with labour rights is high, and all ILO labour conventions are ratified. However, trade union membership and collective bargaining coverage are declining, reflecting the increasing flexibilisation of the labour market with more temporary jobs and false self-employment. Also, there is an increasing tendency to close collective agreements with yellow unions.

Some challenges remain to meet **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies and progressively achieve greater equality)**. The labour share of GDP has slightly declined over the last decade, in particular in the sectors with the most employees. The decline is driven by slow wage growth, particularly for lower earners. The minimum wage has not increased sufficiently and the share of working poor is growing. These trends are of particular concern given the current increase in inflation. Social partners are actively involved in the formation and implementation of migration policy under **target 10.7 (orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility)**. They note that while migrants are free to join trade unions, many are afraid to do so, as they are on temporary contracts and can also be dependent on employment agencies for housing, health insurance and transport to work. The meat sector in particular has a high number of vulnerable migrant workers. Employers in this sector block unions' access to the work floor for organising.

The Netherlands is implementing integrated strategies and dialogue with social partners to meet **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and plans)**. However, further efforts are needed to accelerate progress on climate goals, as affirmed by the recent Urgenda and Friends of the Earth court cases brought against the Dutch government and multinational companies.

Under **target 16.3 (promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice)**, legal aid is available but has become more difficult to access for those on low incomes due to cutbacks made by the previous government.

## TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

To ensure an SDG-led recovery and resilience from the crisis, trade unions urge the Dutch government to take the following action:

- ensure equality of opportunity and truly democratic participation for all, with policies to bring about greater redistribution of wealth and power in Dutch society;
- guarantee decent work, a living wage and social security for everyone, including temporary workers and the self-employed; increase the minimum wage to €14 per hour;
- take measures to prevent the excessive outsourcing of labour and exploitation of migrant labour; combat precarious working contracts (including zero-hour contracts) and the continuous renewal of temporary contracts;
- increase the capacity and effectiveness of labour inspection;
- ensure a just and social transition to a green economy;
- guarantee a better implementation of fundamental labour rights, such as freedom of association and bargaining;
- apply special measures to compensate the essential workers in the care and education sector who are suffering from "long Covid", losing their job and income; and
- ratify ILO Convention 189 to make sure domestic workers enjoy the same rights as any other worker.



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# PAKISTAN

## 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

After the first wave, the federal and provincial governments of Pakistan coordinated their response to the Covid-19 pandemic via a national platform. Vaccination is now provided free of charge to all citizens. Individuals and households were supported with an emergency payment via the national social protection “Ehsaas” programme, which is being extended to low-income workers through the specific “Mazdoor Ka Ehsaas” initiative. Fuel, rent and loan payments were deferred for a limited period and paid sick leave was partially provided. Food parcels were distributed to the most marginalised. Financial support was also provided to businesses, including SMEs, to protect jobs and incomes. A targeted approach allowed certain sectors and areas to stay open.

Trade unions call on the Pakistani government to ensure social protection for all, including workers in informal and vulnerable employment. Women and Pakistani migrant workers abroad were particularly affected by the measures taken to contain the pandemic. Trade unions emphasise the importance of a multilateral approach to sustainable development, combining social, economic and environmental priorities. Investments in the care economy must be a priority for Pakistan’s resilience strategy.

### ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

Pakistan has integrated the SDGs into its national and provincial plans, including its “Vision 2025” growth strategy. The federal and provincial ministries of Planning, Development and Reform each have a unit dedicated to monitoring and coordinating SDG progress. However, resources allocated to the SDGs, particularly for education, health and social protection, are limited. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the economy already faced significant challenges in terms of foreign debt, a current account deficit and an energy crisis.

Trade unions call for full, structured participation in the development and monitoring of policies and programmes to realise the SDGs, given that they have not been involved in their implementation. There is scope for greater collaboration with social partners in the government’s efforts towards sustainable recovery and resilience in key areas, including the green economy, environmental protection, creation of productive employment, decent work, skills development, and social protection for all.

#### TRANSPARENCY



Irregular access to limited information

#### CONSULTATION



Informal or ad hoc consultation

#### SOCIAL DIALOGUE



No involvement of social partners by national government on SDG plan





# IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

While poverty rates in Pakistan have declined over the past decade, the Covid-19 pandemic reversed this trend and significant challenges remain to meet **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)**. 21.9 per cent of the population were living under the national poverty line in 2018. Pakistan ranks 154 out of 189 countries with a “medium” HDI of 0.557. Under **target 1.3 (appropriate social protection systems and measures)**, the most significant development in recent years has been the introduction of the “Ehsaas” national social security and poverty alleviation programme, with new initiatives to extend coverage to informal workers and other vulnerable groups, and a supporting database. A new universal health coverage scheme was launched this year. However, coverage (only 9.2 per cent) and public spending on social protection are still very low, and a shift from a poverty-reduction to a lifecycle-based framework is needed to build a more inclusive system.

Major challenges remain on gender equality in Pakistan, a situation exacerbated by the pandemic. Female labour force participation was only 21.4 per cent in 2020-21; women are overrepresented in informal, low-paid and vulnerable work and still undertake most **unpaid care and domestic work (target 5.4)**. There is a large gender pay gap. Progress on **target 5.5 (full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership)** has stagnated in recent years. The proportion of women who have completed secondary education (27.6 per cent up to 2019) and who are in managerial positions (4.9 per cent in 2018) is still very low by international standards. Gender budgeting efforts still need to become more embedded.

**Target 8.3 (formalisation)** is still far from being met, as in 2021, the informal sector accounted for 72.5 per cent of non-agricultural employment. 37.5 per cent of workers earned less than two thirds of median hourly wages; this is especially the case for female workers, 75.4 per cent of whom were in this category, compared to 31.3 per cent of men (2018 figures). As for **target 8.5 (achieve full and productive employment and decent work)**, the unemployment rate stood at 6.3 per cent in 2021 and was more likely to affect women (8.9 per cent) than men (5.5 per cent). The number not in employment, education or training (NEET) mentioned in **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** stood

at 31.2 per cent in 2020, with great disparity between the sexes: 56.2 per cent of young women compared to 8 per cent of young men were NEET in Pakistan. The “Kamyab Jawan” initiative was launched to tackle this in 2019. Significant efforts are still needed to reach **target 8.7 (eradicate forced labour, end child labour in all its forms)**. Recent statistics are lacking; however, 2011 indicators showed that 11.3 per cent of children (aged 5 to 17) were engaged in child labour and that over three million people (1.7 per cent of the population) were living in modern slavery in 2018. **Target 8.8 (labour rights and safe and secure working environments for all)** is far from being met, as 42 violations of labour rights (28 in law and 14 in practice) were noted in 2017. Trade union density is low, standing at just 2.3 per cent of the total labour force in 2018. There are too few labour inspectors.

Further progress is still needed for Pakistan to reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies and progressively achieve greater equality)**, as the top 10 per cent of income earners had a 25.5 per cent share of GDP, with the bottom 20 per cent of income earners holding an 9.6 per cent share in 2018.

To reach the objectives of **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning), priorities on climate change and the environment are addressed in the government’s 12th Five Year Plan (2018-2023)**, disaster risk plans and other policies. However, trade unions warn that the government has no strategy to accommodate the needs of workers arising from the technological shift associated with the introduction of environmental policies.

Regarding **target 16.3 (promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all)**, labour courts are too expensive for poorer workers to access. Indicators on **target 16.10 (protect fundamental freedoms)** are also worrying. NGO operations are restricted by the government, workers and supporters of social movements have been subjected to intimidation or detention, and labour unionisation is discouraged at all levels.

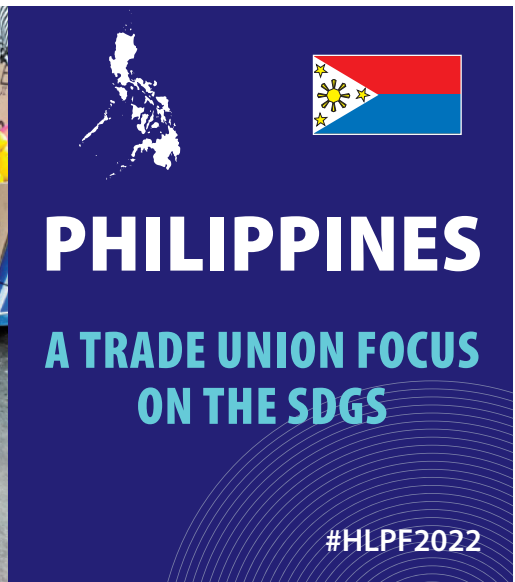
## TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

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

- Ensure more effective implementation of laws and policies, supported by better statistics, and involve social partners in the SDG prioritisation and implementation process.
- Ensure that universal social protection is available to all, including the most vulnerable.
- Ensure a living wage.
- Ensure decent work, safety in the workplace and labour rights for all. Recognise and protect the basic rights of workers in the informal sector, home-based workers, domestic workers, brick kiln workers and agricultural workers. Ratify ILO Conventions 176 (mines), 177 (homework), 189 (domestic workers) and 190 (violence and harassment).
- Eradicate child and forced labour.
- Continue to expand skills development and job creation programmes in order to meet the needs of youth, women and marginalised segments of the workforce. Improve the effectiveness of the existing gender budgeting and gender-sensitive policymaking approaches.
- Pursue a just transition towards environmentally friendly and climate-neutral growth in close involvement with social partners.
- Put in place a comprehensive legal aid system.



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

The Philippines government responded to the Covid-19 pandemic with militarised lockdowns and continues to rank poorly in terms of Covid resilience. Financial assistance to workers was not inclusive, was insufficient to meet basic needs, and was only temporarily available. Wage subsidies were only provided to SMEs. There was a 30-day extension on mortgages, rents and loans. While some companies provided reduced working hours or paid sick leave from day one, Covid-19 was only classed as a compensable occupational disease after a trade union campaign. The government released issuances that effectively amended labour laws without any act of Congress and suspended its labour inspection function. There was no childcare support for frontline workers.

Trade unions continue to call for adequate financial assistance and income protection for all, and for a safe return to work. The government missed opportunities to strengthen the overwhelmed free public healthcare system and provide free mass testing; to provide emergency employment, including transport services; and to develop a just transition, including a more efficient transport system. Furthermore, the Anti-Terror Law passed hastily at the height of the pandemic has been used to justify arrests and extrajudicial killings of union leaders and labour activists.

## ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The Philippine government has integrated the SDGs into the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022. SDG implementation is coordinated via a National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) secretariat and a Development Budget Coordination subcommittee. SDG implementation was discussed but once at the Tripartite Industrial Peace Council (TIPC), the formal social dialogue mechanism at the national level, but there was no meeting involving social partners called for the purpose of VNR consultation.

Information on the SDGs is generally available. However, the government is not fully transparent, for example on extrajudicial killings or on freedom of association cases that are misleadingly classified as non-labour-related. There are mechanisms to gather input from national actors, both online and offline, including multi-stakeholder platforms that include civil society organisations. While social partners mostly submit individual contributions

to the government, these are not necessarily considered in SDG planning and implementation.

There are also formal institutions for social dialogue, although limited to the Department of Labour and Employment, including the Social Security System, the Home Mutual Development Fund and the national health insurance system PhilHealth. Despite the legal mandate to appoint workers at policy making boards of these institutions, workers are not genuinely represented in these and their inputs are hardly considered for decisions. Unions call for social dialogue to apply more widely to all labour-related issues across government and for workers to be treated on an equal footing with employers, as SDG implementation is not currently discussed in tripartite fora. Unions also warn that insufficient resources have been allocated for SDG implementation.

### TRANSPARENCY



Irregular access to limited information

### CONSULTATION



Information sessions but no interaction

### SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Individual contributions from social partners to the national government



# IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Challenges remain for the Philippines to meet **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)**. In 2021 only 2.8% of Filipinos lived below the international poverty line (US\$1.90/day), but 23.7% of the population were estimated to be living below the national poverty line. The Philippines has a “high” HDI ranking of 0.718. Under **target 1.3 (appropriate social protection systems)**, 36.7% of the population were covered by at least one social protection benefit in 2020. While 98% are covered by health insurance, and education spending has increased, out of pocket spending on both remains high and corruption in PhilHealth is a problem.

Under **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)**, women take on more of this work, and this increased during the pandemic. Under **target 5.5 (ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership)**, women held 52.7% of managerial positions in 2018 and 27.6% of seats in the national parliament in 2020. 75.6% of women have at least some secondary education (72.4 % of men). Gender budgeting exists but needs to be more effective.

Much progress is still to be made on **target 8.3 (formalisation)**: 40% of employed people work in the informal sector; 22.3% were in low-paid work in 2017; and 34.6% were in vulnerable work in April 2022. Regarding **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)**, in April 2022 unemployment stood at 5.7% and underemployment at 14%, a decrease since pandemic levels. The **proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (target 8.6)** has decreased over the past decade but was still high at 18.6% in 2020, with more women affected than men. A youth development plan is in place. Under **target 8.7 (end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour)**, the estimated prevalence of people living in modern slavery is 7.7 per 1,000 and 2.8% of children aged 5 to 17 were estimated to be working in 2020. Reaching **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)** is still of concern. While occupational accidents are decreasing, at least one in five businesses does not comply with labour or occupational safety and health

standards. Unions report that rights on freedom of association and collective bargaining are not guaranteed in practice, with 39 violations reported in 2017. More insecure, flexible and informal employment has led to trade union density declining to 7.3% in 2019 and collective bargaining coverage to 1.6%. There are still too few labour inspectors. The Philippines has ratified ILO C.151 several years ago but there is still no implementing law for it.

Major challenges still remain to achieve **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies and progressively achieve greater equality)**: labour share of GDP decreased to 26.6% in 2017. Despite a recent increase, the minimum wage is still too low, given soaring commodity prices. Trade unions and employers are consulted on migration policies under **target 10.7 (migration and mobility)**, but social dialogue is not institutionalised in the main responsible agency. Over half of Filipino migrant workers are in Middle Eastern countries where their right to freedom of association is restricted.

The Philippines has a National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) and submitted its nationally determined contributions in line with **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures)**; however, unions have expressed concerns over weak targets, adaptation programmes, and lack of consultation regarding just transition.

A “Single Entry Approach” exists to make the resolution of labour issues more accessible in line with **target 16.3 (promote rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all)**. The situation under **target 16.10 (ensure access to information and protect fundamental freedoms)** is alarming: there is no guarantee of rights. State repression includes the “red-tagging” of trade unionists, which means that the government labels them as rebels or supporters of communist insurgency, a tactic used to justify harassment, arbitrary arrests, intimidation or, in the worst case, extrajudicial killing, of workers and trade union leaders. At least two media companies critical of the government, were shutdown.

## TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

In May 2022 the new president, Ferdinand Marcos Junior, was elected in an alliance with Sarah Duterte. To ensure an SDG-led recovery and resilience from the crisis, trade unions urge the Philippine government to:

- fully recognise social dialogue as a means of SDG planning, implementation and monitoring, with workers as equal partners;
- impose a wealth tax to pay for Covid-19 measures and fund economic recovery, including social protection and labour market programmes that address inequality;
- pass a security of tenure law that totally ends contractualisation;
- stop extra-judicial killings, resolve existing cases, end impunity and prosecute those responsible for the deaths and disappearances of workers and other rights defenders;
- abolish the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict;
- disband the Joint Industrial Peace and Concern Office (JIPCO)/Alliance for Industrial Peace Program (AIPP), as it violates ILO Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association;
- include workers representatives in the Administrative Order 35 Inter-Agency Council that looks into cases of extra judicial killings;
- create green, decent, and climate-friendly jobs with just transition;
- strengthen social protection systems and improve the existing unemployment insurance schemes to include an active labour market component; and
- end violence against women and girls, including by fully implementing the Magna Carta of Women and the Safe Spaces Act and ratifying the ILO Convention 190.



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# SENEGAL

## A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGS

#HLPF2022

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

Photo: Scott Wallace / World Bank

### 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.



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# SOMALIA

## 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 Federal Government of Somalia instituted a number of measures to help curb the spread of COVID-19 during the height of the pandemic, including sanitary measures, awareness raising on COVID prevention, limiting the movement of people and goods, and soliciting financial support from donors to equip health facilities to treat cases. However, protection for workers did not include paid sick leave, although managed reduction of hours and wage protection in the public sector were necessary.

Trade unions call for free COVID-19 testing and increased availability of vaccines. There is a need to expand free access to healthcare and health facilities. A sustainable response to the crisis should include effective implementation of existing national social protection policy to protect more vulnerable households and establish a functioning social protection system. Strengthening national tripartite dialogues would help to better protect workers, as would a fair labour practice policy to cushion workers from wage losses due to health reasons.

The COVID-19 pandemic occurred as Somalia was recovering from decades of conflict and protracted crises. The country continues to face multiple and interlinked climate, economic and security challenges.

### ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

Somalia has finalised its ninth National Development Plan 2020-2024 (NDP 9) and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 (UNSDCF). NDP 9 covers all SDGs under four organising pillars (inclusive politics; security and the rule of law; economic development; and social development) and six cross-cutting sustainable development dimensions (equity; resilience; environment and natural resources; displacement; humanitarian and development planning; and governance). The monitoring and evaluation framework contains indicators that are mapped to SDG indicators, helping to align funding and intervention and simplify reporting within a common global framework. The Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development is in charge of SDG implementation.

As a result of continued advocacy by unions, under the ambit of the Federation of Somali Trade Unions (FESTU), Somalia has made significant progress in its level and quality of engagement and consultation around

national development processes. Trade unions actively contributed to the extensive consultation processes for NDP 9 and UNSDCF and are valued partners in their implementation. The Somali National Tripartite Consultative Committee (SNTCC) facilitates constructive discussions and establishment of relations on industrial and labour issues relevant to a number of SDGs, including goals 8 (decent work and economic growth) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).

There is still room for improvement, however. Unions have been advocating for progressive legal reforms as well as social dialogue to promote workers' fundamental rights, improved working and living conditions, and decent work for all. Unions also warn that insufficient resources have been allocated for SDG implementation. Evaluating progress on many SDG indicators is made difficult by lack of data.

#### TRANSPARENCY



Regular access to limited information

#### CONSULTATION



Ad hoc informal consultation

#### SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Individual contributions from social partners to the national government



## IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Somalia continues to face major challenges to meeting **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)**. Sixty-nine per cent of the population was living below the international poverty line of US\$1.90 per day in 2019; the proportion of employed persons living below this threshold in the same year was 94.3 per cent. Under **target 1.3 (appropriate social protection systems)**, Somalia launched its social protection policy in 2019. Twenty-five per cent of the population was covered by essential health services in 2020, but there was no budget for other forms of social protection.

Somalia ranks fourth lowest in the world for gender equality. Under **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership)**, the proportion of seats held by women in parliament increased from 8.0 per cent in 2006 to 24.4 per cent in 2020. Gender budgeting is not used. Unions are active in campaigning against gender-based violence, which is pervasive.

Somalia is far from meeting **target 8.3 (support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of MSMEs)**, as around 94 per cent of those employed are in the informal sector and 87.8 per cent of jobs are deemed vulnerable. Up to 80 per cent of the population is employed in the agricultural sector. Wages in Somalia are among the lowest in the world, and there is no minimum wage. Regarding **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)**, unemployment is very high at 54 per cent. At least 70 per cent of Somalia's population is under 30; the **proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (target 8.6)** in 2019 was very high at 44.2 per cent, with more young women (50.2 per cent) affected than young men (37.7 per cent). The country also faces major challenges to meeting **target 8.7 (end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour)**: the estimated prevalence of people living in modern slavery is 15.5 per 1 000, and in 2011 a quarter to half (depending on region) of children were estimated to be working, with evidence of recruitment in armed conflict. The government, in coordination with FESTU, is carrying out a set of activities that would inform a national action plan on child labour. Under **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**, unions report that there are federal, state and non-state actors that consistently violate rights to freedom of association and are reluctant to promote genuine tripartite

social dialogue in the country. Somalia's revised draft Labour Code, which was agreed by the government, FESTU and the Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), is still to be sent to the federal parliament for enactment. A labour inspectorate was set up in 2020.

Under **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies and progressively achieve greater equality)**, labour share of GDP was estimated at 39.6 per cent in 2017. Regarding **target 10.7 (migration and mobility)**, FESTU is actively involved in better migration management, and the federal government ratified three ILO conventions on labour migration in 2021 as well as ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment in the world of work. These conventions need to be domesticated. Migrant workers are struggling to enjoy freedom of association, and labour migration in Somalia is unregulated, leading to exploitation among the large number of Somali workers abroad.

In response to **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures)** and in line with NDP 9, Somalia has prepared its first nationally determined contribution (NDC) climate action plan, its declaration on forests and land use, and its statement on clean power transition. However, unions denounce a lack of coherence, consultation and capacity to realise the ambitious commitments. While Somalia has committed to just transition based on social dialogue, no structured national or sectoral mechanisms for engaging social partners are currently in place.

Serious challenges remain to meeting **target 16.3 (promote rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all)**: legal aid is severely underdeveloped in Somalia, and the judiciary face enormous capacity constraints. Breakdown of the rule of law means there is no guarantee of rights under **target 16.10 (ensure access to information and protect fundamental freedoms)**, especially as the safety of journalists is extremely endangered, with several killings of journalists, with impunity, and the absence of access to information law despite the constitutional stipulation that Somalia should enact it. UNESCO, in partnership with the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), has been pushing for the localisation of SDG 16.

## TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

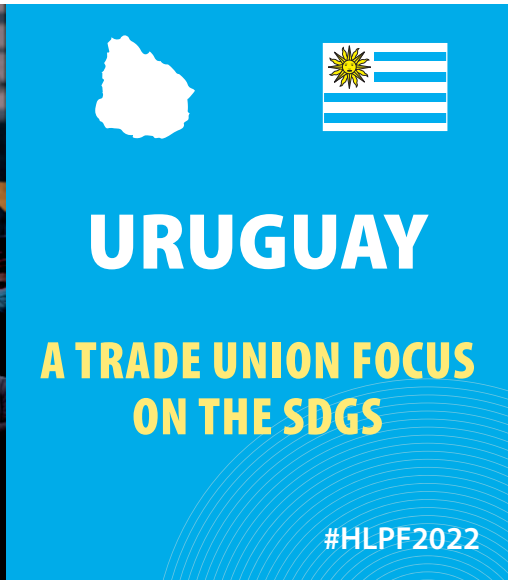
To ensure an SDG-led recovery and resilience from the crisis, trade unions urge the Federal Government of Somalia to:

- Reinforce national tripartite dialogue on the SDGs and set up a functioning coordinating task force and focal point in each ministry to oversee SDG implementation, monitoring and reporting.
- Strengthen peacebuilding, justice and state-building efforts and enact legal reforms so as to implement national policies that foster the speedy implementation of SDGs, particularly SDG 16, and reform the Penal Code to protect journalists' safety, enact the access to information law and end curtailment of fundamental freedoms under the Penal Code.
- Strengthen meaningful consultations with workers' and other civil society organisations to generate and implement pro-poor policies to improve the well-being of Somalis, with special focus on the realisation of SDG 8 by finalising and validating the Decent Work Country Programme.
- Strengthen social protection and initiate measures to address inequality and protect vulnerable populations, such as internally displaced persons living in camps, minority groups, women, youth and older persons.



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

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

The Uruguayan government adopted a range of measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, benefiting from the universal social protection system and free access to health services already in place. Social support was widened, and the vaccination campaign was successful. Economic support was provided to small and medium-sized enterprises. While the correct measures were taken, they were often too late, leading to avoidable deaths and an increase in poverty that is still above pre-pandemic levels.

Trade unions have called on Uruguay's government to provide a broad post-pandemic recovery plan to stimulate the economy and create jobs, including through investment in housing and infrastructure. Allocating more resources (Uruguay allocated less than one per cent of GDP) would allow redistribution and stimulus policies with greater scope and depth to mitigate the impact on poverty, employment and wages. Wage and pension policies should be reviewed to reactivate the domestic market, improve wages and increase the minimum wage. Telework should be better regulated. The pandemic has also highlighted the long-term importance of investing in education, health, and research and development.

### ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Uruguay is governed by the National Development Strategy Uruguay 2050. This strategy was developed by the previous leftist administration (Frente Amplio) and coordinated across the various ministries through the presidential Office of Planning and Budget. Each five-year national budget used to be structured in line with the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.

This changed when the new conservative government (Partido Nacional) came to power in March 2020. The government's stated priority has been to manage the pandemic and keep the economy going, and to press ahead with the "Urgent Consideration Law" to achieve its economic goals: to reduce the fiscal deficit, shrink the role of the state, and stimulate the private sector. The result has been real-term cuts in education, health and other areas of public policy. In addition, the government's wage policy has led

to a loss of purchasing power for public and private sector workers. These developments are having a negative impact on Uruguay's progress towards meeting the SDGs. Moreover, the policies and programmes related to SDG implementation are being dismantled and there are not enough resources to make the necessary investments.

The new government has ended the continuous dialogue previously enjoyed by trade unions, citing the pandemic as an excuse. The new institutional structure concentrates decision-making so that measures are implemented without prior consultation or the possibility of reversal. Social dialogue is limited to collective bargaining to comply with labour laws. In response, trade unions are giving the SDGs increasing prominence in their activities, and are campaigning for the repeal of the "Urgent Consideration Law".

#### TRANSPARENCY



Irregular access to limited information

#### CONSULTATION



No consultation process at all

#### SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Definition and implementation of national SDG plan without inclusion of social partners



# IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Uruguay has a “very high” level of human development (UN HDI of 0.817 in 2019), according to the UN. However, there has been a slight increase in poverty in the past year, reversing the trend of recent years. **Meeting target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)** is becoming increasingly difficult in the context of economic slowdown, employment problems and falling purchasing power. Poverty disproportionately affects children and young people, women, and those living in rural areas. In terms of **target 1.3 (appropriate social protection systems and measures)**, Uruguay has very good tripartite-funded social protection and social services systems, to which almost 90 per cent of the population is affiliated. Benefit levels remain low, however, and more resources are required, particularly from employers, who currently contribute half as much as the workers (7.5 per cent versus 15 per cent).

A pandemic survey carried out by PIT-CNT showed an increase in women’s unpaid work and a decrease in paid work, as many of the sectors most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic are those that largely employ women (**target 5.4 to recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work**). There has also been a decline in the proportion of women in managerial positions, due to difficulties in incorporating these issues into a substantive agenda to meet **target 5.5 (ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels)**.

As regards **target 8.5 (achieve full and productive employment and decent work)**, the unemployment rate has reached 10.3 per cent (12.4 per cent for women) and is very high among young people. The unemployment rate among disabled people is still very high: 80 per cent compared to 8.65 per cent for non-disabled people. Women in Uruguay earn 7.6 per cent less than men. This difference in hourly earnings rises to 11 per cent in the private sector. Official figures on underemployment in Uruguay are very low, but the fact that more than 320,000 people are not registered with social security suggests that the level of underemployment is higher than indicated by the official statistics, which do not, moreover, include discouraged job seekers. Greater efforts are also needed to meet **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)**, as 14.3 per cent of young men and 18.7 per cent of young women fall within this category. Uruguay performs well, by

international standards, on **target 8.7 (end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour)**. There are ever-fewer children and adolescents working outside the permitted age. Measures nonetheless need to be taken in rural areas of Uruguay, especially in the area of hazardous work. Uruguay also performs well on **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**: the national level of compliance with labour rights is very high. The labour inspectorate is qualified and experienced but understaffed. Uruguay is one of the countries in the region and the world with the highest trade union density rate. Collective bargaining coverage under the law reaches all formal workers in the country.

More efforts are still needed to reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies and progressively achieve greater equality)**. In terms of income distribution, the poorest 20 per cent only receive 7.1 per cent of total income. The richest decile has almost four times more income than the two poorest deciles. Uruguay has the best Gini index in the region, but this is the most unequal continent in the world. The national minimum wage is the highest in the region.

Trade unions are concerned about stalled progress under **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and plans)**. The National Policy on Climate Change (PNCC) has been in place since 2017. It was developed in a participatory manner through the National Response System to Climate Change and Variability (SNRCC). But the resources required to implement it are not there at the moment. The new government has not considered the topic, made any announcements, or included environmental priorities in its national strategy, other than setting up an Environment Ministry.

The situation regarding the implementation of **SDG 16 (peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all, and effective institutions)** in Uruguay is satisfactory in terms of protection of fundamental freedoms and access to legal aid and labour courts.

## TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

To ensure an SDG-led recovery and resilience from the crisis, trade unions are urging the government of Uruguay to:

- reinstate policies and programmes under the National Development Strategy Uruguay 2050 as part of the government’s agenda; ensure sufficient resources in the national budget and effective institutional management for the implementation of the strategy, including monitoring and broader social dialogue;
- draw up and implement a post-Covid-19 economic and social recovery plan for the country; urgently create jobs, particularly in those sectors that have the greatest difficulty redefining jobs because of the pandemic, and improve the social safety net;
- implement redistributive public policies that transfer income from richer to poorer sections of society;
- develop targeted policies to provide disabled people with better employment opportunities; review the approach to youth unemployment and consider other approaches including better links between study and work; increase the number of labour inspectors; and
- resurrect the National Policy on Climate Change (PNCC) and the participatory National System of Response to Climate Change and Variability (SNRCC) and ensure sufficient resources for implementation.

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



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# VENEZUELA

## 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

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Venezuelan government declared a state of emergency and appointed a presidential commission for prevention, care and control. With support from the UN system, a national coronavirus prevention and containment plan, and humanitarian response plan, were put in place. There was a moratorium on the payment of mortgages, rents and loans. A “stay at home” bonus to compensate the self-employed was provided until October 2020.

The pandemic exacerbated serious problems already present in Venezuela as a result of decades of poor governance and economic crisis, including a collapsed health system. Trade unions call on the Venezuelan government to urgently improve health supplies and facilities, ensure better access to Covid-19 and universal vaccination schedules, and put in place transparent and timely data collection. A sustainable recovery plan and emergency labour law are needed to generate jobs and provide a minimum income for all. Universal social protection and access to health services, as well as childcare services for essential workers, are required. Inclusive social dialogue and respect for human rights must be reinstated.

### ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The government of Venezuela, continuing the implementation of the Bolivarian Revolution, has developed a series of national plans for economic and social development, each entitled “Plan de la Patria”. The government maintains that the objectives for the 2019-2025 Plan correspond with the SDGs.

However, the independent Venezuelan trade union movement is not consulted on the development or implementation of the Plan de la Patria, as the government consults only with its own supporters. Nor are there adequate mechanisms for reporting. Official, up-to-date data on SDG progress is not available; access to SDG monitoring on the national statistics office website is restricted.

Independent evaluations show that performance on social, economic, political and rights indicators has worsened in recent years. Despite some signs of growth recovery in 2022, Venezuela is still effectively in a state of economic, social and political collapse. After years of hyperinflation and economic mismanagement, the scale of poverty is such that the country is far from achieving the SDG goals. Salaries, including the minimum wage, have declined in purchasing power to the extent that they are insufficient to live on. Food insecurity and hunger are having a devastating impact, with evident signs of malnutrition among children. Retired people are particularly vulnerable as they are not eligible for food vouchers.

#### TRANSPARENCY



No access to information

#### CONSULTATION



No consultation process

#### SOCIAL DIALOGUE



No social dialogue on the government's SDG national plan





## IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Major challenges remain to meet **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty)**: in 2021, total poverty stood at 94.5 %, extreme poverty at 76.6 % and multidimensional poverty at 65.2 %. Under **target 1.3 (appropriate social protection systems)**, trade unions report that the situation has worsened since 2017 when only 54.2 % of the population were covered by at least one social protection benefit. Rights to health and benefits are enshrined in law but the government has introduced the “Patria system” for access to benefits, which excludes part of the population. With regards to **target 1a (adequate resources)**, overall expenditure on social welfare contracted significantly in 2019-2021, but still made up a significant part of the annual budget (76.4 % in 2021). There is a lack of transparency about how money is spent. Public services including the healthcare system are in crisis, and corruption is a significant problem, including in the main food assistance programme (“CLAP”).

Women and girls still face challenges in Venezuela, although equal rights and opportunities are protected by law. Access to sexual health and contraception has declined and the teen pregnancy rate has increased as a result. The pandemic also deepened gender inequalities. The ratio of female to male labour force participation was 68 % in 2021 and women still take on more **unpaid care and domestic work (target 5.4)**. Under **target 5.5 (women’s full and effective participation)**, the proportion of parliamentary seats held by women was 22 % in 2021. More women than men now complete their secondary education, but the gender pay gap persists.

Venezuela is far from reaching **target 8.3 (formalization)**; employment is becoming more informal, vulnerable and precarious. Major challenges also remain to meet **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)**. Unemployment stood at 6.4 % in 2021, however the inactive population was 32.1 %. The share of **young people not in employment, education or training (target 8.6)** was 22.8 % in 2017; ASI has raised concerns that the government’s “Chamba Juvenil” youth employment policy undermines the SDG 8 goal of decent work. Evaluating progress on **target 8.7 (end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour)** is hampered

by a lack of data, but 174,000 people were estimated to live under modern slavery in 2018, a situation exacerbated by the Orinoco Mining Arc. There are serious concerns under **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all)**. Occupational injuries are not being reported and 33 labour rights violations were reported in 2017. Workers’ and employers’ organisations that do not support the government are repressed and excluded, with systematic violations of freedom of association and collective bargaining, although social dialogue to address this is now underway following the 2019 ILO Commission of Inquiry. There is a serious shortage of labour inspectors.

Inequality in Venezuela has led to the forced migration of millions of Venezuelans in recent years. Major challenges therefore remain to meet **targets 10.4 (policies to achieve greater equality, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies)** and 10.7 (orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility).

With regard to **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and plans)**, environmental policies are in the national plan, but proper implementation is needed. Other policies are having a detrimental impact on the environment and human rights, including oil production and the Orinoco Mining Arc. Social partners are not being included to ensure a just transition.

Venezuelans live in a worsening situation of violence and insecurity. The judiciary is partisan and politicised, jeopardising **target 16.3 (promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice)**. With regard to **target 16.10 (ensure public access to information and protect civil liberties)**, trade unionists, journalists, health workers and human rights defenders critical of the government have been subject to arrests, attacks and ill-treatment.

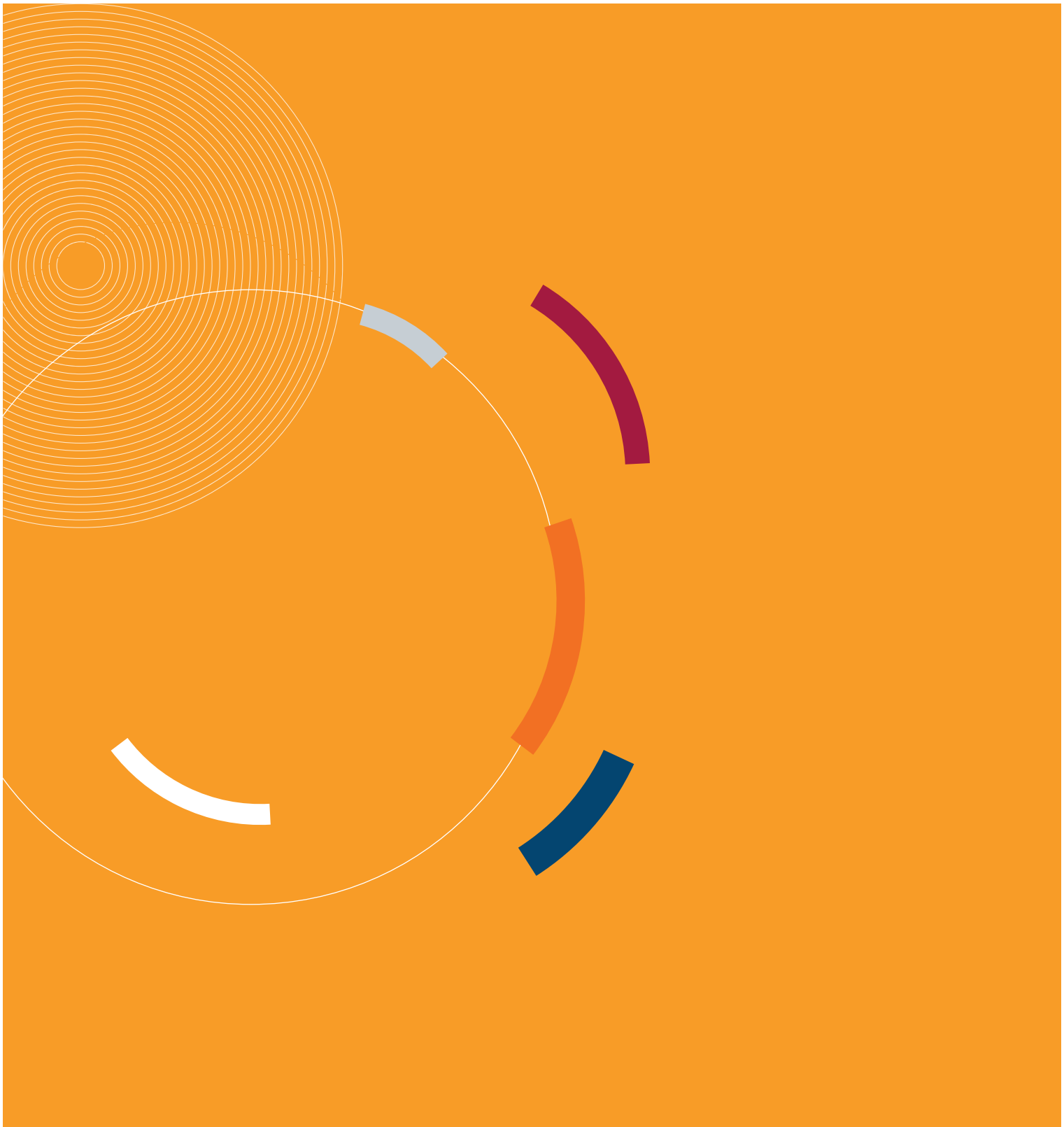
## TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

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

- Develop an institutional framework that promotes a sustainable recovery and creates a democratic, participatory environment where human rights are respected.
- Engage in structured social dialogue, with full participation of autonomous worker, employer, and civil society organisations, to develop and implement plans to achieve the SDGs.
- Introduce an emergency labour law that addresses wages, employment and social security.
- Approve a solidarity fund with multilateral support to provide emergency income support for all active and retired persons.
- Expand social protection coverage.
- Implement a decent work and youth employment country programme within the framework of development cooperation.
- Guarantee fundamental labour rights and ratify specific ILO Conventions as requested in the social commission for dialogue, peace and national reconciliation.



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